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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

A THEORY OF CONFLICT AND COOPERATION WITHIN  
INTERLOCUTOR RELATIONSHIPS IN THE DISCOURSE OF  
SYNCHRONOUS COMPUTER CONFERENCING

A Dissertation  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

By  
CHRISTYNE A. BERZSENYI

Norman, Oklahoma

1998

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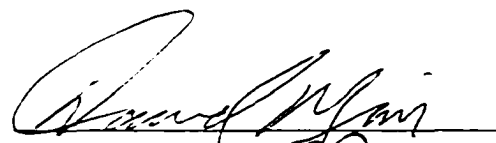

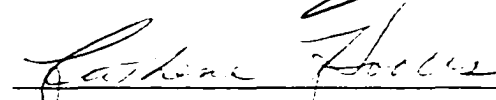
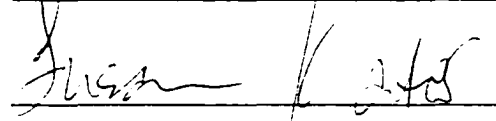
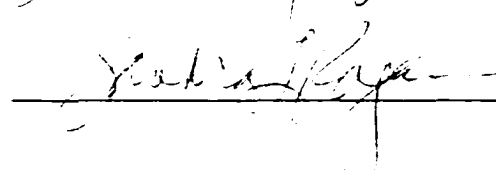


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A THEORY OF CONFLICT AND COOPERATION WITHIN  
INTERLOCUTOR RELATIONSHIPS IN THE DISCOURSE OF REAL-  
TIME COMPUTER CONFERENCING

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project investigates the dynamics of conflict and cooperation in the construction of interlocutor relationships in synchronous computer conferencing (SCC). Chapters One and Two of the dissertation present my qualitative and theoretical methodology which involves both the analysis of Daedalus InterChange transcripts and the construction of a continuum of interlocutor relationships, ranging from conflictual to cooperative: agonistic, hierarchical, dialectical, and empathic relationships. Chapters Three and Four discuss patterns of interaction, situate the interlocutor relationship continuum within other classifications of discourse and audience, and present the pedagogical implications for teaching writing students to be more attuned to interlocutor relationships while composing in SCC. Further, I argue that the constant interaction among participants in SCC renders the teaching of rhetorical considerations inseparable from ethical concerns.

*For my father, Leslie Berzsenyi*

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## **PREFACE**

*Our most ordinary and conventional attitudes  
seem suddenly twisted  
into gargoyles and grotesques.*  
Marshall McLuhan

### **A First Experience with Synchronous Computer Conferencing**

In the summer of 1996, I participated in a week-long workshop on computer-mediated writing instruction offered at the research university where I was earning my Ph.D. and teaching technical writing. The workshop was designed to prepare ten graduate teaching assistants to teach composition and technical writing classes in the computer classroom. In preparation for the activities and topics of in-class inquiry, workshop participants were asked to read scholarly articles which addressed rhetorical and situational concerns of computer-mediated communication, computer technology as a medium that is changing the study of rhetoric and composition, and computer-mediated pedagogy. The articles which intrigued me most and yet also disturbed me the most were those which examined and theorized real-time conferencing in the writing classroom, noting that discourse was often combative among users. As a dedicated and disciplined writing instructor, I felt that there was no space for combativeness in the classroom, an educational environment I've based upon principles of mutual respect among students and teachers,



intellectual inquiry, coherent and analytical articulation, and responsible facilitation of learning. In fact, during the workshop, I participated in synchronous computer conferencing (SCC) for the first time with an attitude of resistance and doubt about the utility of this communication technology for enhancing my writing pedagogy. However, I would soon become an SCC advocate with the conviction that real-time electronic exchange was a new genre of writing which would be an exciting new challenge for rhetoric and composition specialists.

Before using web-based discussion technologies, the university computer-mediated writing instructors used Daedalus Interchange, a software program which allows members of a networked classroom to communicate in synchronous computer conferencing, as well as supporting invention and critique activities. Using the conferencing function of the program, participants are constantly shifting roles as encoders and decoders in real-time exchange as well as interacting with several users at a given time. Initially, it didn't make sense to me to exchange on the computer because we were all in the same room together. Oral conversation seemed the more logical communication choice because I thought that the class could explain and conduct a focused discussion more efficiently face-to-face. Moreover, it bothered me when I noticed that other graduate students in the workshop began to stray from our assigned task, which was to discuss similarities and differences between print-based writing and electronic writing. I was concerned about these teachers on terminals next to me, who were supposedly preparing to use this technology for the purposes of teaching writing but were, instead, joking and playing.

While I felt very serious about trying to understand how computers might be more useful than or different from what we've been doing with discussion or word processing, many were treating the computers like toys. In my life, the only role for computers had been as a writing (work-oriented) tool. Further, the graduate student participants' messages were confrontational, sarcastic, off-topic, and silly. Until that computer conference exchange, the workshop face-to-face discussions had been productive, on-task, and respectful.

Later, during that first session of Interchange conferencing, a graduate student presenter asked what was specifically problematic about the discussion getting off-topic, a question that was directed to people like me who felt frustration from the lack of focus in the discussion. This conversation led into points about poststructuralist language theory, the nature of electronic discourse, and particularly about the discourse of synchronous computer conferencing. The issues discussed that day, the dynamics of our interaction on the computer, and the questions about the nature of conferencing language fostered the beginning of my research in the rhetoric of CMC. While this phenomenon of communicating playfully and agonistically online struck me as inappropriate and counter productive to the classroom setting and educational goals, the assigned readings on the literature about SCC made me rethink the rhetorical context of writing online, particularly in terms of how real-time electronic writers address their interlocutors. With my interest and research background in rhetorical theory and public discourse within the context of print-literacy, it was not

surprising that I transferred some of those earlier inquiries to questions about types of electronic discourse and how those forms affect audiences.

### **SCC in the Writing Classroom: The Research Evolves**

With the suggestions made by published scholars and writing teachers, I taught a semester-long course called Computer-mediated Technical Writing. The thirty-five students were from technical and science majors. Students participated in various forms of electronic activities, which included word processing of technical documents, email for peer review and communication with classmates, Internet searches for project topics, chat room observations, and real-time chat among classmates. During class, I asked students questions about what they thought was appropriate discourse and what conventions they learned and used online. At first, more experienced computer users dominated the discussion, but as we all became more practiced at these literacy skills, novice users participated more, presenting their observations and speculations.

After having read the transcripts from the first two conference sessions, I constructed a questionnaire which was in part influenced by these technical writing students' transcripts and in part by the scholarly literature I had read on computer-mediated communication. Students provided extended written responses to ten questions regarding their thoughts and feelings about their participation in synchronous computer conferencing.<sup>1</sup> In constructing the prompts in the questionnaire, I asked students to elaborate on various aspects affecting their conferencing such

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<sup>1</sup> The questions and student responses are provided in Appendix A.

as education in speech and writing, real-time dynamics, writing conventions, where they conferenced, the task of the discussion, audience roles, writer roles, language style, computer experience, and social and personal background. Students described various levels of familiarity, confidence, and entertainment with SCC. Using their insights combined with a theoretical and critical approach, which I hoped will lead to a better comprehension of how we interact online. Further, I hoped to gain some awareness of what my students understood about SCC participation and their experience with computer conferencing. As it turned out, only one class member had experience working with synchronous computer conferencing in the classroom, but about five students had participated in an internet chat room; therefore, these experienced computer-mediated communicators were at least acquainted with real-time written exchange, if not proficient. Students' responses revealed some patterns of insight as well as frustration with this new medium of communication which became the starting point for this project.

More specifically, through student responses to the questionnaire, I discovered the importance of dealing with conventional language concerns on SCC in order to better prepare students to participate effectively and comfortably. Since few students in that class had much prior training in computer conferencing literacy, some students reported feeling that they couldn't keep up with conversations in which they participated. Matt explains his frustration at his slow processing and writing pace: "By the time I read the topic of conversation and had formed an opinion about it the group was talking about something else, and my comments were no longer

relevant. ” The sense that one can’t stay with the topic at hand can be discouraging. Matt admits, “In the Interchange, I never get the chance to ‘get started’ so I just sit back and read what others are typing and not say much.” Further, Matt explains that he “lurks,” which Gail Hawisher argues is related to communication anxieties about competence and students’ perception of the importance (or lack of importance) of their responding to others and being responded to by others (92). In “Electronic Meetings of the Minds,” Hawisher points out, “the sheer bulk of the printed text can be daunting. . . . How to process this huge amount of information while at the same time making sense of it is one of the challenges of both synchronous and asynchronous settings” (93). Learning to manage this bulk of information online and to respond to a percentage of the messages in a timely fashion is part of becoming socialized into electronic discourse communities. If you don’t adapt to the pace and breadth of SCC discussion, you won’t be part of the exchange, just as Matt was not.

Further, Matt describes his writing process on Interchange, which reveals another reason why he often is left behind in the conversation:

Once I had typed the sentence I would reread it and check the spelling and grammar. Before I would submit the statement to the group I would check the most recent statements being submitted and if my statement was still relevant, I would then submit it; otherwise, I would erase the statement and read until I had formed another opinion and start the process over again.

This passage demonstrates our need as writing teachers to provide students with instruction on strategies, guidelines, and conventions of language use and the writing process in conferencing situations. In fact, in a study on students' computer communication skills in CMC courses, John Ross found that:

Students with weaker [computer-mediated communication] skills would miss important instructional events, have lower levels of task-relevant contributions, have less influence on group products, and engage in less demanding learning activities. (37)

Referring back to how Matt described himself as having “poor writing skills,” it seems that if he had been more aware of the fact that language mechanics are not as rigidly followed nor are they critiqued by others in the same strict manner that print-writing is, he may have been more active in his participation and less frustrated and anxious about the presentational qualities of his message. Fortunately, in later conferences, after discussion about our experiences on Interchange, Matt did relax his style of writing and developed greater confidence and level of participation in communicating with others online. What I learned by hearing Matt's testimony about his experiences is that, as Spitzer, Selfe, Hawisher, Cooper, and LeBlanc have noted, teachers of computer-mediated communication need to spend time going over conventional, theoretical, and participant role aspects of communicating on SCC in order to prepare the less experienced students to make full use of this medium. With the goal of increasing students' awareness of audience during computer-mediated communication, I wrote a

second questionnaire<sup>2</sup> consisting of two prompts that focused on gaining a better sense of their perceptions of audience roles and writer's relationships to their audience members:

- (1) Communicate what you think are your responsibilities toward other users during Interchange. What makes you say so? Why?
- (2) Explain what you think is a successful Interchange. What is going on during the Interchange? Who's doing it? To whom? Why? How? Contrast this description to an unsuccessful Interchange. What makes it unsuccessful?

Several of the nine students' responses were similar in that they described a successful Interchange as one in which students are actively participating by asking questions and addressing other participants' comments. Further, the students also described their responsibilities toward other participants as active participation in the conference through inquiries and responses to other participants' messages. What this limited group of responses to the two questions suggested to me is that there are responsibilities which have an ethical dimension involved in communication on SCC that are directly connected to rhetorical concerns about writer-audience relationships.

In response to my sense that students need to develop greater awareness of writer-audience issues while composing on SCC, I proceeded with the project, primarily focusing on the diversity of types of discourse present in Interchange conference transcripts. I assigned students, from

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<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire, which is in Appendix B with unedited student responses, was given as an extra credit assignment. Only 9 out of 35 students chose to respond.

my two computer-mediated, technical writing classes and a colleague's two computer-mediated, first-year composition classes, to Interchange on ethical concerns related to computer use. Topics of discussion included children's access to pornography on the internet, software piracy, electronic privacy, information ownership, flaming, dangerous information on the net, and altruistic uses of the internet. Initially, I examined the Interchange conferences looking for patterns of responses and writing features which I thought were related to the electronic medium. But then, as I identified moments of play, flaming, and task-driven activity in their Interchange transcripts, I thought about how students' language use reflected writer-audience dynamics. However, I realized that my questions/prompts and my students' responses to the questionnaires did not tell me enough about what I wanted to know about their writer-audience relationships. I had to find this information in another way.

### **Shifting Methods for Assessing Interlocutor Relations**

The project took a considerable turn in terms of methodology. Rather than using the students' questionnaire responses as my data, the Interchange transcripts became the central focus of my research. What I was able to interpret through discourse analysis of the transcripts that was not apparent in the students' responses to the questionnaire is the discourse that participants actually use as they interact online. A close examination of the transcripts made me more aware of how the playful, antagonistic, and cooperative moments of the text revealed a great deal about the nature of the participants' relationships, and that a variety of



relationships manifest online. With further analysis, I developed a theory of interlocutor relationships as part of a rhetoric of synchronous computer conferencing in the writing classroom. With this relatively small focus group of composition and technical writing students, this project is a pilot study, analyzing the discourse of Daedalus Interchange participants, theorizing some of the ways participants interact while completing course discussion assignments. I have identified patterns of relations among participants which cannot represent all forms of interaction; I offer a beginning toward a theory of interlocutor relationships on SCC.

While audience concerns are certainly not a new consideration for rhetoricians, in my work I account for how writer/audience relations must be reconsidered in the communication context of synchronous computer conferencing. Audience awareness should play a significant role in the composing process of effective SCC rhetoric as writers communicate with real readers dialectically. Moreover, in order to most appropriately respond to messages which represent the participants' concerns, ideas, and opinions, SCC writers must be astute interpreters of tone and attitude in written language on the screen, gaining a sense of other participants' emphases and implications.

Chapter One addresses the literature on computer conferencing which situates my theoretical concerns about interlocutor relationships as related to electronic writing, poststructuralism, and analysis of interaction on SCC. Chapter Two defines, describes and illustrates four types of interlocutor relationships identified through analysis of the context and interrelational meanings of the messages sent by conference participants,

illustrating the implications messages suggest about participants' roles shared, attitudes about, and power struggles with other participants. The classification of four types of interlocutor relationships rests on the concept of conflict and how it manifests in varying degrees in SCC discourse, ranging from cooperation, at one extreme, to antagonism, at the other extreme. Chapter Three situates this theory about interlocutor relationships within existing theory and discusses the challenges of classifying discourse and how others have done it. The conclusion, Chapter Four, discusses specific strategies for teaching rhetorical and ethical considerations of interactive electronic discourse. Further, I argue that the constant interaction among participants makes ethical concerns of SCC inseparable from rhetorical considerations because written dialogue depends on the dynamic exchange between participants who oscillate in their roles as readers and writers reacting to one another and immediately affecting each other with their powerful words and arguments.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTERLOCUTOR RELATIONSHIPS IN SCC

*When we move into public discourse in our classes, many of us fall back on traditional notions of rhetoric, the most dangerous of which is the way we visualize the relationship between the reader and the writer. We often unwittingly instill in students a theory of discourse that allows them to oppress others. In the way we teach writing we are promoting a patriarchal mode that encourages students to internalize a rhetorical stance of dominance toward their readers.*  
Susan Meisenhelder

The highly interactive nature of synchronous computer conferencing (SCC) makes writer-audience concerns of utmost importance in terms of a rhetoric of SCC. At this time, theoretical and analytical work in the area of SCC is needed. While composition and rhetoric as a discipline progresses toward a greater understanding of communication technologies as sites for rhetoric, academic institutions are incorporating computer classrooms into their writing programs and instruction. However, what is lacking here is that students are generally not being trained to be effective rhetors in the medium of computer-mediated communication (Hawisher and Moran 1993). Using SCC programs in the writing classroom is largely seen as a means to the end of improving writing through immersion in written discourse (Record 1994; Boothby 1985) or of discussing an issue in a way that will include more participants, especially marginalized students (Record 1994; Selfe 1988; Hawisher 1992; Faigley 1992 and others). While these are fruitful applications of SCC, students are being asked to carry out

literacy skills without being given the criteria, strategies, and conventions for producing effective electronic communication. Unless students have prior experience and nontraditional training in computer conferencing, they are going to need some guidance as novice participants, just as I needed in the graduate student workshop, to feel comfortable, competent, and aware of appropriate and effective participation with other users in this language-based medium.

The problem I am addressing in this work is to determine what are the interlocutor<sup>1</sup> relationships in SCC and to construct a theory of audience which is applicable for the study and teaching of rhetorical and ethical dimensions of synchronous computer conferencing. Through this theory of interlocutor relationships in SCC discourse, I provide a way of analyzing writer's attitudes toward readers and the implications of these attitudes which will enable writers to more appropriately respond to other interlocutor's messages. Also, this project reveals some issues of audience and rhetoric which are more common to SCC than to traditional print-based literacy and which provide teachers of computer-mediated composition with a useful analytic strategy for interpreting interlocutors' meanings. The result is an increase in students' awareness of audience during the composing process which is an important step in the production of effective, interactive, electronic rhetoric.

The purpose of this project is to identify the types of interlocutor relationships present in the conference transcripts as well as to theorize these relationships, situating them among the work of others that also

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<sup>1</sup> I use interlocutor rather than writer and reader because these roles continually reverse during SCC.

focus on writer/reader relations but not in electronic contexts. Finally, I offer a pedagogy useful to teachers of computer-mediated writing. While the project is a pilot study of the ways my sample group of students from two Computer-mediated Composition and two Computer-mediated Technical Writing classes interact and interrelate participating in SCC, this research offers a better understanding of audience issues associated with online language use and effective rhetorical strategies in the context of real-time electronic writing. I am constructing a theory of conferencing relationships which acknowledges the uniqueness of SCC as a genre of writing and as a forum in which participants interact and exchange according to community prescribed conventions of discourse, language practices which must be learned in order to understand meaning in electronic text and write appropriately to other community members. More specifically, I observed manifestations of conflict which I recognized as playing a vital role in defining the nature of the interaction among participants and in eliciting subsequent messages. The degrees of conflict varied in intensity, emerging from the text in the forms of simple disagreement, contest of wits, degrading commentary, and critique. What is important about conflict is that it is not only a significant element in online discourse, perhaps because of the high level of interaction possible, but that conflict is a defining characteristic of Western oratory and rhetoric in terms of an emphasis on eristics, persuasion, competition, and dominance among encoder and decoder<sup>2</sup>. However, manifestations of cooperation also appear in the SCC texts,

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<sup>2</sup> See George A. Kennedy's *Comparative Rhetorics* (1998) for a historical account of conflict within Western oratory.

revealing modern rhetorical approaches which acknowledge and value identification, collaboration, and mutual understanding. Cooperation and conflict limit and enable particular kinds of relationships in communication, education, and problem-solving situations. This research takes into account how a continuum of conflict and cooperation manifests in the student participants' SCC transcripts, in order to construct a range of four types of interlocutor relationships which serve to expand our understanding of the role of audience in electronic conferencing composition. This rhetorical project culminates in a discussion of computer-mediated writing instruction, suggesting applications for this theory of interlocutor relationships in the discourse in SCC.

### **Plato's Dialectic and Dialogue in SCC**

In this project, I interrogate the role of audience in the process of composing and delivering, concerns rhetoricians from as far back as ancient Greece through contemporary rhetoric and composition have been theorizing. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato argues for the need for rhetoricians and students of rhetoric to adapt their speeches to their audience's souls in order to be persuasive:

But it is only when he can state adequately what sort of man is persuaded by what sort of speech; when he has the capacity to declare to himself with complete perception, in the presence of another, that here is the man and here the nature that was discussed theoretically at school--here, now, present to him in actuality--to which he must apply *this* kind of speech in *this*

sort of manner in order to obtain persuasion for *this* kind of activity--it is only when he can do all this and when he has, in addition, grasped the concept of propriety of time--when to speak and when to hold his tongue, when to use and when not to use brachylogy, piteous language, hyperbole for horrific effect, and, in a word, each of the specific devices of discourse he may have studied. . . . (64)

Plato discusses the use of opportune moments in the delivery of rhetoric and the importance of understanding your audience in order to react appropriately and, therefore, persuasively to their doubts, needs, interests, psychology, consciousness, metaphysical soul, and the like. Further, Platonic rhetoric is useful for the study of SCC because of the dialectical nature of the medium.

Platonic rhetoric addresses issues of persuasion as well as ethics which makes his theory particularly applicable to this project. My theory of dialectical relationships, as described in Chapter Two, is based upon Plato's concerns for the exploration of truth. While students are not necessarily trying to remember the soul's past knowledge, they must draw upon previously learned information and experience in order to provide messages which further the discovery of the group's understanding of a subject. In fact, Kathleen E. Welch, in *A Contemporary Reception to Classical Rhetoric: Appropriations of Ancient Discourse*, relates the psychology of discourse to the rhetorical canon of memory as she appropriates Platonic Rhetoric for electronic discourse. Welch builds her case upon the work of others in cognitive psychology and history:

Perhaps the most important connection that memory as a canon of rhetoric gives us is its explicit pointing to psychology. Research in cognitive psychology reveals the relationship between memory and creativity, as the work of John R. Anderson and John R. Hayes, among others, has shown. . . . Moreover, memory does not decrease in importance with the rise of writing dominance, but it changes emphasis, particularly in the formation of consciousness as it relates to technology (Ong, *Orality*, 78-116). (98)

By reaffirming the continued importance of the canon of memory in Walter Ong's concept of current electronic forms of writing, "secondary orality," Welch asserts the renewed relevance of classical rhetoric in contemporary, electronic discourse. More specifically, Welch focuses attention on Platonic rhetoric and how concerns about ethics and qualities of dialectic in language use are particularly pertinent to electronic communication through the formation of memory and the delivery of language through electronic media in addition to the canons of invention, arrangement and style which have remained with contemporary rhetorical education. Also, Welch alludes to poststructuralist conceptions of psychology in that scholars acknowledge how individuals have been enculturated by linguistic forces and communicative technologies, which continually shape how we think and how we write.

Accordingly, students have memory of their pasts, or their psychologies which were formed as a result of experience, education, and socialization. Therefore, interlocutors in SCC draw upon the resources of



their memories in order to engage effectively in the electronic dialogue. Patterns of interaction are to be expected since interlocutors from a particular class, region, and culture have been socialized in similar ways and are accustomed to using similar types of technologies. Based on this assumption, I examined SCC transcripts looking for predominant types of interaction among interlocutors so that I could describe how participants are exchanging in electronic dialogue.

The concept of dialogic language use or “heteroglossia” is one which Mikhail Bakhtin has theorized in our postmodern experience of fragmentation and multiplicity of voices; discourse becomes intertextual, language is always social and belonging to others, and texts lose their unified coherence. However, the concept of “heteroglossia,” in a “single-authored,” print-based, literary text is quite different from a multi-authored, dynamic text of actual writers and readers in real-time exchange. In the former, the dynamism of language use is accounted for in the social consciousness of the writer, while in the latter, the dynamism actually takes place among conference interlocutors. Therefore, the SCC text engages several voices at once, constructing a fragmented, multi-directional course of dialogue which may or may not form a complete or coherent argument in the print-based sense of effective argumentation. In fact, I find that it is this sense of incompleteness that is at the heart of traditional, print-based scholars’ avoidance and discounting of electronic writing. Deeply rooted in the authoritativeness of the modern author, scholars react negatively to the lack of wholeness and cohesion. Our traditional sensibilities about writing must adjust to the new writing context of

computer conferencing by creating new conventions, expectations, and criteria for effective participation; otherwise, computer-mediated communication will continue to be marginalized within academia as an inferior form of writing, not worthy or scholarly preoccupation (Welch 1993).

### **The Rise of Electronic Writing in Academic and Nonacademic Contexts**

In 1990, Welch described the lack of courses in electronic discourse and technologies in the college English curricula. In *The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric: Appropriations of Ancient Discourse* Welch explains how the low status and priority of electronic text renders it marginal in curricula:

The most compelling evidence for this marginalization of newer discourse technologies is the nonintegration in general education requirements. They are regarded as peripheral concerns, unrelated to the study of printed texts. When courses do appear in the electronic media, they tend to be segregated or marginalized. Their placement in the curriculum announces their secondary status. The written text of the canon reigns supreme. ( 150-51)

Welch alerts us to the neglect as serious objects of study communication technologies have experienced in academic institutions. Perhaps a bit ahead of her time, Welch reveals her commitment to the study of electronic language systems as early as the beginning of the nineties. Throughout her

work, she demonstrates the adaptability of classical rhetoric to electronic discourse, which is based on writing and yet incorporates the mass speech communication of orality, making it relevant to the study of composition and rhetoric. Welch recognizes the increasing importance that electronic writing was having in our articulation and exchange of ideas and text and, therefore, realizes that electronic writing should be taught as a new area within composition and rhetoric.

By now, email is a common form of asynchronous computer communication. Rapaport and others have predicted that SCC will become common as well, particularly for those who must communicate interactively with a group over distances and require a record of the transaction. Conference telephone calls have been the primary means of handling group discussions over distances, but difficulties with limiting who speaks, when, how often, and for how long persisted. In addition, no record of the discussion is generated.

The same challenges of organizing and facilitating oral discussion in the classroom have concerned teachers across the curriculum. SCC could provide a means of expanding the function of oral discussion in the classroom by allowing more participants to be involved in the discussion at the same time, to send messages more often, and to practice literacy skills (Hawisher 1992; Hawisher and Selfe 1992; Lanham 1993; Daisley 1994; Gerard 1995). Research indicates that the globalization of the workplace brought on by technology has increased the commercial dependence on communication technologies in industry, commerce, and mass culture in order to accommodate the expansion of audience in numbers and over

distances that computer technology makes possible. Workers need to be able to communicate proficiently using the computer for work. In fact, in addition to technical calculations, graphic design, and organizational spreadsheets, workers will also be using computer technology for synchronous as well as the already adopted asynchronous communications as technology is increasingly integrated into our daily workplace operations. Therefore, implementing SCC in the writing classroom will better prepare students for the full range of modes of communication they will be expected to participate in when they enter the work force. However, writing courses now must not only include training and practice in print-based forms of written communication, but also in electronic forms, synchronous as well as asynchronous, if teachers are going to provide students with the preparation they need to discourse effectively (Halpern 1983; Faigley 1990; Hawisher and Moran 1993).

Scholars have argued much about the need to incorporate computers into our writing classes, particularly in ESL, foreign language, and distance education classes (Record 1994; Gerard, 1987; Blair 1993; Boothby 1985; Bolter 1991). Others have focused on the content and use of computer conferencing as a learning tool and alternate form of discussion (Balestri 1987; Blair 1993; Faigley 1990; Miller 1991; Leppanen and Kalaja 1995; Mowrer 1996). Completing tasks through synchronous conferencing is also addressed but with very little attention to the manner in which people exchange information electronically or how people interrelate in these virtual spaces of communication (Hiltz, Johnson, and Turoff 1986; Mowrer 1996). Other scholars have focused on the phenomenon of flaming, which is

rude, bombastic or aggressive language use online (Wang and Hong 1995; Thompsen 1993). While flaming does appear in the transcripts of classroom SCC, it does not comprise the majority of communications among participants, and studies have shown that task-driven activities tend to exhibit little or no flaming. Therefore, instructors are best off providing clear assignment objectives for student activities if they wish to limit inflammatory exchanges in their classrooms. However, SCC research has for the most part focused attention primarily on tasks and communication objectives, which neglects potent ethical considerations about communication consequences as a result of flaming, for example. In research in SCC, a medium of communication that is already perceived as “depersonalizing” communication (Takayoshi 1994; Rubin 1996), issues of ethics can easily get marginalized in favor of rhetorical concerns. A sense of emotional distance from other participants may foster abusive behavior if participants ignore how they may affect others online. In her dissertation titled *Computer-Mediated Communication and Social Support Among Eating Disordered Individuals: An Analysis of the alt.support.eating-disord News Group*, Christine North acknowledges that social presence theory<sup>3</sup> relates to users’ perception of distance in computer-mediated communication:

According to social presence theory, the fewer the channels or codes used in the communication, the less attention the sender

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<sup>3</sup> For more discussion on social presence theory, see J. Short, E. Williams, and B. Christie’s *The Social Psychology of telecommunication* (1976), R.E. Rice and G. Love’s “Electronic Emotion” from *Communication Research* ((1987), and several works by J.B. Walther, including an essay co-written with J.K. Burgoon titled “Relational Communication in Computer-mediated Interaction” in *Human Communication Research* ((1992).

pays to the presence of other social interactants. Short et al. (1976) state that electronic communication systems vary in “their capacity to transmit information about facial expression, direction of looking, posture, dress, and nonverbal vocal cues” (p.65). When one considers all of the channels and codes in face-to-face communication, it can be seen that there is high social presence. In contrast, computer-mediated communication has little contextual and nonverbal codes or channels, thus greatly diminishing the social presence of another. According to social presence theory, when presence is low, the subsequent communication is thought to be very informational in nature. (16)

North’s connection of social presence theory to the context of computer-mediated communication clarifies further users’ incomplete, objectified, or even absent concept of audience. While emoticons are one way to provide nonverbal cues lacking on SCC, interlocutors, especially novice users, have to make the adjustment to learning to appropriately use these symbols of emotional state to clarify message meanings. While some interlocutors may initially find emoticons to be simplistic and pedestrian expressions of nuance and tone, more computer literate writers find that the images are very useful for maintaining effective communication, particularly when the verbal text alone may contain ambiguities about humorous or literal interpretations, for example. Moreover, instructors need to help students make that adjustment to computer literacy because real writers and real readers are interacting and reacting to one another through the computer.

These interconnections and communications comprise the content of SCC text. Therefore, electronic conferencing, perhaps even more than print-based forms of writing, calls for a closer examination of the relationships between writers and audiences.

The immediacy of interaction among participants of electronic writing and the perception of SCC as depersonalized call for an examination of interlocutor relationships in order to develop rhetorics of writing and technology. Without theoretical training in the area of interlocutor relationships in SCC, participants often take on habits of abusing or disregarding other participants without much conscious thought about the consequences of their powerful language. Therefore, I am concerned that by ignoring the ethical implications of such dynamic interaction, we may be further encouraging agonistic behaviors which could render this medium less suited for intellectual exchange than for verbal boxing. In fact, based on my own limited and general observations of internet chat rooms, I find that participants, perhaps because they are participating anonymously with others from a distance, frequently display conflict in their exchanges online. While I would not argue that there is no place for agonism online, I do claim that agonistic language use is not the most effective nor the most ethical type of discourse for all rhetorical situations in real-time computer conferencing. Choices have to be made, which consider audience, purpose, conventions, forum, topic, etc. Moreover, through theoretical examination and practical experience, learning what types of interaction are most appropriate in particular conferencing situations and with particular online

audience members can only strengthen literacy skills and, therefore, increase success in communication with other participants.

Another concern about the emotional distance between participants is that this abstraction of audience seems to be to some extent a convention of the medium, at this point in its development and application, and also a symptom of participants' lack of critical perspective on new communication technologies. The common response that computer conferencing is associated with "fun" because of the ability to construct an anonymous persona without any real consequences is both its advantage and its drawback. While students have reported in the questionnaire that anonymity would allow for more "honest" interaction, it can also foster play which strays from the goals of the conference. Further, participants can be less critical when enjoying themselves than when they are engaged in classroom work, as evidenced by the students' Interchanges. In fact, the more strictures students had with regard to the task of the conference, the more work oriented their discussion became, making the medium useful for classroom purposes. On the other hand, the more broad topics, which simply required students to discuss ethics and computer use, revealed a greater degree of off-topic play which resulted in their not fully answering the question being asked.

While such play and agonistic language behaviors are common phenomena in SCC, I find it imperative that electronic language theorists confront the conflictual nature of these types of discourse which position writers and audience members in particular power relationships. In other words, we need to acknowledge the dominant presence of conflict in



language practices online and examine how participants convey information, negotiate disagreements, accomplish tasks, and compete for power and attention in real-time conferencing. As a key concept in patriarchy, capitalism, and various other hierarchical relations present in our society, conflict thus permeates not only our social practices but also our discourse in professional, educational, and social communities<sup>4</sup>. However, conflict does not necessarily lead to oppressive relationships or behaviors because there are varying degrees of competition among individuals and institutions with equally diverse consequences which promote or construct particular power dynamics among those involved in oral, print, and electronic communication. Therefore, in order to understand which types or degrees of conflict underlie oppressive behavioral practices, participants must become more aware of how conflict plays a role in our daily language transactions online. Identifying the degrees of conflict predominating at particular moments of interaction in order to understand writer-audience relations is central to this research.

SCC participants concerned about effective communication must acknowledge the various ways their audience members may be affected by or respond to the messages characterized by conflict and agreement. However, an individual's concern about conflict with other participants in SCC may not stem from a consideration of ethical communication, but instead from a desire to win an argument, for example. Since ancient Greece, rhetoric teachers have been concerned that teaching students to be

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<sup>4</sup> Sandra Lee Bartky (1990), Helene Cixous (1975), Dale Bauer (1988) and other cultural and discourse critics have addressed how the elements of patriarchy, domination, and even violence are evident in our language practices.

effective rhetoricians may have negative consequences, meaning that students may use their language power in oppressive ways by taking advantage of others.<sup>5</sup> Further, instructors of rhetoric cannot expect to transform students' ethical standards into their own. We can only raise their consciousness about the effects their language use can produce and perhaps hope that they not abuse their power. Finally, a rhetoric of discourse in SCC must account for conflict in discourse and its role in constructing interlocutor relationships online.

### **Postmodernity and Discourse**

A theory of discourse associated with any discipline or activity must acknowledge that discursive communities form and change according to shifts in the group's ideology, methods of investigation, objectives, and material conditions. While the language and behavioral norms created by such a community are in flux, they provide guidelines for communication which members are urged to adopt in order to be clearly understood, well-received, and successful in the accomplishment of a disciplinary endeavor. According to James Gee, participation in discourses requires learning how to talk the talk of a given group or institution (xv). However, in order to speak the language of a discipline or organization and gain membership, the individual must understand the thought processes and analytical view point which lead to the making of assertions and discoveries relevant to that group. Further, knowledge-making reflects the contingent language

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<sup>5</sup> Gorgias in the *Encomium of Helen* analogized logos to drugs with its powerful effects over audience members. Plato felt that rhetoric had positive and negative effects over the soul in the *Symposium*.

practices of a particular discourse community and is based upon that group's sense of "reality," which is subject to historical conditions constantly in flux. Due to the nature of language being infused with ideology, effective writers confront clashes in values through their written exchanges, which embody power relationships among writer and audience. Since dialogue is constant in SCC, participants experience such confrontations of ideology throughout their conferences. Therefore, an awareness of how the ideologies connect is vital to the rhetorical success of an individual's contributions. Moreover, participants of computer conferences must learn not only to determine the general language constraints and practices of conference interaction but also to recognize the ideological implications of the participants' rhetorical arguments and strategies. Rendering effectively these tasks of rhetorical interaction involve the negotiation of both content and form among participants.

To illustrate this process of enculturation into the discourse of a particular group, in *Audience and Rhetoric*, James Porter addresses reasons that social and cultural factors predetermine the content and style of our language use:

The model of communication illustrated here may thus be said to be dialogic or dialectic. We could even call it collaborative. That is, the development of discourse--and the creation of knowledge--is not the responsibility of any single discourser working in isolation (the expressive image of the writer). Rather, discourse is developed through interaction--it is developed dialogically, through the process of the 'person'

moving from speaker role to audience role and back and forth.

In fact, the roles of rhetor/author and audience blur. The boundaries between the two roles disappear. (81)

Through the concept of discourse community, Porter explains why the authority of the author as originator of a thought no longer applies in poststructuralism. Porter argues for a view of the relationship between writer and audience as one of symbiosis, or mutual dependence.

Particularly in SCC, writers and readers constantly change roles as they exchange messages in conversation. Writers have to be very good readers so that they not only address larger discourse community conventions and genres of communication, but also respond appropriately to the actual person(s) with whom they interact online. Porter's social constructivist position contrasts with individual centered, expressivistic epistemology in that, from the postmodern point of view, issues of the social and cultural complicate notions of individual choices and written expression. Assuming that language and culture limit our choices, our visions of the world, and our means of expressing those visions and choices, postmodernists view the individual as a product of language, cultural, and social systems; therefore, locating the writer in the text is not necessarily a plausible task in discourse study. This traditional literary approach to the study of text in terms of the voice of the author is supplanted by an objective of identifying patterns, movements, theories, and positions which compete and conflict with one another. As writers, we ally ourselves with a discourse community from which we learn to communicate, investigate, and function intellectually. Identifying these types of discourse used online serves to demonstrate

congruities of dialectical interaction which are characteristic of SCC, as well as the range of discourses, which merit analytical study of the complexities found among students' message exchanges.

Specifically applied to CMC, Bellman explains how members' participation practices within electronic conferences are shaped by definitions of social reality:

The definition of social reality is critical to the success of a conference. When joining a computer conference participants have some definition of what it is they are signing onto; whether it is a virtual classroom, seminar, collaborative working or research group, an online therapy group, a place for casual conversation or joking or the like. Members have expectations and make assumptions about the normative rules for participating in each conference based on the definition of social reality they have for it. The definition provides the auspices for interaction and is a significant constitutive feature in the otherwise objectivated meaning context for the online discussions. (61)

The classroom setting plays a major role in the content and language conventions of student interactions during Interchange. The rules and norms of classroom behavior are mingled with students' expectations of online computer conferencing from chat room experiences, email exchanges, and so forth, which form "heteroglossia,"<sup>6</sup> a mixture with components which do not dissolve into one another, but predominate at given moments. In

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<sup>6</sup> Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. 1981.

other words, in her essay titled "Gender in Bakhtin's Carnival," Dale Bauer explains, "For Bakhtin, language bequeaths us many social voices, and these voices construct both selves and characters-as-selves. The explicit and implicit interplay of these voices reveals the way a specific historical and cultural context fashions the self" (670). Bauer's point about the intermingling of strands of discourse which come from a multitude of communities to which we belong and by which we are influenced, is a basic assumption of my research, which attempts to name some of these strands or types of discourse used in SCC; however, construction of the self or relating discourse to the self is not my goal here. Instead, I will limit the scope of my research to analysis of the discourse itself. Identifying the types of persuasion predominating at particular moments of interaction in order to understand writer-audience relations is the central task of this research. What is considered to be acceptable behavior or a productive contribution will vary from classroom to classroom, teacher to teacher, and student to student. Each class requires some instruction on expected forms and degrees of participation during SCC in order for students to understand how they can interact effectively and ethically.

SCC is a forum for writing and dictates particular conventions and attitudes in the manner in which we participate. First of all, I wish to borrow James Porter's use of forum as he defines it:

A forum is a concrete, local manifestation of the operation of the discourse community. It is a physical location for discursive activity--such as a journal, a conference, a corporation, or a department within a corporation. Forums

provide well-defined speaking and writing roles for its members, who are, in turn, defined by those roles. . . . The forum is a trace of a discourse community, a defined place of assembly or means of publication for discourse communities. (107-8)

SCC is a concrete entity where discourse takes place according to certain conventions. Novice users become more closely affiliated with the particular conference group when they learn to use prescribed conventions and choose a position among the competing ideas presented in the conference. Such decisions include qualities of style which should be made consciously by each user as part of a rhetoric of SCC.

Beyond the classroom, students need to be able to determine norms of each new communication context through inquiry, theoretical and analytical study, and practical experimentation. W. Ross Winterowd asks an important question of those studying language use: "Where does choice end, and where do the inflexible laws of language begin?" SCC language conventions and cultural values manifest in patterns of online communication, reflecting writer attitudes, writer-audience relationships in the dynamic setting of SCC. However, in order to identify such patterns and conventions, I must examine particular aspects of students' messages.

### **Electronic Discourse and Interlocutor Relationships**

Before defining types of interlocutor relationships as part of a rhetoric of SCC, we need a clear sense of the nature of electronic text and how that affects writer/reader roles. In "Electronic Conferencing in the

Networked Classroom,” Melinda M. Miller describes the nature of SCC as a mode of communication: “The on-screen ‘conversation’ appear a bit disjointed--in fact, it’s rather like listening in on a party line with multiple conversations occurring simultaneously” (136). SCC is a new way of producing written communication. While SCC is writing intensive, the nature of the language use is unlike the coherent, unified, extended types of expository writing we teach students in composition and technical writing courses. Writers must be able to follow numerous traces of commentary to interpret by piecing together several messages of assertions, claims, opinions, reactions, and so forth, which comprise an argument or remain a fragment of one. Conversely, SCC writers must be able to work with existing text produced from a dialectical exchange to be able to respond in a timely, appropriate, and concise manner. Writers must become at ease with spontaneous engagement in exchange, which is not to say that no preparation for the conference has taken place. On the contrary, real-time computer writers have opportunities to use notes in front of them without negative judgment, but they must retrieve information in order to keep up with the pace of the conference.

Further, scholars have explored SCC as a medium of language exchange. In “Marshall McLuhan and Computer Conferencing,” Paul Levinson captures the nature of electronic language in computer conferencing by referring to McLuhan’s writing and theory:

In his Introduction to Harold Innis’ *The Bias of Communication*, McLuhan extols the “mosaic” approach that both writers employed: It offers snap shots from various



angles of the big picture, rather than a series of descriptions that attempt to construct a larger whole in an orderly, step-by-step fashion. Because each snap shot or piece of the mosaic is equidistant from the central theme and the other snap shots, each can serve as an entry point, review, or food for further thought on the main topic. (10)

Levinson emphasizes the fragmentary and interrupted nature of McLuhan's writing style, which captured the complexity and speed of the electronic age (10). While electronic discourse in SCC is temporary, a record of the interaction can be produced, making it a text for analysis. Levinson acknowledges that such a text refuses to be a closed, unified whole. A reader determines the arrangement of the text, depending on the order of the reading process. Transcripts reflect threads of conversation that discuss various opinions on topics with no modern notion of structure leading to a conclusion. This mosaic structure is unsettling for those wanting the coherence and product-oriented quality of a printed book.

Scholars have discussed SCC in terms of a literate act of printing written language, its textual cues of attitude and tone, the impersonal nature of the language used, and also its formality of style as a form of conversation (Hawisher and Selfe 1992; Record1995; Costanzo1994; Duin and Hansen 1994; Bolter 1991; and others). On the other hand, some scholars have discussed how SCC is similar to speech in that participants experience immediate feedback, engage in informal conversational language style, and address larger audiences. Even the term "conferencing" suggests a base in conversation. However, typically accompanying speech are

nonverbal cues such as tone of voice, gesture, expression, and so forth that clarify the speaker's meanings. Without these nonverbal cues of face-to-face, conference participants must become more attentive to indicators of meaning and context by specifically identifying subjects of discussion, by interpreting the tone of a message, and by learning and using emoticons. A third position in the orality vs. literacy debate about the nature of SCC is that electronic writing is a combination of oral and literate languages (McLuhan 1962; Ong 1982; Halpern 1981; Schafer 1981; Yates 1993; Costanzo 1994). Along this line of reasoning, for my work here, SCC is a form of writing; however, I would argue that SCC is the most "oral" form of CMC because it occurs in real-time. With this time element, participants are in a conversation-like context with expectations of prompt responses from other participants. Therefore, conventions and language practices must accommodate the real-time aspect of writing in a synchronous conferencing context in order to communicate meaning with purpose and effectiveness. As textual signs of nonverbal cues, emoticons are "visual cues formed from ordinary typographical symbols that when read sideways represent feelings or emotions" (Rezabeck, Landra L. and John J. Cochenour 1). The emoticons help to not only clarify message meaning but also to personalize communication by indicating an emotional state behind the message.

There are other aspects of electronic writing which make it a unique form of language use from speech or print literacy. According to McLuhan, Ong, Lanham, Bolter, Welch, and others, electronic text is highly

collaborative, nonlinear, interactive, and volatile in nature. Further, Lanham argues:

This changed status of the word affects the entire range of arts and letters as well as the whole marketplace of text (which is free now so doesn't fit into the current marketplace of copyright laws) and the fundamental laws and principles that govern--these all must be renegotiated--a new rhetoric of the arts created. (1)

Lanham articulates the need to reconsider how texts operate in our daily lives as well as in our classrooms. In the virtual environment, text is produced, consumed, and shared differently than in print literacy (McLuhan 1962; Ong 1982; Lanham 1993). In her master's thesis in SCC software for distance education, Linda Record describes computer conferencing as "marginal writing spaces" and a literacy practice when arguing:

Until we understand how truly different this type of collaborative writing is, we will not be able to fully exploit its potential on behalf of our students, nor will we be able to minimize potentially harmful effects. (29)

While the context of Record's comment is distance education, I share many of her concerns about how computer conferencing is a unique form of literacy, one which requires study for better understanding. In fact, many scholars have been brought together by Cynthia L. Selfe and Susan Hilligoss to discuss computer literacy in a collection of essays titled *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology*. The volume addresses the nature of electronic writing,

research on computer literacy practices, and the challenges of teaching writing on the computer. As set forth in the Introduction, the authors agree that “computers change the ways in which we read, construct, and interpret texts” (Selfe and Hilligoss 1).

### **Computer-mediated Composition Pedagogy and Interlocutor Relationships**

Currently, teachers of writing who are working in computer classrooms involve students in literary criticism, composition, and conversation on the computers. However, students often use the computer with very little instruction on how computer literacy varies from other forms of print-based literacy, what constitutes criteria for effective electronic communication, or on how each mode of computer-mediated communication demands different language forms and styles from the user to be effective in various professional, social, and personal contexts. In 1986, Michael Spitzer argued that computer conferencing is a unique medium of communication that we need to better understand in order to teach students how to use it effectively for communication. Eleven years later, I would argue that we still need to better understand this medium to take full advantage of it in writing instruction curricula not only because communication technology has not yet been adequately theorized within a rhetorical context but because technology has changed so much and continues to change very rapidly. In response to a need for more computer-mediated pedagogy, this project culminates in a pedagogy of SCC designed

to serve electronic writing teachers with suggestions for presenting and practicing strategies for effective real-time computer conferencing.

This research suggests that we address SCC as a valid genre of computer writing that deserves and requires our attention as scholars and teachers just as print-based writing and oral speech have been studied. We still seem to be using it not as a unique rhetorical forum with particular language conventions, physical conditions, visual aids, ethical considerations, and so forth, but as a toy or tool, to which we apply print or oral conventions. In contrast, we need to use the computer with students to not only compose, critique, and converse. Rather, instructors along with students should define criteria and types of appropriate, effective, and ethical interaction in various SCC discourse communities.

While limiting the scope of their essay to e-mail, Hawisher and Moran argue that rhetoric and composition specialists must give electronic communication the same theoretical treatment as print genres have received: "A full rhetoric of e-mail would consider the different rhetorical contexts for e-mail, including in its view genres, audiences, voices, uses, and the extent to which any and all of these are influenced by the properties of the medium" (629-30). Their work is the beginning of a rhetoric of e-mail addressing in brief the uniqueness of the medium, which is a variation of speech and writing. Generic features, rhetorical strategies, and stylistic conventions which are peculiar to e-mail are glossed, closing with a call for research which may contribute to a rhetoric of e-mail.

Therefore, in order to begin research on electronic forms of rhetoric which would serve to teach students effective electronic communication, we

must identify unique qualities of the medium, features of the language, and conventions of interaction among participants, and, then, apply this understanding to the encoding and decoding of electronic texts. Hawisher and Moran acknowledge that a rhetoric of electronic communication “ought to include a description of the range of conventions and would train students to be able to recognize the conventions that are current in a particular context” (631). Further, they argue that such a rhetoric would consider various types of rhetorical contexts for computer-mediated communication, which would include “genres, audiences, voices, uses, and the extent to which any and all of these are influenced by the properties of the medium” (629-30). Their central argument and purpose is to suggest a starting place for a rhetoric and a pedagogy that includes electronic mail.

Likewise, I work toward a rhetoric and a pedagogy of SCC; however, my work specifically examines SCC transcripts through the traditional rhetorical identification and description of types of interlocutor relationships online. While I find that the term “interlocutor” best acknowledges the orality of the interchanging writer/reader roles of SCC participation, I will isolate momentary roles of encoding and decoding during my analyses of the transcripts. An examination of these moments, which demonstrate a participant primarily or exclusively acting as a writer, for example, while all other participants at that same moment are acting primarily or exclusively as readers, enables me to identify rhetorical strategies and conventions used in reaction or response by one participant to others. Therefore, during my explication of the transcript excerpts, I will refer to participants often

as writers and readers, depending on the individuals' rhetorical role at that point in the exchange.

My questions about how electronic technology affects how writers and readers discourse arose from among the concerns that scholars of electronic writing have engaged in the texts. For example, Lester Faigley comments on his students' sense of isolation at the terminal:

Electronic technologies for writing do not support the illusion that the author is present on the page, speaking directly to us. Instead, writing appears as signs on the screen coming from seemingly nowhere, sometimes linked tenuously to a name and sometimes not, with a piece of discourse from the remote past looking no different from what was composed on the terminal beside you only moments before. As one of my students put it, electronic class discussions "aren't really anonymous, but they feel anonymous." (229-230)

For novice and experienced computer users, there is a strangeness about sending a message that is directed to someone in the next terminal. The message seems to go into this vague notion of electronic space before reaching each participant's terminal. While experienced internet users are familiar with the act of real-time conferencing in chat rooms, they are ill prepared for conferencing in situations in which their identities are explicit. They have become accustomed to anonymous communication which requires minimal accountability. On the other hand, novice conference users are often confused by not only conversing in writing, but also by interacting with other participants in the same room, an activity which has

traditionally been a face-to-face oral exchange in the classroom. For novice users, SCC appears to be more anonymous than face-to-face conversation. Students have reported not feeling sure whether they are to be formal or informal, personal or professional, and conversational or writerly. Both experienced and inexperienced computer conferencing users must be prepared for the unusual context of conferencing within the writing classroom in order to make this new medium of communication and learning useful and effective for carrying out instructional objectives.

In order to account for participants' sense of distance Beryl Bellman explains, "The anonymity in computer communications results from the lack of physical, contextual, and paralinguistic cues present in face-to-face interactions" (59). The more anonymous the interaction is, the more distance seems to be created among users. Users will have to adapt to this apparent sense of isolation, which is actually a moment of communication in which one user is connected to or affecting other users. By becoming more aware of the ways the individual participant expresses membership in a community through personal involvement, interest and perspective, the more in touch with a real human being each will feel. As instructors of SCC, we must address the theoretical and practical concerns which differentiate this electronic medium of communication from other forms of computer-mediated communication as well as from oral and written forms of communication.



### **The Textual Embodiment of Interlocutor Relationships**

Persona can be defined as the embodiment of the writer in text and as the sense of the writer's relationship to the audience, which guides the readers' interpretation of the text (Houp, Pearsall, and Tebeaux 1998). Throughout the histories of rhetoric, particularly written rhetoric, theorists have emphasized persona in different ways while searching for a greater understanding of how written text mediates communication among writers and readers. Aristotle considers *ethos*, or the character and credibility of the speaker present in the speech, and how *ethos* contributes to persuasiveness (*Rhetoric*). In the romantic tradition, persona is associated with the individual writer's true self and sincere message coming through in the text. With romantic notions extended in contemporary language studies, Philip M. Rubens has defined the term persona to include "the presence of the author," the "personality" of the author in the text, and a "discernible 'voice'" in the writing (1980). However, in light of postmodernist theories of audience and poststructuralist notions of text production, persona relates to the discourse roles and identities performed through specific language practices characteristic of particular discursive communities (Porter 1992; Bazerman 1988). Writers adopt conventional personas to be received by discourse community members as insiders. An effective persona is one which is appropriate to the readers' expectations and the writer's purpose. Effective persona ought to invite the interlocutor into a particular relationship with the writer through textual cues (Long 1990). When the other participants adopt or reject or modify the role, a relationship among

participants emerges in the text. This project investigates what textual qualities in SCC define particular types of interlocutor relationships according to a postmodernist conception of audience as discourse community and writer as situated member of a multiplicity of communities which limit and enable particular discourses.

Just as each synchronous computer conference will vary in topic and purpose and audience member, so will the persona have to vary. In *Fragments of Rationality*, Lester Faigley addresses the multiplicity of persona online:

Because electronic text facilitates many different readings and thus changes each time it is read, it lacks the authority of a unified persona. Instead, persona in an electronic text necessarily appears to be fragmented and partial in perspective. (229)

Faigley recognizes the failure of attempting to present or attribute a unified, genuine personality online. As discourse analysts, we can only hope to identify types of personas articulated at fleeting moments of the text that itself is continually in flux. Further, such multiplicity of points of view on constantly changing topics defies expressivistic theories of the authentic writer who remains fixed in her or his integrity of character over time and over issues. Moreover, this multiplicity poses an ethical problem of holding students responsible for their texts which represent a variety of relationships, discourses, and arguments.

Writers have often associated persona primarily with writing style. However, Jeanne W. Halpern argues for a rhetorical notion of persona

which is deeply connected to audience. Halpern explains that considerations of audience are critical in making conscious choices of how to project a particular persona in texts:

Considerations of voice are inseparable from considerations of textual features and audience adaptation. . . . Putting personal voices on paper depends almost entirely on understanding who the audiences for a given text are and what they require and expect. . . . teachers should emphasize that voice, text, and audience are interlocking concerns. (1)

Halpern's comment reflects her social perspective. She calls our attention to discourse community as a determining factor in the construction of effective persona. In addition, what discourse communities expect of writers will be mingled with personal voices, which become present in texts as persona. Halpern's position moves away from the extreme poststructuralist concept of socialization which denies individuality as well as stays clear of an extreme romantic notion of the self as represented in one's writing. Adopting this perspective, I analyze SCC transcripts not for individual personalities or any one absolute characterization. Rather, I am examining patterns of interaction which are classified into categories of interlocutor relationships in order to construct an audience-oriented strategy for effective and ethical communication in SCC.

In particular, SCC involves participants in written dialogue which requires each member to take on particular roles made available to them by experiences of enculturation in the discursive practices of online conferencing. This socialization process, whether conscious or unconscious,

forms how we participate online. Through experience, suggestions, and correctives, new participants learn acceptable and common means of interaction. Participants must act and react to one another's messages continuously in flux. Participants must make decisions about how to respond and relate to other participants with each message that is received and with each new participant who sends messages; then, a response is needed. Part of our decision-making process about how to respond to other participants involves the selection of our style of interaction and its appropriateness and effectiveness. The words we choose reflect membership in a discourse community as well as carry a sense of the person sending the message. Consequently, the style in which we interact is simultaneously a reflection of individual mode of expression as well as a selection from among the choices presented to us during our socialization and participation in various discourse communities. In order to gain access and membership in a discipline or organization, new members must adopt one or some of the personas that members have agreed are appropriate to their group's tasks, concerns, and communications. Those personas are presented through styles of interaction, which serve to not only reflect membership and legitimacy, but also to set the mood of the discussion and the dynamics between users. Further, these styles reflect sincere modes of address from a writer, but in addition constructed ethos in order to operate within the discourse of a particular community. Attentiveness to the dynamics of online interaction along with modification of style and content in order to better suit different audiences are the kinds of strategies students need for enculturation into the language practices of a new

discourse community. However, scholars of writing have shown how extremely difficult it is to distinguish form from content in text so that writer-audience relations can be analyzed and determined.

### **Form Versus Content in Analyzing SCC Transcripts**

In order to identify writer-audience relationships, discourse analysts must discern how projections of character and attitude are constructed in the style and content of a written text. However, a major difficulty in discussing style is that it overlaps with issues of content and is, therefore, difficult to isolate for scholarly examination. In his 1968 essay entitled "The Problem of Style," Louis Tonko Milic discusses the history of rhetoric's study of style and the difficulties of not only defining style but also identifying style in written text; further, he asserts that distinguishing style from content is near impossible. Milic reveals the complexity of the "matter-versus-manner controversy" embodied in the assumptions of ancient and modern theories of style:

Most of the theories which govern the thinking of those who worry about style had their origin in Greece and Rome.

The ancient theory of style (Style as ornate form) is probably older than Plato. Of the two modern theories (Style as a reflection of the individual and Style as meaning), the first has its roots in the ancient past and the second is modern.

"The theory of ornate form" as Croce<sup>7</sup> has named it, requires a fundamental separation between content and form. Aristotle

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<sup>7</sup> Croce, Benedetto. *Aesthetic*. Trans. D. Ainslie. New York, 1958 [1909], 422.

held this view and, in urging the student of rhetoric to learn not only what to say but also how to say it, clearly implies the independence of thought from its linguistic clothing. (275)

Milic describes ancient theories of style as separating considerations of content and style and contrasts those theories to modern theories which see meaning and form as inseparable. However, rejecting any differentiation of what is said from how it is said makes impossible the task of explicating how certain aspects of text contribute to nuances and tone, which clarify message meaning. In light of Marshall McLuhan's famous remark, "the medium is the message," the medium of communication is as important as what one communicates in terms of agreeing upon a reality, exchanging ideas, sharing a dialogue, making decisions, and, most importantly for this work, and of creating a useful and effective interlocutor relationship. Without acknowledging arguments made, topics discussed, and persuasive strategies used, discourse analysis of stylistics in a text would ignore integral aspects of message content which would lead to an understanding of interlocutor relationships. On the other hand, analysis of content and not style would yield only hints of nuances, tones, and emotive elements which are essential to interpreting and identifying particular interlocutor relationships.

How content and style construct interlocutor relationships is at the heart of this project. However, addressing both concerns poses the problem of having several aspects to examine in the text, which may create a focus too broad to be useful. By maintaining a broad data base for coding, researchers run the risk of not answering their driving questions, becoming

overwhelmed with superfluous information, or of not having a manageable research project.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, I have used an analytical framework which combines some examination of content for information being conveyed with analysis of graphical and stylistic elements that indicate relations among interlocutors. In addition, emoticons and other punctuation were examined to gain insight into the spirit of the message's meaning which would facilitate interpretation of the writer's emphasis and attitude, and, therefore, the interlocutor relationship. In other words, my reading of the emoticons used facilitates my interpretation of the text's messages in terms of understanding whether or not to discern them as literal, playful, or inflammatory in meaning. Further, this approach allows me to consider how messages presented by one participant relate to those sent to and by other participants. Such analysis reveals conflict, the ideological and rhetorical clashes displayed in the electronic dialogue. By recognizing degrees of conflict expressed by one participant toward other participants, I am able to construct a classification system which describes types of interlocutor relationships in SCC to provide students/rhetoricians a theoretical framework for perceptively decoding messages in order to effectively encoding messages.

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<sup>8</sup> Grant-Davie, Keith. "Coding Data: Issues of Validity, Reliability, and Interpretation." *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. Ed. Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990. Grant-Davie provides a concise but comprehensive survey of the concerns of validity and reliability in the coding of data in discourse analysis which include the focus of one's coding schema in order to effectively pursue the research question.

## **Identifying Degrees of Conflict in SCC Discourse**

In order to examine participants' relationships, I analyzed Interchange conference transcripts, as Kristine Blair has suggested, with the intent of looking at how conflict appears in their messages as information is exchanged and feelings are expressed with implications toward other interlocutors.<sup>9</sup> Assessing the level of conflict among particular participants in SCC provides insight into the interlocutor relationship. Indicators of conflict among participants manifest themselves in SCC as forms of disagreement, cursing, demeaning commentary or negative criticism about other participants, and expressions of intense emotion such as anger. On the other hand, cooperation is displayed in transcripts through assertions of agreement, support of other interlocutors' concerns, praise, and of interest in what interlocutors' think about the issue in question. However, three aspects of language use in SCC made the analysis of meaning and degree of conflict or cooperation difficult to interpret with any certainty and, therefore, to classify as revealing a particular type of interlocutor relationship: purpose, silence, and humor. In order to better overcome these interpretative obstacles, I had students use emoticons to express the spirit of their meanings, i.e. writers' attitudes and emotional states. Emoticons helped me to interpret the meaning of a message so that I could better distinguish messages which functioned as sarcasm from others which conveyed literal meanings, to name one possibility. Emoticons, whether present or absent,

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<sup>9</sup> These transcripts have been invaluable to me for studying how electronic language is being used in the Interchange conferences and for developing a theory about types of interaction in this medium, which begins following this chapter.



allowed me to better understand the dynamics of the interaction so that I could make some sense of the power dynamics among writers/readers or interlocutors.

### Analyzing Purpose in SCC

In general, interpreting connotations of meaning is a subjective experience requiring substantiation. Whether or not a participant actually meant to be overtly condescending toward others in a literal way or to be talking in jest is a matter of interpretation, just as the reading of data is always a product of interpretative analysis from the researcher's perspective. However, understanding the context of the discussion and the textual features allows any reader to make sense of the message in order to respond to it with some understanding. While my research could have involved discourse-based interviews to verify participant's intentions in each message, I decided not to strive for the confirmation of purpose for each message sent because my research is focused on examining the language in the text, a product of social communication and meaning making. In social communication such as SCC, participants do not always have the luxury of clarifying meaning or of knowing how their audience members are understanding their messages. Therefore, I refrained from seeking confirmation for my interpretations of the text and interlocutor relationships through discourse-based interviews in order to maintain some of the limited perspective of a participant in SCC who reads and reacts to the other conference users' messages from the electronic text itself.

Furthermore, as I considered purpose and how it relates to discourse, I thought that purpose and discourse type do not consistently correspond

among participants. More specifically, Deborah Tannen says, "The effect of dominance is not always the result of an intention to dominate" (18). In other words, while writers may consider how they wish to present themselves in order to achieve their rhetorical aims in SCC, individuals write using different types of discourse, expressing differing relationships with audience members, to achieve the same goals. For example, in SCC, I noticed that some students are playful in manner when presenting an opposing position while other students use a more direct approach by articulating an antagonistic message. What each writer must realize is that different ways of presenting information affect individuals in different ways. In other words, the use of a particular type of discourse may have unpredictable results with different participants and within different discourse communities. Therefore, there are no absolute rules for participating in SCC which will work in all situations and for all audiences. Successful writers become astute analysts of audience and adapt their discourse accordingly.

While attributing authorial purpose is difficult at best, in "The Rhetoric of Beneficence, Authority, Ethical Commitment, and the Negative," Winterowd argues that "We cannot fully interpret a sentence until we can supply an intention for it" (599). His solution to the ambiguity is to interpret performative verbs such as "advise" and "appoint," which are verbs that actually state intentions. Unfortunately, students' intentions are not always as clearly articulated as a performative verb would express. Nonetheless, having some sense of the writer's purpose is important to

deriving meaning from a text, which is why I required students to use emoticons.

For this project, the problem of writer's purpose and how it relates to meaning in the Interchange conference transcripts is not focused on what the original intent was so much as what the actual message conveys to readers and how the message elicits reactions from other interlocutors. Moreover, the acknowledgment of the way a message is presented in SCC is vital to an insight to power relations among interlocutors as implied by each writer's messages. SCC transcripts exhibit language exchange "what position the speaker is assuming in the activity, and what position [the reader has been] assigned" (Tannen 33). The metamessages we send to convey interlocutor relationships create a "frame" or a context for the messages through which readers interpret their roles in each particular language activity. For example, if a teacher asks students, in an examination, to provide answers to questions which require them to repeat exactly what they heard during lecture, that teacher is assigning students to play a passive role. Students would be asked to subordinate their own ideas for those of the teacher. On the other hand, if a teacher required students to synthesize and make new connections among the reading materials, for example, she or he would be assigning students a more active role which would validate their ideas and encourage them to think independently. The "frame" for the interaction affects readers' participation, but not always in the predictable way. Individual readers or participants decide whether or not they are going to take on the assigned role. However, an unpredictable or unconventional response to a particular

conversational “frame” tells us as much about the nature of the writer-audience relationship as does a conventional or anticipated response; rebellious or nonconformist language behavior sets the individual as an “outsider” to the organization, while conventional language practices typically result in membership in the community. The realization of such online dynamics among writers and readers as well as among individuals and an institution or discipline helps us in the production of effective discourse.

### Silence

The most difficult form of discourse to analyze and interpret is the noticeable silence among participants. Silence is difficult to interpret meaning in SCC because there are several possible reasons for the silence such as rejection, shyness, or simply because the participant is listening. In “The Game of Literacy,” Margaret Daisley discusses the problem of understanding the meaning of a particular moment of silence:

Silence in the realm of CMC is almost impossible to read. Silence can seem to be threatening; it can be like wilding, like trying to kill off a member of the tribe. It can be like a refusal to allow someone into the game; or, it can be like booing someone off the stage. On the other hand, silence might be interpreted as signaling involvement in a significant part of literacy skills--reading/listening. Then again, silence might also signal the fact that someone simply doesn't know how to play the game or doesn't want to play. (117)

Therefore, silence must first be identified within the specific conversation and, then, addressed directly with the person to discover more. With no encoded symbols in an act of silence, there is no text to interpret for meaning nor for categorization as a type of writer-audience relationship. On the other hand, the fact that a participant is silent for extended periods of time indicates that someone is not participating, which deserves investigation. Daisley argues, "I think it is as important to read the silences in this medium as it is to try to read the texts, and our readings of both should not be overly simplistic" (117). While I agree with Daisley's argument that silence is complex and should neither be oversimplified nor ignored, interpreting silence within the scope of this project, which attempts to classify types of interlocutor relationships online, poses the problem of proof. Without testimony from the individual participants who withdrew from particular moments of exchange to confirm their reasoning for that silence, I could not demonstrate the meaning behind a given act of silence.

Further, power issues associated with silence are not explicitly indicative of a particular response from one individual to another. In other words, interlocutors may be silent for different reasons and individuals in general may have different "talk/listen" ratios. For, example, in her work on male and female conversational styles, Tannen posits that silence in conversation between men and women suggests a power differential:

Clearly men are not always talking and women are not always listening. . . . but men tell me that it is most likely to happen if the other man is in the position of higher status. They know they have to listen to lectures from fathers and bosses. . . .

The act of giving information by definition frames one in a position of higher status, while the act of listening frames one as lower. (139)

However, Tannen remarks that, for women, listening is not usually an issue of status, but rather often is an attempt to reinforce connections and establish rapport. Therefore, to interpret a woman listening as a subordinate position within a conversation is a misinterpretation of her perception of her role in the act of interpersonal exchange. However, neither all men listen with the intention of deferring to another of perceived higher status nor do all women desire to listen in order to establish rapport. In other words, we cannot differentiate the intentions of the silent participant when he or she is listening either as an act of subordination or rapport-building, but rather we can only identify a moment of silence from one or more members of a conference. Unless the participant sends a message which might clarify his or her reaction to the conversation thus far, the meanings of silence are too ambiguous to be useful within this project. Since silence can indicate any number of possible power and interpersonal relationships among participants, placement of this category along a continuum of conflict/cooperation is almost impossible, which makes silence, as symptom or sign of interlocutor relationships, a special case. Therefore, I acknowledge that silence is an aspect of discourse in SCC which requires a qualitative research method not within the scope of this project. Consequently, silence is not associated with a particular interlocutor relationship. However, I identify moments of silence, the obvious lack of any response to a given message in the transcripts, and

argue that such omissions indicate a conference community's determination to focus or not to focus on a particular topic or conversation, which reveal values and language practiced by that specific discourse community. In recognizing silence as one means a community uses to convey acceptable and unacceptable language practices and values, SCC interlocutors become more adept at effective and appropriate messaging.

### Humor

Another special language use is humor, which is problematic to classify because humor or attempts at it are sometimes subtle and difficult to identify with certainty. While Tannen and Von Nostrand argue that joke telling and jest often involve put-downs or center stage performance, which are generally associated with a more agonistic relationships, Margaret Daisley argues that humor is an important form of language use and can be a means of building rapport, lightening conflict, or critiquing with less harshness. These functions of humor provide just some of the possibilities for how joking or play can operate in communication among participants. Though humor can reveal or create further ruptures in understanding, it can also be productive and lead to mutual understanding. In the context of the writing classroom, Daisley discusses the importance and function of play in learning and practicing literacy skills and argument:

It is a new world, a new experience for most students to be talking and listening, reading and writing, and considering together. Boundaries of discourse at this point have not been erected, and students find such language exchanges to be fun, or consider them a type of game. For some, these exchanges

are a new experience within which one can associate the use of literacy skills with feelings of pleasure. It is exactly this feature--the fun, the gaming--I am arguing, that we should not be too quick to dismiss as being *just* play, or *just* a game. (118)

A playful approach to communication in SCC cannot only unite literacy practice with fun, which appeals to many students, but it can also become a means of addressing participants in order to, for example, lighten a serious discussion, to perform a battle of wits, or to explore alternative points of view, to name a few functions of play. The point is that play does not have to mean that students are off-task or unproductive. Further, Thomas Farrell and C. Wright Mills also argue the importance of playfulness for the purpose of intellectual productivity. Play represents a distancing between the writer and the subject of discourse which allows for consideration of a field of possibilities perhaps overlooked by the imagination in a literal mode (Farrell 917).

While, play may be designed by an individual interlocutor to be a harmless means of addressing another, it can be interpreted as an act of aggression, competitiveness, or insult when the target of the joke feels the play has gone too far and become offensive to that individual or group. Just as in other forms of written and oral communication, offending someone can occur unintentionally. SCC participants need to be sensitive to how their participants are responding to humor in order to recognize how others are understanding the spirit of their play and how their understanding affects writer and interlocutor relations. In turn, receivers of play must learn to recognize and/or inquire about the nature of the play in order to decode the



writer's expressed relationship with participants. Becoming more in tune with the interlocutor relationship when play is occurring enables participants to read and respond more appropriately to SCC messages.

The concept of power differential is another concern in classifying humor within interlocutor relationships. Deborah Tannen discusses how joke telling can serve as self-display or as a community-building form of communication: "In a situation in which there are more people in the audience, more men, or more strangers, joke telling, like any other form of verbal performance, requires speakers to claim center stage and prove their abilities" (Tannen 90). In this passage, Tannen calls our attention to the situation of a given individual telling a joke while the listener or group of listeners passively give the speaker the role as the center of the conversation, a powerful position as giver of language. However, unless the joke teller is already of high status among the conversation participants, that person must prove that he or she is worth listening to through the demonstration of high communication skills; joke telling becomes a contest of wits for status. In both cases, whether center stage is freely granted by listeners or is taken by the speaker, joke telling takes on the form of a power play indicating a hierarchical relationship among speaker and listeners. However, through discourse analysis, it is difficult, if not in some cases impossible, to prove that the interlocutors are listening as a rapport-building behavior or are deferring power to the speaker. Tannen goes on to explain how power differentials operate in joke telling and that supportive listening and the deference or assumption of higher status are not mutually exclusive conditions in this rhetorical situation:

The situation of joke telling illustrates that status and connections entail each other. Entertaining others is a way of establishing connections with them, and telling jokes can be a kind of gift giving, where the joke is a gift that brings pleasure to receivers. The key issue is asymmetry. One person is the teller and the others are the audience. If these roles are later exchanged--then there is symmetry on the broad scale, if not in the individual act. (Tannen 90)

The key issue of power in joke telling is the symmetry among participants telling and listening. In order to achieve symmetry, participants have to find a balance between contributing to the discussion or play and listening or being the target of the play. Moreover, Tannen warns that continually telling jokes typically results in distancing among participants (90-1).

Given that this is the case, participants who wish to develop a rapport with interlocutors that may transform into an empathic relationship need to balance the quality of humor with directness in communication and to trade positions by taking turns in writer/speaker and reader/listener roles. Effective rhetoricians in SCC incorporate humor and silence at appropriate moments in persuasive and useful ways with the most suitable participants.

In this project, due to the variety of ways that humor manifests in communication, it represents a quality of language use which is accounted for within each category, but humorous interaction does not characterize a separate category of interlocutor relationships. Rather, the particular type of humor along with the degree of conflict present in the message

characterizes a specific type of interlocutor relationship along the continuum which describes varying degrees of conflict and cooperation within interlocutor relationships.

Despite the difficulties that purpose, silence, and humor may pose, effective interlocutors will be those who can interpret with reasonable sensitivity message meanings and respond to them appropriately. Furthermore, after analyzing SCC transcripts, it becomes clear that the composing process must be firmly grounded on an awareness of the constant interactivity among users, rendering writer/reader relations central in the production of text. As a result, participants' relationships are constantly being negotiated with each new message sent. Therefore, I've developed a theory about patterns among participants' discourse that display specific features and qualities that are characteristic of different interlocutor relationships. By better understanding ways we interact with our audiences through rhetorical choices, I introduce a rhetoric of SCC that is concerned with success in discourse as well as the ethics of discourse.

### **A Note About Method of Discourse Analysis**

At the start of coding data, researchers must consider the interpretation process and all of the factors which influence the outcome of such analysis. Since every interpretation of language meaning is a subjective act, grounded in each person's social and disciplinary enculturation, personal experiences, cultural values, etc., it is important to address the fact that my own subjectivities color my understanding, reaction, and classification of these messages. My background in feminist,

cultural, and rhetorical studies makes me particularly sensitive to issues of power among communicators and how that power affects the process and outcome of the exchange. Also, while I am deeply interested in studying the diverse ways that participants interact with one another, I am concerned about the ethical implications of particularly aggressive or egocentric communication dynamics. As a feminist, I am committed to the promotion of egalitarian relationships and forms of communication so that individuals can communicate in harassment-free or nondiscriminatory environments such as my classroom would ideally be. Based on these assumptions and principles, I may interpret text meaning in a slightly different way than another researcher. For example, to a person who is familiar with competitive and even aggressive work environments, a message of condescension may be only mildly noticeable, while to me, that same message may be very offensive and, therefore, signal an agonistic stance by the writer. However, my task as a researcher is to support my conclusions regarding the meaning attributed to an electronic message. Therefore, I must define and describe my categories to readers' understanding. In other words, whether or not I approve of a particular type of exchange must not hinder my ability to identify language features and classify relationship types.

In fact, several factors contribute to the determination that a given message reflects antagonism, hierarchy, intellectual challenge, or rapport building. Some of these factors include the context of the conversation, the conferencing situation, the conferencing task, the individuals involved, and the actual message. My research is limited to a discussion of how the text

itself displays particular qualities and features of the interlocutor relationship. Therefore, the particulars of some of the other aspects of the rhetorical context have been glossed over or ignored. The fact that all participants are college students exchanging in a classroom setting in order to achieve, through their discussion, a pedagogical objective established by a teacher greatly affects the students' attitudes, language, and behavior in the conferences. Expectations of appropriate classroom conduct along with the goals of education in a university institution govern language practiced and relationships shared by teachers and students. These conditions are consistent among all of the conferences. The main, general difference among participants in these conferences is that composition students are first-year students and technical writing students are juniors and seniors. However, it is not within the scope of this project to address how these differences in college status bear in SCC participation or on the interlocutor relationships in SCC. Other concerns such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, disciplinarity, etc. will undoubtedly emerge from the research, issues which I cannot address at this time but find potentially rich for future work with computer conferencing.

Another constraint of this research includes the limited sample population of composition and technical writing students, which provides a mere starting point for my hypothesis on how people actually discourse and relate to one another online. The sampling that presented this data was primarily a matter of convenience. Since technical writing students were from courses I taught that semester, I had access to their conferences along with those of my colleague's classes. I hope that future researchers

will test my hypothesis and apply this theory in their computer-mediated writing classrooms. My own future work includes such research activity for the development and validation of this classification of interlocutor relationships in order to generalize about the kinds of relationships present in SCC and to increase our understanding of how these relationships affect the composing process. However, I think it's important to consider for a moment how what is not in the text can affect meaning of discourse and how absences of discourse have affected the way I've constructed the classification of interlocutor relationships.

### **A Classification of Interlocutor Relationships**

Observation of the Interchange conferences allowed me to see patterns of discourse emerging from within the discussion which, initially, I intuitively understood to represent differing attitudes among participants. I observed that students presented themselves in ways that ranged from antagonistic and paternalistic to playful and purely cooperative. While I must be careful about generalizing with a small sample population of eighty college-level composition and technical writing students, diverse ways of relating to other participants became clear to me through discourse analysis of language and emoticon messages. As a result of my analyses of the transcripts, I identified a continuum of four major types of interlocutor relationships among users: agonistic, hierarchical, dialectical, and empathic. The four categories provide an abstract means of discussing the types of interaction and the dynamics among participants engaged in SCC so that students can learn to apply this analytical framework to their

own electronic exchanges for a better understanding of how they behave toward their audiences.<sup>10</sup>

To begin, *agonistic relationships* are characterized by a high degree of conflict and antagonism which is generally a symptom of a lack of emotional connection among participants. Power dynamics among agonistically related participants are hierarchical and display features such as cursing, derogatory messages, strong imperatives toward others, and sexually graphic references and implications about participants, which can be read to suggest disrespect and hostility, even within the context of play. While agonistic relationships are represented in the transcripts among a few students, they are not common or predominant in the transcripts.

Since agonistic relationships express aggressive language behaviors and attitudes, they counter my efforts to build a sense of community and collaboration among students in the writing classroom.

Second, *hierarchical relationships* are characterized by a moderate degree of conflict and by, as the name suggests, hierarchy, expressed by one participant toward another. Participants typically exhibit hierarchical relationships in messages expressing one-upmanship, paternalism, and a critical attitude toward others in the conference. Textual features of agonistic relationships are a predominance of information, criticisms, corrections, and prescriptions in the messages of an interlocutor. Also, hierarchical participants often give advice without asking questions first, which would clarify the situation or another participant's position, making

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<sup>10</sup> In Chapter Four, I will go into more detail about using these categories for classroom application.

the suggestions inappropriate. The emphasis in hierarchical relationships is the participant's representation of personal authority and individual point of view. The hierarchical power relations implied in this category involve a milder degree of dominance and conflict among participants than in agonistic relationships and a higher degree than in dialectical relationships.

Third, *dialectical relationships* are characterized by interactivity, intellectual engagement, and low degrees of conflict in the form of disagreement and critique. Dialectical participants ask questions to get clarification on other participants' messages about claims or opinions as part of an effort to explore an issue and discuss its various view points. Due to the highly interactive nature of dialectical relationships, which focus on the exploration of a topic and the participants' views about those topics, conferences tend to display more developed arguments with reasoning and justification provided. Power dynamics among dialectical participants are egalitarian and cooperative but with the conflict of intellectual challenge as participants encourage one another to prove an opposing or accordant argument with persuasive proofs. However, individual participants tend to display greater independence from one another than in empathic relationships in which participants bond together.

*Empathic relationships* are distinguished by low to zero degrees of conflict in messages which present information affirmatively. Empathic relationships consist of active interaction among most or all participants in a balance of messages represented in the transcript. Comments support other participants' positions or add to what other participants have presented. With participants demonstrating the communication which



serves to facilitate mutual understanding, empathy and consensus in problem-solving are common among participants of empathic relationships, who express agreement and allegiance to one another's positions. Within empathic relationships, participants play mediatory roles in order to facilitate discussion, draw out ideas, and maintain the peace among participants. Participants will often praise the comments of others and make statements of encouragement for conference members to participate further in the exchange. Power dynamics in empathic relationships are completely cooperative with a sense of community among the participants who are working as a team to achieve a goal.

Each of these four categories of interlocutor relationships will be discussed in Chapter Two. Operational definitions and descriptions of qualities and features of each category of relationships will be provided. Then, each section of the classification will review the theoretical background of each type of interlocutor relationship in order to construct a basis for each category. Finally, each categorical discussion will be followed by analyses of excerpts of the transcripts from Interchange discussions to illustrate each type of relationship, the frame of conversation, and the power issues related to each relationship. The sections are arranged along a continuum of conflict among users, starting with the greatest degree of conflict and ending with the lowest degree of conflict. Chapter Three addresses how this theory of interlocutor relationships in SCC contributes to the scholarship on audience and the composing process. As the Conclusion, Chapter Four, I argue for the benefits of teaching types of interlocutor relationships as the intersection of rhetoric and ethics in SCC,

providing strategies for implementing this analytical schema into classes which involve electronic writing. I offer considerations for ethical dimensions of SCC which may serve researchers and teachers alike in their future work.

## **CHAPTER TWO: INTERLOCUTOR RELATIONSHIPS IN SCC**

In developing this theory of interlocutor relationships, I considered what aspects of the transcript to analyze in order to interpret the degree of conflict in the messages in SCC. Further, with a focus on ethical dimensions of electronic writing, I needed to have some information about the context of the messages in order to better understand the interlocutor relationship implied in a message, which, in turn, provided insight into the power dynamics between the participants, an important part of discussing the ethics of communication. In this chapter I will describe four distinct types of interlocutor relationships on a continuum of conflict and cooperation which I've identified through discourse analysis on synchronous computer conferencing transcripts among the participating students. The following four sections each define, describe, provide background for a distinct category of interlocutor relationships on Daedalus Interchange conferences. Following the construction of each class of relations, I will analyze excerpts from the Daedalus Interchange transcripts in order to illustrate how message connotations and denotations imply particular relationships writers express about their audience members. A better understanding of the type of relationship or role our audience participants are creating for us can be useful rhetorically for directing writers' discourse on computer conferencing. Given that the sample population of 86 students from Computer-assisted Technical Writing and Computer-assisted Composition classes used for this research is too limited to support

any valid generalizations which might represent how people or even college students typically interact in synchronous computer conferencing, this work presents my conclusions from a pilot study designed to be a beginning in this area of research. What this project accomplishes is a recognition that, due to the highly dialectical nature of SCC, participants write and address their audiences in ways that vary from traditional print literacy. Therefore, SCC merits rhetorical examination if writing instructors are going to help prepare writers to be effective and conscientious participants in electronic communication technology.

It is worth noting that while each category represents a particular degree of conflict and cooperation, within each category are varying degrees of conflict and cooperation. For instance, not all agonistic relationships will be equally conflictual or oppositional, nor will all empathic relationships be cooperative or supportive to the same degree. Also, as with all classification systems based on discourse, text will display features from more than one of the categories simultaneously. However, I will focus on the predominating features and qualities in order to maintain workable degrees of analytical validity and data reliability in the construction of this classification system (Grant-Davie 1992).

### **Agonistic Relationships**

#### **Definition, Qualities, and Features**

For the context of SCC, the agonistic category of interlocutor relationships can be defined as a connection between participants in which one participant demonstrates a high degree of competitiveness,

antagonism, and condescension in his/her messages. In other words, when a writer's SCC message displays a hostile, combative, or highly condescending attitude toward interlocutors, the relationship can be referred to as agonistic. This class of interlocutor relationships is characterized by much conflict, oppositional positioning, harsh criticism, and strong implications of malice toward the interlocutor. Agonistic text displays a particular writer dominating conversation and audience members, denigrating audience participants, and flaming (participating with inflammatory commentaries).

One of the clearest indicators of agonistic relationships is the presence of inflammatory comments or suggestions, commonly referred to as "flaming." Agonistic relationships can also be detected in the text by a contextualized analysis of the following features: bombastic messages, demeaning humor, ad hominem criticism, shouting (all-capitalizations of words), sexually explicit or violently graphic presentations of challenging subjects that are illegal or are offensive in some manner to some of the classmates, cursing, rudely brief messages that indicate dismissal, forceful imperative sentences and strong rhetorical questions that assert power of writer over reader, emoticons with angry content, and threatening images.

The end result of these textual qualities and features is the superiority of writer over interlocutor. The representation of that superiority, I observed, is the most common way that agonistic relationships manifest in classroom SCC. Through the identification of a number of these features in a given Interchange message, I deduce that a

given participant is exhibiting an agonistic relationship with particular conference participants.

### Theoretical Foundation

In classical rhetoric, conflict and contest were an integral part of the practices of oratory. Inherent in this agonistic notion of rhetoric is the assumption of an antagonistic relationship between speaker and opponent (Kirsch and Roen 1990). Lundsford and Ede explain that one important and often-cited distinction between classical rhetoric and modern rhetoric is the writer-audience relationship, “a relationship said to be characterized in the classical period by manipulative, antagonistic, one-way or unidirectional communication” (38). While not all scholars believe that classical rhetoric is based on agonism, this common conception of classical writer-audience relations became the root of the agonistic interlocutor relationships in SCC, which exhibit the antagonism, manipulation, and typically unidirectional communication which serves to end conversation rather than encourage further discussion. While this approach can manifest in various degrees of conflict and contest, agonistic relationships represent those relations among participants which display greatest degrees of hostility, authority, and aggression in communication, specifically more than the second most conflictual category, hierarchical relationships.

Based on her research on conversational styles, Deborah Tannen connects conflict to human nature and human communication, but emphasizes that men display higher degrees of conflict in speech than women. Tannen cites Walter Ong’s discussion of “adversativeness” as an aspect of human nature from his work, *Fighting for Life*: Ong explains that

“putting one’s needs, wants, or skills against those of others—is an essential part of being human” but “conspicuous or expressed adversativeness is a larger element in the lives of males than females” (150). Based on Ong’s theory about contestation in human beings, Tannen posits that male behavior typically entails contest, which includes combat, struggle, conflict, competition, and contention. Further, Tannen argues that “pervasive in male behavior is ritual combat, typified by rough play and sports” (150). She refers to this type of ritual aggression as friendly aggression in the form of contest, which is a part of male friendships and patriarchal modes of expression and exchange. If the dominant mode in communication is the patriarchal, the traditional masculinely paternal mode, then, we can assume that computer conferences would display such contest. Tannen explains how conflict can be interpreted as a negative dynamic in conversation as well as a positive aspect of communication:

To most women, conflict is a threat to connection, to be avoided at all costs. Disputes are preferably settled without direct confrontation. But to many men, conflict is the necessary means by which status is negotiated, so it is to be accepted and may even be sought, embraced, and enjoyed.

(149-50)

In this passage, Tannen explicates how men use conflict toward other speakers/listeners in order to negotiate authority. While Tannen acknowledges the hierarchy implicit in this type of interaction, she interprets the conflict not in terms of judgment and blame but in terms of understanding how men use language to maintain their identities and

status within a relationship. The disagreement, competition, and/or antagonism which can be a part of conflict serve to create distance and connection among communicators. Tannen goes on to explain why women tend to shy away from conflict in conversation:

It may seem at first that conflict is the opposite of rapport and affiliation. Much of what has been written about women's and men's styles claims that males are competitive and prone to conflict whereas females are cooperative and given to affiliation. But being in conflict also means being involved with each other. Although it is true that many women are more comfortable using language to express rapport whereas many men are more comfortable using it for self-display, the situation is really more complicated than that, because self-display, when part of a mutual struggle, is also a kind of bonding. And conflict may be valued as a way of creating involvement with others. (150)

At the heart of Tannen's point here is the notion that struggle and conflict can be a means of "bonding" with others rather than simply being a source of dissension in a relationship. How we can identify whether a moment of conflict in a text is rooted in intimacy or discord is in part through an analysis of the reactions of other participants: subsequent messages sent by the same individuals and the emoticons used to clarify the meaning of the message.

Another form of agonism online which can create a variety of effects in the interlocutors is flaming, which can encourage as well as discourage



communication, manipulate emotional responses, and hinder interaction explicitly. Michael Spitzer defines flaming as “emotional outbursts of rudeness, profanity, or even exultation” (20), and Philip A. Thompsen in “A Social Influence Model of Flaming in Computer-mediated Communication” surveys definitions of flaming, concluding it is generally negative antisocial behaviors, including the expression of hostility, the use of profanity, and the venting of strong emotions (3). While these definitions seem to describe behaviors antithetical to successful, academic communication online, scholars have argued for positive effects and uses of flaming even in the context of education. In fact, the agonistic interlocutor relationship does not automatically mark relations that are negative or destructive to relationships. Moreover, flaming can function productively in some rhetorical situations in SCC. For example, it has been argued that flaming serves the purposes of teaching one to discourse appropriately (Wang and Hong 1995). Participants use inflammatory discourse for a variety of reasons, which include malicious and productive intentions and which produce a variety of effects on participants, including amusement, anger, hurt, and indifference. More specifically, Hongjie Wang and Yan Hong have identified three types of flaming which they argue are used to “educate the ignorant,” “enforce the rules,” “facilitate effective communication,” and “reshape society” (1). The authors explore positive ways that flaming encourages clear writing and no-nonsense communication among users. Also, Philip A. Thompsen discusses theoretical explanations of flaming that show that it is useful to understand how and why flaming functions in SCC. While some scholars caution teachers, claiming that flaming is destructive

of productive exchange in the classroom (Takayoshi 1994; Tamosalitis 1994), other scholars illustrate how such language expression can be used to bring about opposing points of view which expand the study of argumentation, therefore, providing reasons flaming should be permitted in the writing classroom (Thompson 1993, 1994; Wang and Hong 1995; Thompson and Foulger 1996).

While I am not arguing for the use or the banning of flaming in computer conferencing, identifying the degree of conflict in agonistic types of discourse places rhetorical theorists in a more informed position with regard to better understanding how conflict is used in electronic messages and how it renders the interlocutor in terms of power. In general, when a participant is flamed, he or she must decide how to respond to that aggressive message. Reactions in messages range from silence, to expressions of bewilderment or offense, to angry retorts, to mockery or laughter. The wide spectrum of responses reveals that the meaning of a particular inflammatory message is contingent upon how the audience interprets and feels about the message and flaming in general. While some individuals are amused by flaming and respond with play or flaming, others are offended by such hostile expressions, and, consequently, leave the conference, remain silent, or react with anger to the manner of the participant's dialogue. Besides the individual personal feelings about agonistic discourse, context also determines what might be an appropriate response to an inflammatory message. For example, if a participant is exchanging with a superior in a work-related conference, sending an angry or aggressive rebuttal could result in employment termination. For my

purposes here, I will discuss excerpts of exchange from the transcripts, illustrating moments of agonistic discourse which reflect interlocutor relationship.

### Agonistic Relationships in SCC Transcripts

During the Interchanges, students did not send many inflammatory messages, perhaps because flaming is not a type of discourse which is encouraged in academic settings. Rather flaming is more a phenomenon of Internet chat room discussions, when participants are anonymous and physically distant (Bellman 1993). However, milder forms of flaming and other agonistic behaviors such as messages conveying apathy toward individuals or the assigned task, cursing, mockery of other interlocutors, overt sexual suggestions, and double entendres did occur infrequently in the Interchange conferences. These features establish agonistic relationships among interlocutors, dynamics marked by hostility and efforts to establish greater degrees of hierarchy.

Such relations could be analyzed in the transcripts of an SCC exchange from conference session one, which was designed to introduce students to the classroom real-time chat and to allow for brainstorming about the midterm. The students' task for this conference was to answer the question, "What do you think the midterm will or could be about?" In the conference, two technical writing students, Tad and Matthew, started to flame by overtly dismissing the Interchange task and cursing:

Tad: Who cares about the midterm. I'm just ready to get the hell out of Norman.

Ed: Watch your mouth!

Matthew: Oh shit. Screw the midterm

Nancy: quit kidding

Phyl: hmmm...well...the midterm will be about spring break, right?

Tad: absolutely. I'm going home, and then to Vail.

Freddie: settle down Matthew this is school

Ed: chicago here I come.

Tad: school sucks. And then you die.

While Tad and Matthew want to play and avoid performing the task of answering the question seriously in preparation for the examination, Nancy scolds them with an imperative, "quit kidding." Further, Freddie and Ed remind the agonistic participants, Tad and Matthew, of the inappropriateness of their participation in the school setting. Within this initial conferencing activity, only one participant, Phyl, attempts to perform the task of addressing the structure and content of the midterm, however, he does so in a humorous way, without actually achieving the goal of the assignment. The flaming apparent in the curse words, "shit," "screw," "sucks," and "hell," emphasize the flippant and defiant personae constructed in the messages, "Who cares about the midterm?" "Screw the midterm," and "school sucks." These messages indicate an indifference and hostility by the writers to the task, the institution, and the instructor. More specifically, the defiance, conflict, and antagonism are directed toward the instructor who gave them the task of exchanging about the midterm and will give them the midterm in the near future: me. Therefore, they are

displaying an agonistic relationship with me. Further, Nancy's and Ed's sharp correctives toward Tad and Matthew's inflammatory messages provide a secondary agonistic relationship with the offensive participants. Thus, this passage demonstrates how flaming can function in a variety of ways which include correction as well as rebellion; however, both functions involve the expression of superiority of the writer over the target audience members.

In the Interchange conference, "Cyberporn," students demonstrated agonistic relationships through graphic and bombastic discursive behaviors when answering the question:

How do you define pornography? Who do you think should have access to pornography? What ages? Do you support the content blockers which limit a person's, specifically, children's, access to particular topics? Do you think that pornography should be available for free to anyone? Why or why not?

This conference was focused on the ethical concerns related to children's access to Internet pornography. In this conference, students engaged in agonistic behaviors in discussions that involved graphic language and images, and inappropriate content. For instance, just after two students, Dawn and Kristy, addressed how the university has blockers on prohibited topic news groups, Jay, a participant in the writing class, entered several messages which discussed the topic of bestiality and his personal enjoyment of it: "I would enjoy animals in the pics in order to help arouse me. I believe in bestiality." Consequently, the only response Jay got to his shocking statement of an illegal and anomalous sexual activity was from

Phyl when he writes, “all rightee. . . .” I was surprised that Jay’s provocative and ironic message receives only one written response which is one of puzzlement and speechlessness which suggests that the message is either so ridiculous that it is not worthy of response or too taboo to the point that no one will address him. Further, the seriousness of Jay’s stated personal bias toward bestiality is undermined when he writes, “I believe in bestiality.” The statement displays an element of hyperbole, based on the serious nature of proclaiming a belief contrasted with the vulgarity and the social lack of acceptance of the topic of bestiality, makes the statement absurd. Whether or not students took what Jay wrote at face value or interpreted his statement of belief as a message of irony and sarcasm, they did not respond. The participants’ silence or, rather, refusal to engage the topic terminates the line of discussion Jay has initiated. In fact, other than Phyl, who provides merely a negative reaction comment, the other participants continue exchanging as if he had not written a word about bestiality. By reading the context of students’ reactions or nonreactions to Jay’s message, the graphic and illegal nature of the content of Jay’s message, and the pseudo-serious tone of the message, I assess that the message displays the qualities of agonistic relationships in SCC, which elicit a variety of responses, but in this case, the response was a deafening silence.

Another quality of agonistic relationships is extreme emotional expression which typically manifests in shouting, commands to leave or be silent, personal attacks, assertions of authority and power, messages that convey defiance, and expressions of attitudes of apathy toward or dismissal

of others and their concerns. For example, in the “Cyberporn” conference in session two, Lidy repeatedly constructs agonistic relationships with interlocutors, particularly those who espouse a view point which deviates from hers. The following is a sampling of some of Lidy’s message found in this transcript:<sup>1</sup>

**Lidy: I think pornography is the sickest thing in the entire world!!!**

**Lidy: Kamal is out of control!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I feel sorry for your kids!**

**Lidy: Nothing that disgusting [pornography] has a right to do anything!!**

Lidy.N000000000!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Lidy: Whatever Kamal!! I think Kamal is SICK in the head!!!!**

**Lidy: Megan--Get out of our group!**

**Lidy: Yes, we can and I will!!**

**Lidy:** What are you smoking Whitley?

Lidy: :O

Lidy: :), :(, :O, :-), :-/, @--, \*<:0), :-D, <s>, <S>, <g>, <G>, LMAO,  
ROFLMAO, OIC, gmta, and a BIG {{{{{{{{{{{{A}}}}}}}}}}!!!!!!!  
~~Take that!!!!!!~~

**Lidy. STOP THE MADNESS!!**

While these messages have been quoted here out of context, we can still make some sense of them to get an idea of the kinds of discursive patterns she follows, the qualities and features of her language use, and the ways she

<sup>1</sup> Only Lidy's messages are provided here. See Appendix C for the complete transcript of "Cyberporn Three" in conference session two.

constructs her relationship with other interlocutors. Perhaps what struck me immediately was the sheer number of exclamation marks used to create emphasis and shouting in Lidy's messages. Also, the capitalized words and :O emoticon convey shouting, generally, in a hostile or angry tone.

To start with the first message of this excerpt from the transcripts, Lidy establishes her extreme view of pornography as being "the sickest thing in the entire world." This point not only serves to present Lidy as having a strong, authoritative position on the subject immediately, with her message being the first in the conference transcript, but also to show a somewhat hyperbolic expression of disapproval. Exaggerated emotional expression is a pattern in Lidy's messages throughout the transcript, whether she conveys approval, disgust, or boredom.

In the next message, "Kamal is out of control!!!!!!!!!! I feel sorry for your kids!!!!" Lidy begins with a critical evaluation of what she suggests is Kamal's poor mental state and social inappropriateness. While this comment is really a retort in which she diagnoses Kamal doing what he has claimed she was doing, i.e. being out of control. Therefore, the comment about Kamal has more to do with their playful but competitive exchange than to do with a literal, sincere criticism. However, Lidy takes her play a step further than Kamal does when she suggests that his future, unborn children would be subject to a scenario deserving of pity and presumably protection from their imaginary father's inappropriate behavior.

Lidy's next message displays her generalizing about the valuelessness of pornography as she personifies pornography to be



someone who would not merit basic rights of existence due to a disgusting nature. Other evaluative criticisms such as “I think Kamal is SICK in the head!!!” and “Any kid that will do anything for porn is a FREAK!!!!!!” support her condescending, hierarchical positioning as she relates to the subject of pornography, to any viewers of pornography, and even to anyone supportive of the right to keep pornography legal for adults. The only interlocutors with which she constructs a peer dynamic are those who express the same opinion she has.

The comments, “NOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” “Yes, we can and I will!!” and “Take that!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” show defiance, rebellion, and challenge in unproductive ways because they do not elicit response but only serve to display the strong emotions and bravado. Lidy’s challenging implications continue when she asks the rhetorical question, “What are you smoking Whitley?” she is suggesting not only that Whitley may be using illegal substances which may be perception altering, but that Whitley’s opinion, “I don’t think [pornography] should be banned,” is a rational one; most importantly, Whitley’s opinion differs with Lidy’s which is a conflict that Lidy addresses with humor, disregard for Whitley’s feelings, and the assumption that her own opinion is the only valid one.

At one point, Lidy orders Mandi to leave the conference, “Megan--Get out of our group!” Most obviously, Lidy asserts a sense of authority as she verbally takes away Mandi’s membership within the conference, feigning the power to do so, and dismisses her from the conference. I would have to expect that a certain degree of play is at work here, since she would not have the authority to dismiss or rearrange the groups in any way at all.

However, Lidy's play demonstrates a power differential which places her on the dominating position, whether she means it literally or not.

In these examples, Lidy exhibits her hyperbolic reaction to other interlocutors such as Mandi who finally begins to taunt her with suggestions that her "future job" will be as a pornographic actress and by repetitious shouts, "PORNPNORNPNORNPNORNPNORNPNORN." Also, Shane sends Lidy a directive to "calm down," to which she replies, ":O," a shout with open mouth emoticon. However, she remains agreeable and nonconfrontational for the duration of the conference. In general, individuals display a variety of interlocutor relationships, as does Lidy. However, Lidy's participation predominantly established an agonistic relationship with interlocutors.

### **Hierarchical Relationships**

#### **Definition, Qualities, and Features**

A hierarchical relationship is characterized by moderate degrees of conflict, condescension, and authority. Participants exhibiting hierarchical relationships write messages which are self-centered, information or point-of-view focused, unemotional, paternalistic, and confrontational.

Hierarchical relationships can be identified by the presence of messages which tell other participants how they will feel, respond, think, or react to a piece of information or a given situation with pedantic certainty and authority. As with all online relationships, the power struggles involved in hierarchical relationships are exhibited in the content of the speech as well as the style of presentation in speech. For example, hierarchical behavior

includes telling others what to do, assuming the position of independent, individual of higher status within the group, and taking a leadership role in the conversation. Conversation rarely focuses on emotions, and particularly not on the speaker's emotions. However, emotions may be commented on by the speaker in the form of evaluative statements about the appropriateness of another's emotional expression or state of being or prescriptive statements on how others should react, feel, or behave in a given situation.

Hierarchical relationships are based on the assumption that one participant knows better or best. Hierarchical relationships are evident when one person's participation comprises a majority of suggestions, information, and direct commands for action while comprising few or no questions that seek a fuller understanding of the situation. In other words, the individual is hastily prescribing action often without a clear understanding of the potential complexities the situation may hold. Another way writers convey superiority is by asserting that they are accurate or logical while emphasizing that a reader is in the wrong. More specifically, hierarchical participants emphasize the universality of their own points of view and the irrationality of an alternative position. Moreover, hierarchical writers suggest the obviousness of an interlocutor's point, which is a critique of simpleness or surface-level understanding, with words and phrases such as: "can," "could," possibly," everyone," pointless," "of course," and "anyone," to name a few examples. These terms place the writer in the correct and obviously rational position while undermining the

interlocutor's credibility, reasonability, and persuasiveness in the group exchange.

Also, often individuals constructing a hierarchical relationship will provide information and suggestions without being asked to do so by other interlocutors. Therefore, the hierarchical individual's prescriptions and information can at times be considered inappropriate, unsolicited, and off-topic from what the interlocutor genuinely wishes to learn. Generally, participants offering a hierarchical relationship with others listen less and talk more. Further, in situations of question and answer following a speech, hierarchical participants tend to interrupt other speakers in order to gain back the attention. The emphasis is not on community consensus but on presenting one's personal point of view. This individual-centered relationship maintains greater emotional distance among participants and fosters conflict that pits participant against participant in a battle of wit. As long as the exchange was not hostile or belligerent, the relationship was classified as hierarchical and not yet agonistic.

In addition, hierarchical participants such as Lidy generally present their suggestions and opinions in absolute or universal terms as if they were facts or truth for everyone. Such generalizations were evident during an Interchange in the Altruistic Uses of the Internet conference, which involved students individually selecting among several discussion rooms that were all focused on different ethical issues related to computer-mediated communication. Other topics included pornography on the Internet, software piracy, and flaming. After making a vulgar, homophobic

joke related to the discussion prompt,<sup>2</sup> which included an example about utilitarian uses of the Internet such as AIDS information, Jack asserts the certainty he feels in the “fact” that all students in the class are in the cyberporn conference: “I’m willing to bet that no one sees my last comment because everyone is too busy fixating their attention on pornography . . . :-).” The bravado Jack displays in the challenge of a bet supports his sense of certainty about being right about the situation. In fact, I was in the room, and sent a message to indicate my presence and disprove his statement of perceived fact. While the truth is that most students were in the “Cyberporn” conference, his use of the term, “fixating,” to describe the other class members as opposed to his participation in the “Altruistic Uses of the Internet” conference indicated an attitude of superiority and humor. In a predominantly Christian region, fixating on issues of pornography is an insult to the other students because it suggests that the students have base morality and perverse preoccupations. However, as he indicates, he doesn’t expect the others to ever read his messages in that room. Furthermore, his general behavior had been whimsical throughout the semester in oral and electronic discussions. His messages seem to call for attention, instigate a humorous exchange, and seek amusement rather than hurt the feelings of another participant or isolate Jack from the rest of the group. As a result, I classify his message as displaying a hierarchical

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<sup>2</sup> The prompt reads: “What utilitarian uses of the Internet can you think of which have helped people in important ways? One example is information regarding diseases such as AIDS which get updated daily, making the Internet the ideal forum and medium for conveying that information to millions of people. Can you think of other ways we have or can use the Internet as a source of such communication and benefit for the general public?”

rather than an agonistic relationship, which would have been more severe in tone and hostile in implication toward the students.

One-upmanship is another example of hierarchical behavior that is status linked. When an individual participates by overtly, repeatedly, and gratuitously stating that he or she is in some way better than others, that participant is performing one-upmanship. Such behavior can persuade others of the individual's superiority or can irritate interlocutors. Besides what is actually written, insistence on being superior is conveyed in participants' tone. Paternalism or the taking of the role of father figure or the all-knowing advisor, is another feature of competitive, hierarchical behavior. Through the use of diminutive personal references such as "babe," "sweetheart," and "honey," writers indicate a higher authority over the reader, particularly because of the professional or educational roles and settings. Personal terms are inappropriate gestures of familiarity and superiority due to the nature of student, teacher, and professional roles which require more overt behaviors of emotional distance and mutual respect. One-upmanship displays a hierarchical relationship to individuals who may not expect to be talked down to, especially not by a peer. Therefore, participants need to be careful about how they position other participants in a relationship when interacting online so that they are not addressing their peers inappropriately or offensively, which may result in unexpected and undesired communication consequences such as silence.

### Theoretical Foundation

This classification is an expansion of Deborah Tannen's gendered "report talk", which typically refers to men who characteristically are

speaking about “things,” taking center stage, and giving opinions (Tannen 1991). According to Tannen, for most men, conversation involves maintaining or raising one’s status within a group which is achieved through talk. Further, Tannen argues:

For most men talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order. This is done by exhibiting knowledge and skill, and by holding center stage through verbal performance such as story-telling, joking, or imparting information. (77)

Tannen attempts to understand how talking functions differently for men than for women. In this passage, she develops the notion that men speak in order to gain and maintain power within a particular group. That power is asserted in speech through verbal contests which involve speakers struggling for verbal space in a conversation and for superior performance in the space one has taken or been given. For hierarchically-oriented speakers, providing information is construed as powerful while asking for information is viewed as inferior or powerless. Therefore, hierarchical speakers tend to refrain from asking questions, and rather present information, whether solicited or not in order to maintain power within the conversation.

Tannen goes on to say that such conversational behaviors and patterns are learned from childhood:

From childhood, men learn to use talking as a way to get and keep attention. So they are more comfortable speaking in

larger groups made up of people they know less well--in the broadest sense, 'public speaking.' but even the most private situations can be approached like public speaking, more like giving a report than establishing rapport. (77)

Tannen's "report talk" category describes the transference of data and ideas within an emotionally distant relationship. When one speaks to a public audience, one, generally, cannot focus on any single person's needs or develop a personal relationship with any individuals. Instead, the speaker chooses a general persona which can address the issues and convey them understandably to a larger audience. The focus on the information, the speaker's authority, and the emotional distance among participants is what defines "report talk" and, in turn, hierarchical relationships.

Similarly, Kathleen Hall Jamieson describes "manly" speech (speech by men, typically) and its power in social and political realms historically. In *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speech-making*, Jamieson contrasts the popular and positive reception of "manly" speech to the negative response to "womanly" speech (speech mostly by women). Because of the belief that "manly" speech was driven by reason, "the manly style was thought to be factual, analytic, organized, and impersonal" (801). Consequently, the "manly" style of speech was thought to elicit well-reasoned judgment while "womanly" speech invited emotion-driven responses which were viewed as irrational and, therefore, inconsequential. She goes on to describe and contrast the eighteenth-century notions of "manly" discourse and "effeminate" discourse and discuss their functions and proper settings:



Manly discourse works in the service of “ambition, business, and power,” noted eighteenth-century theorist Hugh Blair. Accordingly, it is impersonal, unemotional, and competitive. Where manly discourse persuades, effeminate discourse pleases. Manly discourse inhabits the public forum where it engages in debate about public affairs. The proper place for effeminate discourse is either in the parlour or the corrupt government. (803)

Throughout this section of her work, Jamieson critiques the practice of limiting women to private spheres or to associating women’s discourse with corruption, idleness, and gossip. This hierarchical relationship among speakers of “manly” speech, according to Jamieson, is a result of Cartesian scientific philosophy:

The emphasis of the scientific method on objectivity contrasts with the supposed feminine focus on subjectivity. The scientist who aspired to distance himself from the subject, control the environment, and manipulate variables expressed his findings in impersonal dispassionate prose. Within this frame of reference scientists were heirs of Descartes living in his world of extension and motion. (803)

Jamieson provides an explanation for how women’s discourse became relegated to an inferior position, and, more importantly for this project, how the hierarchical positioning in “manly” speech became dominant. Not only is “manly” speech dominant in social and disciplinary discourses, but it involves dominance among participants, each carving out spaces of power

and rhetoric for themselves. While Cartesian philosophies of language, power, and science have dominated Western culture, feminists such as Jamieson, Tannen, Cixous, and many others have worked to provide critiques of patriarchal discourse and its dominance. More importantly perhaps, these theorists offer new approaches to discourse in which participants are exchanging on egalitarian levels of power and working collaboratively, which will be addressed in dialectical and empathic interlocutor relationships in order to consider how one expresses conflict in egalitarian discourse communities.

### Hierarchical Relationships in SCC Transcripts

A major aspect of a hierarchical relationship is the display by the writer of being superior and authoritative to other participants, which manifests in a variety of behaviors such as abundant prescriptions, imperatives, curt responses, absolute evaluations, and harsh criticisms. In Interchange transcripts, moments of such hierarchy are most evident in the interactions by a male student of composition, Chuck. However, at the same time that Chuck clearly displays hierarchy towards other participants, he also displays dialectical and empathic relationships; he is one of the most complex participants with a wide range of relationships displayed in these transcripts. Displaying hierarchical relationships, in the “Cyberporn” conference which addressed the ethical aspects of pornography being available to children on the Internet, students are discussing who is responsible for deciding whether a child should or should not view pornography on the net:

Christy: First we have to establish whether or not we think pornography should be available to children on the net.

Kamal: first, lets define porn.

Kamal: It should be up to the parents

Christy: Does anyone have a definition for porn?

Maggie: 20 MINUTES????!!!!!!

Chuck: No, porn should not be available to children, but it is inherently legal that it be available on the internet. Who in there right mind is going to say that an 11 year old should be able to see...well "certain things" and then go to school and tell his teacher about them in front of the whole class. I am sorry that this is so far behind the conversation. My computer only updates every two or three minutes.

Kamal: PORN= People fornicating in public.

Christy: Sorry guys I'm leaving. I'm in group four answering question one. Bye!

Chuck: no.

Maggie: We need to figure out a definition because we may all different ideas of what porn is.

Chuck: Porn is not just bikinis and speedos. That should be legal. So, yes Baywatch is not porn.

In this exchange, there are several moments that Chuck displays a hierarchical relationship to Kamal and to Christy. First of all, in his first message of this passage, Chuck expounds at length about his very clear and firm position regarding pornography being available to children on the

Internet. In fact, he goes on to state the irrationality of taking an alternative position of supporting children's access to Internet pornography when he writes, "Who in [their] right mind is going to say . . . ." He overtly establishes his position to be the rational one, a position of hierarchy. However, Kamal returns Chuck's hierarchical implications with his own when he shouts with all capital characters: "PORN." Online, as in oral discussion, shouting demands others' attention and emphasizes an interlocutor's urgency to be acknowledged. However, shouting in both oral and electronic media is generally understood as rude and overbearing behavior. In Kamal's case, shouting the word, porn, may be simply a form of play in that he is boldly announcing that which is taboo in our culture. However, he does follow his shout with a definition of pornography presented in a brief, denotative manner which connotes, or at least attempts to connote, the authority of a dictionary. Therefore, Kamal and Chuck display a hierarchical relationship in their struggle for authority within the conference.

As a switch in tone from authoritative writer, Chuck finishes his message with what seems to be an apology with the words, "I am sorry that this [message] is so far behind the conversation." On the other hand, he continues by placing blame on the technology, vindicating himself of any blame or need to apologize, which in turn, transforms his apology into an expression of frustration with the messaging process that others may be feeling as well. As a result, this move to apologize becomes less a maneuver to connect with the group and more an act of critiquing the technology. If this sentiment, criticism is shared, it may, in fact, bond the

participants together. However, since no one furthers the discussion of the failings of the Daedalus technology, Chuck is not gaining explicit, verbalized support from other participants who may not be experiencing the technological difficulties that Chuck is. Another possibility is that others may not want to offer support or reassurance regarding this problem for various unknown reasons which could include the emotional distance Chuck creates in his messages.

Later in the above exchange, Chuck sends a short message, “no.” It is not entirely clear to whom he is directing his response. He could be responding with a “no” to Christy’s question about someone having a definition for porn or he could be rejecting the ambiguous message from Maggie, “20 MINUTES?????!!!!” Another possibility is that he is playfully rejecting Christy’s assertion that she is leaving the conference to go to another in which her assigned group is discussing question one. If the last, then his humor is based on a notion that he is playing the part of one who has the power to say whether or not Christy will stay or leave the conference, which again is a display of hierarchy. A final possibility I imagine is that Chuck is disagreeing with Kamal’s definition of pornography in a curt and vague manner without the respect and regard to provide an explanation for his disapproval. Which ever the case may be, Chuck’s overly brief, negative comment creates confusion as to what he is referring, which produces a message that is generally negative and critical. He is ineffective at communicating specifically his feelings or thoughts about another’s message and, instead, he simply displays negative criticism toward anything and everyone involved in the conference.

In his final message of this section of the transcript, Chuck asserts with certainty what pornography is not and notes *Baywatch*, a television show which involves “bikinis and speedos,” is not pornography. First of all, the tone behind the statement is based on authority as Chuck presents the “facts” about what porn is not. His statement is void of qualifiers which might limit his absolute assertion. He follows his initial statement with a second absolute assertions that “[bikinis and speedos] should be legal.” Again, Chuck offers neither explanations to justify his position nor qualifiers which suggests that his opinion is true for all cases and contexts. With Chuck’s message attitude there is no gray area with room for discussion because he is right. Finally, Chuck finishes his message with yet another absolute statement of opinion as fact: “So, yes *Baywatch* is not porn.” First of all, the word, “so,” suggests a causal link with his opinion that “porn is not just bikinis and speedos.” I believe Chuck is critiquing Kamal’s definition of pornography as too broad. Chuck provides the vague reference to characters in television having sex in “speedos” and “bikinis” on *Baywatch* as a counter example which challenges Kamal’s definition. Therefore, Chuck’s use of the word, “so,” functions to present his conclusion about what pornography is not without attempting to define what it is, a much more challenging task. Second, Chuck’s final message is situated as if someone had asked him the question, “Is *Baywatch* pornography?” In fact, no one had. On the one hand, anticipating possible questions from other participants is a sophisticated rhetorical ability and strategy in persuasive writing. On the other hand, he demonstrates that he has no need for interlocutors, because he can switch roles within electronic

exchange, sustaining his own monologue as if it were dialogue. In SCC, writers have actual interlocutors who participate; therefore, it is more effective if a writer addresses what his/her interlocutors' actual concerns are rather than proceeding in a monologue on one's own, which suggests hierarchy.

What is important in this next section of transcript from the same conference discussion with Chuck is to see how he establishes a hierarchical relationship with others in the conference in the form of broad, negative evaluations and authoritative universals without the qualifier, "I think" to narrow the potency of the comment. For example, the discussion about children having access to pornography on the Internet continues with this first statement of "facts" by Chuck:

Chuck: It is currently illegal in most places for anyone under the age of 18, and in some places 21, for anyone to view porn.

Kamal: Is Porn ETHICAL?

Chuck: Sex is only more prevalent because we let it be. Sex has always been there, it just was not [as] public. Kids used to get married at thirteen, so you cannot say that they are just starting earlier now.

Chuck: That was a dumb question Kamal :-(

Christy: The adults should be responsible for maintaining the innocence of today's children because if they do not the kids will begin to lose their childhood. If exposed to sex and porn at early ages they will have to begin to deal with adult problems at childhood. GETTING MARRIED AT THIRTEEN FOR

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL REASONS IS  
COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN SLEEPING AROUND  
AT THAT AGE! DON'T EVEN TRY TO COMPARE THEM.

Kamal: To some people Porn is ethical and they don't see  
anything wrong with it. <s>

Maggie: Don't yell

In this excerpt, Chuck begins with a general information about the legality of age and the viewing of pornography which supports his earlier point about regulating or restricting who can watch porn and at what age. He follows this up with a claim that "sex is only prevalent because we let it be." In this case, since he does not specify who the "we" is, he uses the pronoun as a universal term to indicate the society, all in the room, which then serves to place responsibility on each participant, even those who are overtly against pornography at any age such as Christy. This move of universally blaming the decision to allow, promote, and provide pornography on the Internet on all participants attempts to render Christy's clear opposition to pornography a lie, denial, or naiveté.

Chuck goes on to give a history lesson on the facts of sex in society when he states that "Sex has always been there, it just was not [as] public." The authoritative tone behind Chuck's presentation of how things are and have been is what makes this statement establishes a hierarchical relationship with other participants; he is instructing with his factual and certain information, his truth. He finishes that message with more historical information, which generalizes about marriage ages, and gives a command about how to think and talk which is directed to Christy in



particular. She claimed earlier, “Children’s innocence should be guarded as long as possible because the more they know about sex, the earlier they will start experimenting. Instead of sixteen year old mothers, we’ll start seeing eleven year old mothers.” In response to this comment, Chuck writes, “Kids used to get married at thirteen, so you cannot say that they are just starting earlier now.” The strong imperative of “you cannot say” reflects a hierarchical relationship which emphasizes authority to direct the actions of another as he asserts his contradictory position. Moreover, Chuck’s order demands silence from all interlocutors with opposing points of view. The message is moderately confrontational and paternalistically corrective, displaying an act of one-upmanship, which establishes the hierarchical relationship.

In the next message, Chuck goes a step further by articulating a negative evaluation of Kamal’s previous question, “Is Porn ETHICAL?” By stating, “That was a dumb question Kamal :-(“ Chuck degrades the value of Kamal’s contribution to the Interchange. Placing himself in the position of judge, Chuck criticizes Kamal’s point of view, relegating the question as idiotic, and not worthy of consideration or a legitimate response. This implies an ad hominem argument against Kamal. The emoticon emphasizes the literal meaning behind Chuck’s expression of reproach. The conflict as presented by Chuck’s criticisms is a move to establish his credibility by denigrating the contributions of other participants. With this evaluation, Chuck displays a hierarchical relationship at this moment but is moving toward an agonistic relationship.

As a result of the insult, both Christy and Kamal defend the validity and reasonableness of their positions which are threatened by Chuck's castigation. Kamal's message, "to some people Porn is ethical and they don't see anything wrong with it. <s>," provides a challenge to Chuck's universalizing of the position that pornography is absolutely ethical. Kamal's response illustrates his dialectical relationship with Chuck. On the other hand, Christy's retort displays a hierarchical relationship which crosses into an agonistic relationship as she conveys her anger with rebuttal of Chuck's previous dismissal. She begins her refutation of Chuck's criticism with a straight counter argument which is centered on the topic and negative consequences of exposing children to pornography. However, in the second half of her message, Christy's tone changes. The fact that she uses all capital letters, an indicator of shouting, and further commands Chuck in this manner, "DON'T EVEN TRY TO COMPARE THEM," shows a shift in the nature of Christy's relationship with Chuck to agonistic in the last part of her message. In Christy's case, Chuck's behaviors elicited Christy's manner of relating to him, while in Kamal's case, Chuck's agonism was returned with a less passionate rebuttal. However, neither Kristy's nor Chuck's approach was effective at creating a more productive exchange, one which would be less hierarchical, less insulting to some of the participants, and more egalitarian. Just a bit later in the Interchange conference, Chuck continues to assert that "Again the question here is not whether porn is ethical . . . porn is still legal, ethical, and all of the above," which indicates that he was unaffected by Kamal's contributions and that he insists that Kamal's concerns are not the central

issue. Also, Chuck presents the impression that he wishes to ally himself with Christy on an equal plane, but then asserts hierarchy once again in a pedantic lecture:

Christy, I do not want kids to have access either . . . for any individual who has reached a point in their life where they have a certain understandin. . . . . [his ellipses] Yes. There is an age for porn. Do not take this the wrong way but . . .

In his direct address to Christy, Chuck emphasizes that the two share the same position about pornography on the Internet being wrong for child viewers. Then, he shifts to a generalization about people who come to some epiphany about the merits or value of pornography in their lives while commenting on Christy's apparent immaturity or lack as she has not yet reached the point of coming to terms with pornography. He speaks to Christy from a paternalistic point of view as one wise man speaking to a naive, younger, inexperienced and confused child. His message is a clarification of Christy's perceived misunderstanding about the negative aspects of pornography. He does not blame Christy for not understanding, but he is firm that, indeed, "Yes" [period], there is a universal "age" for the reception of pornography, a claim which dismisses the validity of all opposing points of view against pornography, including Christy's position. Finally, Chuck openly anticipates that he thinks Christy will definitely take his message in a "wrong" way , completely misinterpreting his message, just like a misguided student, a less intelligent individual, or a very emotional person might do. Further, he commands Christy not to feel hurt. This message is yet another example of Chuck's hierarchical relationship to

Christy, which is not tempered, despite her counterattacks. Chuck's insistence on being right is characteristic of hierarchical relationships because of the writer's self-centeredness, which prevents him/her from seriously considering alternate points of view. Moreover, Chuck's seemingly objective or unemotional stance is characteristic of hierarchical interlocutors. The indifferent attitude Chuck constructs presents conflict as he constructs a relationship with Christy, an interlocutor who displays a greater degree of emotionality, which Chuck openly disdains as "taking things the wrong way."

### **Dialectical Relationships**

#### **Definition, Qualities, and Features**

Dialectical relationships are characterized by moderate degrees of conflict, cooperation, eristic, and disagreeableness. Participants agree and disagree as they exchange multiple and opposing ideas in a dialectical conversation with balanced levels of participation among SCC users. Dialectical participants are constantly switching roles as analytical listeners, critics with questions or critique, and presenters of information.

While dialectical relationships do serve to build community among participants, there are higher degrees of emotional distance among SCC users than with empathic relationships and less distance than in hierarchical relationships. Also, the degree of conflict and disagreement is higher in dialectical relationships than in empathic, but, again, is less than in hierarchical relationships. The emphasis of dialectical relationships is on the democratic exchange of ideas through an egalitarian mode of interaction

in SCC which excludes domination over conversation and degrading commentary. Mild levels of conflict, expressions of puzzlement, confusion, discord, expressions of clarification, and are present in the messages from participants of dialectical relationships.

Discourse among participants of dialectical relationships involves critique (not criticism), question and answer exchange, evaluations, explanations, arguments, and assertions of opinions which may or may not agree with other participants' messages and points of view. Also, messages from dialectical participants include the use of light humor typically in the form of sarcasm which is nonderogatory, but often has a challenge for further discussions within it, as opposed to there being a kind of "end of discussion" closure to interaction as with more authoritative relationships such as agonistic and hierarchical.

### Theoretical Foundation

According to Plato, dialectic is the "true rhetoric" which engages individuals in the mutual search for the truth about the soul, leading to immortality.<sup>3</sup> In *The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric: Appropriations of Ancient Discourse*, Kathleen E. Welch posits that Plato's dialectic is designed to involve both participants in the search for "truth." By actively analyzing the interlocutor's discourse, dialecticians are able to

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<sup>3</sup> For an alternate interpretation of Plato's dialectic see Helmbold, W.C. Introduction. *Phaedrus*. Trans. W.C. Helmbold and W.G. Rabinowitz. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1956. In the Introduction to the *Phaedrus*, W.C. Helmbold suggests that the discourse of Phaedrus, Socrates' partner in conversation, functions as "enthusiastic co-operation," which reinforces Socrates' position, rather than as critical engagement in a genuinely mutual or collaborative effort in the search for truth. Ultimately, this reading of Plato's concept of philosopher-controlled dialectic would suggest that Plato allows only the chosen few philosophers to perform in the role of the leader of dialectic, while the other audience/speaker role is limited largely to passivity, which also constrains the discovery process to the leader's point of view.

respond suitably and critically to one another's points and, then, advance their philosophical inquiry. Welch explains, "the process of Platonic dialectic itself involves the activity of forming discourse while at the same time criticizing that discourse in order to reach a higher level of understanding" (5). Such a higher level of understanding is a mutual journey of the souls which are clashing and struggling to remember the "truth." In fact, Welch purports that Plato's rhetoric emphasizes "individual responsibility" in the act of rhetoric, dialectic, which demands an active "readerly resistance" from each participant (102).

While using the terminology of twentieth-century social constructionism, C. Jan Swearingen further argues that Plato indeed is offering a method of scientific inquiry which engages both interlocutors in the construction of knowledge. She counters the common conception of that classical rhetoricians presented a purely agonistic relationship with their listeners. Swearingen uses the metaphor of maieutics to characterize a relationship among participants of dialectic in which each assists the other in the "birth" or the very creation and development of ideas. Through the term maieutics, Swearingen dispels the belief that all ancient rhetors rely on eristic forms of argument and writer-audience relations:

Maieutics is used throughout the dialogues to represent the kind of relationship that should exist among interlocutors in a dialogue. Their good will and trust of one another are as essential as their candor in saying what is true, hard as that may be. . . . Each guides the other's attempts to say what they are trying to say by candidly responding when they find

error, ambiguity, or wrong intent. . . . When interlocutors have the sense of helping each other find words to talk about a subject--when they both have an interests in and wish to know about or seek understanding of that subject--there is a maieutic exchange going on. (83)

According to Swearingen, Plato's philosophical inquiry includes a mutual participation in dialogue. Maieutic exchange characterizes a joint venture toward understanding through the discursive act of dialogue. Swearingen purports that Plato's dialectic is meant to be a genuine search for "truth" and that all interlocutors have a responsibility to participate critically in the dialogue without becoming agonistic:

As a more formal, directed procedure, dialogue brings into being mutually "constructed" understanding. It is diametrically opposed to the asymmetrical, adversarial, and agonistic opposition of one view or argument (*logos*) on another, the pattern that Plato censures in both rhetoric and writing. (83)

Maieutics allows dialogue to operate in a mutually challenging but supportive way. While many scholars recognize Plato as a highly agonistic rhetorician, Swearingen argues that his theory of "true rhetoric" is quite the opposite in dynamics. Further, she refers to Plato's stated oppositions to writing and rhetoric as evidence of his position against monologic and purely tactical forms of rhetoric, which could foster a lack of real dialogue. The difference that Swearingen is emphasizing is the role or relationship among the interlocutors. It is this stance among interlocutors that is at the heart

of dialectical discourse. Indeed, the nature of the exchange reflects the interlocutor relationship and embodies an expanded notion of the purposes of rhetoric as moving beyond conquest of one over the other. Swearingen explains:

In contrast, maieutics characterizes the attitudes which the participants in philosophical dialogue should have toward one another, and extends the verbs--the blending, mixing, mingling of terms and propositions--to include a larger set of attitudes and purposes among interlocutors. (83-4)

Explicit in Swearingen's position is the argument that interlocutors ought to take this maieutic stance or relationship when involved in dialectical exchange, a position with an ethical component, which I will be addressing more in the conclusion. However, at this point, I will analyze some moments in electronic exchange which illustrate dialectical discourse.

#### Dialectical Relationships in SCC Transcripts

What is most apparent about dialectical relationships is that the discussion remains for the most part topic-centered and productive as a means of exposing various viewpoints on an issue. Also, the counterpoints are presented respectfully as participants challenge the targeted assertions. In addition, participants refrain from ad hominem arguments which generally serve to personalize an exchange, threatening participants' credibility, which then is defended, leading the discussion away from the main purpose. Because participants challenge and critique one another, points of view tend to develop into more sophisticated arguments than in agonistic relationships, which often consist of rude one-line messages aimed



at evaluating the interlocutor's ethos rather than constructing truth. Dialectical relationships tend to be more productive than in hierarchical relationships as well, which often result in clashes of ego driven by authoritative power struggles rather than intellectual exchange among various participants. And as we see, dialectical relationships are more productive than empathic relationships, which often become narrow and uncritical exchanges that produce the sense of being likeminded, and, therefore, reduce the need for production of new knowledge.

In the technical writing students' conference, "Cyberporn," participants expressed qualities of dialectical relationships as they discussed the complex aspects of limiting children's access to pornography on the Internet.<sup>4</sup> In addition to relatively mild, playful banter with sexual innuendoes related to the topic, the transcript reveals students responding directly to other students' messages with assertions of agreement and disagreement, along with providing additional information on the topic of discussion. The following is an excerpt from the beginning of the conference exchange:

Tad: I want access to HARDCORE PORN :)

Freddie: Anybody Naked :)

Terry: Pornography is quite simply naked people. Personally, I don't think anyone should have access to it because it breeds deviant behavior which could potentially lead to violent crime

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<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the prompt to which students were responding is: "What is pornography? Do you think that pornography should be available to children on the web? Do you support content blockers which would inhibit children's access to certain types of subjects? Why or why not? At what age do you think pornography is acceptable for viewing? Why?"

like rape and molestation. I think it should be unconditionally banned.

Tad: It's just a form of entertainment

Matthew: I think everyone knows what pornography is. Only adults should be able to access pornography. The internet does a good job of limiting access

John: I am definitely for some sort of blocker to limit access to pornography in the case of children. Children should not be exposed to such material because of the possible harmful effects.

Terry: pornography's effects are just as harmful to adults as it is to children.

Matthew: :O [surprise] definitely at some of the stuff that is accessible on the internet

Dawn: "internet does a good job of limiting access"? :-o  
ummmmm...the internet does little censoring at this point in time, though individual internet service providers do control material

John: Terry, I agree with you!

Nancy: I think that pornography is more than just naked people. I think it is naked people doing certain things. you know? :) ideally I don't like censorship to even children. it's a hard call. but if parents just communicate with [their] children and explain porn then . . . I don't know. . . .

Matthew: Many times trying to get into certain porn websites is stopped and asked for a credit card therefore limiting access.

This exchange represents positions which are supportive of allowing pornography on the Internet as a form of entertainment and others which posit that pornography is detrimental to both adults and children.

However, what all participants agree upon is that pornography should not be available to children on the Internet. Through their discussion, participants expressed the points at which they agreed and disagreed.

While this excerpt demonstrates several participants displaying dialectical relationships, such as Dawn and Matthew in their exchange about the degree that Internet providers limit access to certain sites, I will focus this analysis on the exchange between Nancy and Terry, to show how the former best illustrates a dialectical relationship.

When Terry, early on in the discussion, provides a definition of pornography as “simply naked people,” Nancy objects to this broad and simplistic conception and explains, “I think that pornography is more than just naked people. I think it is naked people doing certain things. you know?” Her message includes a direct refutation of Terry’s definition without being disrespectful toward Terry or directing any criticism at him as a person. Rather, her critique is focused on the task of defining pornography. Further, she clarifies what her conception of pornography is, which builds upon Terry’s definition by agreeing on the species category of “naked people.” Then, she extends and narrows his definition of pornography by providing a *differentiae*, which distinguishes “naked people” who are “doing certain things” from just “simply naked people.” However, Nancy is

playful and ambiguous in that she does not clearly state what those “certain things” are. While this poses a problem of interpreting with some accuracy what the “certain things” refers to, understanding the context of the conversation as being focused on sexual acts, pornography specifically, leads me to make the leap in analysis to assume that Nancy is referring to sex, a somewhat taboo subject for students who predominantly share conservative values. In terms of establishing a dialectical relationship, Nancy responds directing to Terry’s contributions through critique and elaboration which serves to both challenge her reader at this moment, Terry, and work with him to further their mutual intellectual inquiry and their performance of the assigned task.

The next part of Nancy’s message asks the question, “you know?” which seems to operate more like a rhetorical question which seeks assent than like a genuine question because of the fact that she does not stop at this point for responses to her question, but rather continues expressing her position. Further, Nancy follows the question with a smile emoticon, which indicates that she means no harm or offense in her contradiction of Terry’s definition. With the smile emoticon, Nancy’s message of “you know?” suggests that she is concerned about Terry’s reaction to her criticism, and that she wants to clearly convey an amicable attitude. As a result, the conflict of this situation resides merely in the fact that the two disagree on some part of a definition of the term pornography without there being a conflict amongst themselves over how ideas are presented.

Nancy carefully declares her dispute with Terry’s definition by not taking a hard stance against him. After submitting her counter definition,

she continues her message by demonstrating the difficulty of making and enforcing laws that have to do with pornography on the Internet. Still responding to Terry's message that pornography "should be unconditionally banned," Nancy explains that she generally does not support censorship of any kind, "even to children." This statement is a direct rebuttal of what Terry very staunchly argues about putting a ban absolutely on all forms of pornography because of the "deviant behavior" he posits that it "breeds." Terry's position is extreme in that he claims that pornography should be completely disallowed, citing examples of violent sexual assault, and arguing for a causal link between those forms of violation and pornography. On the other hand, Nancy's position is not as extreme in opposition to Terry's. When Nancy writes, "it's a hard call," she represents herself as one who validates, not only Terry's position and feelings, but also acknowledges the difficulty of coming to any absolute position on an issue that involves censorship. "It's a hard call," suggests that she is not absolutely sure of how to deal with laws regarding pornography, even with children, and that perhaps Terry's assertion of an absolute and extreme position may stem from his not considering the complexity and consequences of what he is arguing.

In the next part of her message, Nancy begins to brainstorm about ways that society could address the phenomenon of pornography with children, to "explain porn" to them. She indicates with the use of ellipses, that she's thinking about what that conversation may involve. The word, "then," conveys that her message was leading toward a suggestion that such a conversation with children which might produce positive effects.

However, she does not provide more information on her ideal conversation with children, and ends with an “I don’t know.” Having extended her thought as far as she could and admitting that she solely hasn’t conceived of an absolute solution to this problem opens up the possibility for further discussion. Providing space for others to engage in critical inquiry is a clear indication of dialectical relationships. In fact, later in the transcript, Terry asserts, “What’s one benefit to society from pornography? Also why are people against child porn? What’s the difference? They’re both sexually deviant behaviors which sometimes cause people to act out their fantasies in the form of rape.” In this response, Terry presents an emotionally charged statement about the harmful effects of pornography on viewers as well as an analogy between adult pornography and child pornography, a comparison which clarifies just how dangerous and wrong he feels pornography is. Then, Nancy directly responds to Terry’s message by writing, “I don’t think that porn necessarily leads to rape. Maybe a person that would possibly rape gets off with cybersex and then wouldn’t feel the need to rape.” In this message, not only does Nancy offer an opposing position to Terry’s, but she also suggests a positive effect pornography may have on potentially violent viewers, which is an attempt to validate the existence and legalization of pornography on the Internet. Finally, Terry directly addresses Nancy in the transcript and responds: “Nancy: I think a more realistic approach would be to obliterate the deviant behaviors and feelings in the first place.” While it is clear that Terry’s violent but vague solution to the problem of violent, sexual assault is opposed to Nancy’s suggestions, he does not present a personal attack of any kind. Moreover,

Terry's inclusion of the phrase, "I think," presents his position not as an absolute "truth" but as an opinion, which serves to maintain egalitarian relations with Nancy. Both Nancy and Terry's positions have in common the view that sexual assault is wrong, but they offer different approaches to dealing with the dilemma. The two interlocutors construct a dialogue displaying some differing views on the subject in a critical but respectful manner, allowing them to explore part of the range of the issue without attacking one another. Terry and Nancy's dialectical relationship facilitated a productive exchange without either showing defensiveness about the rebuttals.

Ultimately, Nancy positions herself as an ally in terms of trying to solve the problem, but also as an intelligent and challenging participant with differing views on the subject. Nancy treats Terry with dignity by reasonably accepting and addressing his position, which some may view as highly conservative and even fascistic in its absolutism. In fact, at some points, Nancy even attempts to create common ground among their definitions. At another moment, Nancy clarified what were the grounds for their disagreement, which was censorship, and, finally, completes her message with an overt gesture that states, "I don't know." In other words, she admits that she doesn't have all of the answers, which reflects a dialectical and nonhierarchical relationship with Terry, an individual with whom she disagrees. For many reasons, dialectical relationships, in general, facilitate educational goals most effectively. As Nancy demonstrates in the above excerpts from the SCC transcript, an open but critical attitude coupled with a respectful and interactive manner of

exchanging allows students to productively explore conflicting and competing ideas about particular questions and problems related to a course. Also, this passage shows that knowledge isn't produced by two people who "don't know" discussing an issue; rather, active members of communities investigate and come to agreements about the construction of knowledge.

## **Empathic Relationships**

### **Definitions, Qualities, and Features**

Empathic relationships are characterized by strongly supportive responses in SCC, serving to build rapport among the community of participants. Often, empathic participants in SCC will play the role of facilitators of discussion or mediate among participants, particularly when agonistic behaviors are occurring to "keep the peace" or maintain professional and productive attitudes in the exchange. Participants will often praise other participants' messages for their value or contribution to the exchange or for their support. However, the most extreme forms of empathic relationships include complete agreement, empathy, approval, and total cooperative support of other participants and their positions.

Empathic participants present affirmations of others' claims both to ally themselves with other participants and to provide support in this sometimes hostile communication environment. Participants apologize for misunderstandings, comfort others who are frustrated, assert likemindedness, reassure others of being part of a team effort, and ask



questions for clarification of another's point. Also, empathic relationships encompass personal issues and emotional concerns during exchange.

### Theoretical Foundation

Carl R. Rogers' "mutual communication" is a model of speech interaction designed to facilitate communication by encouraging individuals to empathize with the other person's position or point of view, in his 1951 speech. Rogers argues that "the major barrier to mutual interpersonal communication is our very natural tendency to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove, the statement of the other person, or the other group" (28). He contends that our block to communication stems from our evaluations which are erroneously rooted in our own point of view. When communicating, Rogers argues that individuals need to understand *with* the other person not *about* that person. In other words, Rogers' model for mutual communication involves two-way understanding which facilitates the development of an intimate relationship among interlocutors.

Therefore, speakers are less likely to objectify audience members which would maintain a greater emotional distance among interlocutors as well as a more generalized sense of what the audience's specific needs and points of view are. Further, Rogers explains how greater understanding of an audience's perspective can lead to rhetorical effectiveness: ". . . if I can see its personal meaning for him, if I can sense the emotional flavor which it has for him, then I will be releasing potent forces of change in him" (29).

While Rogers provides a clear explication of a mutually supportive model for communication, explicit in this theory is the goal of not only understanding but also changing either the attitude of the other person, the dynamic of

the conversation, or even the relationship shared between the interlocutors. In fact, his theory rests on a “limited amount of research” in the area of small group communication which concluded that an “empathic approach leads to improved communication, to greater acceptance of others and by others, and to attitudes which are more positive and more problem-solving in nature” (31). Rogers’ theory strives toward “solving a problem rather than toward attacking a person or group” (33). While Rogers’ model of mutual communication describes interlocutors’ relations in speech, it also serves to define and explain empathic relationships online. In empathic relationships language functions to create supportive relationships among participants who reinforce one another’s ideas and sense of value in the exchange while maintaining an egalitarian power dynamic.

Also a major influence on the construction of empathic discourse are feminist theories about male and female ways of communicating. Work by sociotheorist Carol Gilligan is an example of the kinds of theory which have argued for differences in male and female approaches to decision-making and the communication of those decisions. In *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School*, Gilligan states that women tend to define themselves in terms of their connectedness to others and make decisions and moral judgments by considering the consequences of actions on important relationships as well as their sense of responsibility toward others (9).

In the same vein of feminist research in communication studies, linguist Deborah Tannen’s theory about male and female styles of conversation has been important in the development of the category of

empathic discourse particularly through Tannen's class of "rapport talk," a form of "private speaking."<sup>5</sup> The assumption that men and women have different styles of conversation is at the heart of her book, *You Just Don't Understand*. While this project does not attempt to generalize about distinctions in discourse which may be associated with gender, culture, age, or the like, Tannen's "rapport talk" is particularly useful for identifying a specific relationship I've identified among SCC participants. Tannen explains that these language differences exist "because boys and girls grow up in what are essentially different cultures, so talk between women and men is cross-cultural communication" (18). In an attempt to find more common language for confronting real conflicts of interest among men and women, Tannen argues that "rapport talk," is spoken mostly by women and focuses on people rather than things, building and maintaining relations among communicators.<sup>6</sup> In "rapport talk" women strive to create personal connections to those with whom they are speaking. More specifically, Tannen writes:

For most women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport: a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. From childhood, girls criticize peers who try to stand out or appear better than others. People feel their closest connections at home--with one or a few people they feel close to and comfortable with--in other words, during

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<sup>5</sup> Tannen defines private speaking as "The fewer the people, the more intimately you know them, and the more equal their status, the more it is like private speaking or rapport-talk," (89).

<sup>6</sup> See Hardy, Hodgson, and McConnell 407.

private speaking. But even the most public situations can be approached like private speaking. (77)

Van Nostrand further explains Tannen's "rapport talk" by claiming that "women most often use language in a private way, to establish rapport and to develop intimacy" (6). A key term of Tannen's "rapport talk" is intimacy, which involves connections among individuals negotiating complex networks of relationships. When individuals share intimacy in friendship, they attempt to "minimize differences, try to reach consensus, and avoid the appearance of superiority, which would highlight differences" (Tannen 26). Interrelating on an equal plane is central to achieving intimacy. Also, the notion of symmetry is important in intimacy, in that speakers feel a sense of closeness and sameness with each other. In other words, there exists no acknowledged hierarchy among speakers. In conversation, speakers do not position themselves "above" or "below" other speakers. Tannen shows a relationship between the connections made within a symmetrical relationship and the phenomenon of building community among speakers:

The symmetry of connection is what creates community. If two people are struggling for closeness, they are both struggling for the same thing. (29)

In other words, speakers are working toward the same goals which do not culminate in a victory at the expense of one over the other. Ultimately, speakers strive toward mutual understanding and conciliation, maintaining peer relations.

Like Tannen's theory, Helene Cixous' work identifies and describes women's discourse; however, Cixous describes women's natures from a Lacanian and psychoanalytic point of view. Cixous addresses what she sees as "feminine" and "masculine" writing, which have historical and cultural limits. Her theory focuses on how ideas are conveyed, the dynamics among writers and readers, and the levels of authority implied in each mode of discourse. In the case of an empathic type of discourse, Cixous' theory is useful for addressing issues of authorial power. In her discussion of "feminine writing," Cixous uses the analogy of gift-giving (Cixous 1975, 344). The analogy exemplifies the generous, generative, nurturing, and the additive aspects of "feminine writing." She further explains that it is a language that "does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back, it makes possible" (345). Cixous' "feminine writing" characterizes such language in terms of inclusivity, multiplicity, and, most importantly, "love." Hence, "feminine writing" invites dialogue and further thought, embraces the exploration of changing boundaries and new possibilities, and refuses closure and absolutes which are characteristic of "masculine writing." Unlike "masculine writing," "feminine writing" demonstrates the play of difference and rejects competition among communicants. There is no power struggle or hierarchy among writer and reader. Mutual respect paves the way for open and intimate communication which serves to explode universals so that language use is encouraged and not silenced or constricted. "Feminine writing" is produced by writers who wish to create a strong rapport with their readers in an atmosphere of "love"--desire for communication and connection. Moreover,

“feminine” writers strive to construct truth amongst members of a discourse community rather than to search for a universal which pre-exists. The strong emphasis on the economy and community in “feminine writing” makes this theory of communication particularly useful in describing the composition process of interlocutors in SCC.

What I find most useful in Cixous’ theory is the dynamic she describes between writer and reader, which is supportive and motivating just as a companion might be. I see this attitude toward the reader as possible and present in all levels of hierarchy in communication: upward, downward, and horizontal. However, the writer is treating the reader, regardless of his or her status, as an equal and as someone whose messages are valued by that writer. The fact that questions are asked from the point of genuine inquiry signals the desire to understand information the reader may possess. The writer addresses the reader in a manner of respect even when there is disagreement among them. While the category of empathic discourse does not require consensus, it does necessitate conciliation. Rhetorics of dialectic, negotiation<sup>7</sup>, and, even, invitation<sup>8</sup> (non persuasive rhetoric) are also included in empathic styles of interaction because they emphasize the cooperative spirit among the participants. Moreover, even within the empathic category of discourse there is a range of degrees of conflict or cooperation.

Representing such a range of feminist critiques of argument, Richard Fulkerson encapsulates effectively, I think, some of the major qualities of

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<sup>7</sup> See Lamb, Catherine. “Beyond Argument in Feminist Composition.” CCC 42 (1991): 11-24.

both the “cognitive/epistemic critiques” and the “equity critiques.” The two lines of criticism reveal counter views to traditional classical approaches to rhetoric. For this project, the second line of critiques, “equity critiques,” is pertinent. Fulkerson states that the “equity critique” stems from a more radical feminist position that says:

By its nature, argumentative discourse attempts to change an auditor’s viewpoint. The equity critique says that such an attempt to shape another’s beliefs violates that person’s rights, by enacting a patriarchal attempt to dominate, and thus deny equity. (4-5)

What is significant about this passage for empathic discourse is the power dynamic Fulkerson summarizes from the “equity critiques.” These focus on the element of dominance in the discourse. While I would disagree with the position that any attempt to affect an audience and move them to rethink and reconsider how they feel about an issue or subject is a violation of the auditor’s rights, I would like to highlight the value of the writer-reader relationship that is being posited in this line of critique: equity.

Another strong influence in the empathic category of discourse is Kathleen Hall Jamieson’s work on “womanly” speech. In addition to describing this “womanly” speech, Jamieson addresses much about the history of this dichotomy between “womanly” and “manly” speech as well as discusses the negative, political ramifications of being labeled as having “womanly” speech. Jamieson defines the traditional category or “womanly”

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<sup>8</sup> See Foss, Sonja K., and Cindy L. Griffin. “Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric.” *Communication Monographs* 62 (March 1995): 2-17.

speech as “intimate,” “conversational,” “narrational,” “conciliatory,” “nurturing,” “self-disclosive,” “personal,” “emotional,” and “ornamental” (801-818). Historically in Western culture, “Womanly” speech has been deemed an oral style to be reviled and silenced for the privileging of “manly” speech. Since the speech of women has been silenced and the speech of men has dominated the public spheres, objectivistic, unemotional and logical (linear) styles of language use became hegemonic. Consequently, the more emotional and person-centered type of discourse attributed to women has been suppressed. However, as Jamieson argues, electronic communication, particularly television, is a forum which invites a personal and self-disclosing style of speech in a public arena that draws viewers to watch through a sense of comfort, close contact, and familiarity with the speakers who are actually addressing mass audiences. Consequently, in the forum of television, “womanly” speech is the preferable style of conversation.

A final point about empathic relationships is that it seems so far in my research to operate as epideictic discourse, which is based upon Aristotle’s category of oratory that includes ceremonial speeches. However, it is very important to note that epideictic discourse involves the “praise” or “blame” of someone or something which is already agreed upon by the speaker and audience members to be worthy of praise or blame. For better understanding how empathic relationships are established in SCC, epideictic rhetoric describes how the dynamic between interlocutors can manifest when there is general agreement and cooperation in the communication process. In *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*,



CH. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca explain how epideictic rhetoric has been devalued and misunderstood to refer to purely ornamental language use designed simply to please and entertain (1969). Unlike deliberative and judicial rhetorics, “real contests in which two opponents sought to gain the adherence on debated topics of an audience that would decide on the issue of a trial or course of action” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 47), epideictic rhetoric dealt with subjects which were apparently uncontroversial. However, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca argue that epideictic rhetoric is persuasive discourse because rhetors attempt to increase the intensity of the audience’s adherence to particular values which prepares audience members for action:

The speaker tries to establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience, and to this end he uses the whole range of means available to the rhetorician for purposes of amplification and enhancement.  
(51)

The value of this form of modern discourse in the context of SCC is that participants may create a sense of community and mutual purpose as they explore issues and problems. As a discourse community, participants can unite in their efforts to construct developed arguments in support of a claim they jointly share. Epideictic discourse inspires community thinking as opposed to confrontational activity. Further, epideictic rhetoric is characteristic of empathic interlocutor relationships in SCC and offers students an alternative to conflict-centered approaches to persuasive rhetoric.

However, as mentioned before, a drawback to empathic relationships in SCC can be that participants do not thoroughly explore all facets of a controversial issue. Interlocutors may fall short of discovering the most appropriate choices in a dilemma due to the limited but consensual perspectives expressed. The problem with consensus is that, just as with impasses from conflict, agreement can effect termination or digression of conversation because likeminded participants may perceive a loss of purpose in exchanging similar or identical points of view on an issue. On the other hand, empathic relationships can also be a dynamic of genuinely open communication which can be an encouraging context in which interlocutors push the boundaries of their own experience to consider alternate possibilities. Interlocutors establishing empathic relationships in SCC brainstorm for new ideas which may seem risky in terms of revealing vulnerability or uncertainty, but can also be very educationally fruitful for all members of a conference when interlocutors trust one another not to belittle each other for exploring a new area of knowledge. The end result of such exploration can be the construction of new knowledge as a community.

#### Empathic Relationships in SCC Transcripts

On the one hand, agreement, acceptance, praise, and cooperation among interlocutors who have established an empathic relationship can result in productive collaboration, and on the other hand, they can result in digression and the termination of discussion. Characteristic in empathic relationships are expressions of agreement. For example, Whitley, a student in a “Cyberporn” conference,<sup>9</sup> repeatedly displays agreement with

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<sup>9</sup> See “Cyberporn Three,” in conference session two of Appendix C for complete transcript.

others which serves to build rapport with them: "I agree also . . ." and "I think you should be older also . . . ." Overt expressions of consensus are common in empathic relationships in which interlocutors strive for mutual understanding. In addition, praise is a common feature of empathic relationships. For example, during the same conference in which Ally provides a definition of pornography, Whitley sends a complimentary message to her: "Good definition Allison." With this message, Whitley provides reassurance, validating Ally's contribution to the task of defining pornography and potentially encouraging her to continue participating in the discussion. In one message, Whitley moves out of an empathic relationship with interlocutors and establishes a hierarchical relationship with Christy, specifically. In response to Christy's message in which she writes that children under eighteen years of age ought to be protected from pornographic materials, Whitley writes with condescending implications, "Face the facts, many teenagers want to learn about sex before they come to college." Unlike her other messages which characterize an empathic relationship with interlocutors, Whitley universalizes about the "facts" about children's behavior, which is a feature of hierarchical relationships. However, by the next message, Whitley modifies her approach by explaining what she and Christy share in common: the belief that pornography is ethically problematic: "I'm not saying that pornography is right . . . ." By doing so, Whitley reconnects to Christy by asserting that they are not in opposition to one another. After Christy posits criticism regarding pornography, Whitley plays a role of mediation among interlocutors by stating pro and con opinions about pornography on the

Internet. This becomes more clear in the second part of this message. Whitley provides a justification for why she wrote what she did in the last message about the “fact” about teenagers and sex: “I am just trying to make it fair for the people who do not agree!” She explains that she wishes to acknowledge and accommodate interlocutors whose positions oppose her own. The action of conciliation among competing positions is a distinguishing feature of empathic relationships among interlocutors building community and encouraging participation among conference members.

These qualities of cooperation, conciliation, and agreement which are characteristic of empathic relationships, are associated in these transcripts with productive exchanges of information and persuasive discourse. In a “Cyberporn” conference addressing the definition and ethical dimensions of pornography and how to limit children’s access to it on the Internet,<sup>10</sup> Kristy and Dawn mutually establish an empathic relationship which leads to the exploration of the concerns related to content blockers and administrative regulation of illegal or taboo material. At first reading of this transcript, I thought that the two interlocutors were communicating actively with one another but were being exclusionary in their discussion of the issues with the other members of the conference; Dawn and Kristy were each specifically directing their responses to the other with a name reference. Throughout most of the conference, Dawn and Vickie clearly do

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<sup>10</sup> Specifically, the prompt to which students were responding is: “What is pornography? Do you think that pornography should be available to children on the web? Do you support content blockers which would inhibit children’s access to certain types of subjects? Why or why not? At what age do you think pornography is acceptable for viewing? Why?”

not regularly address other interlocutors' messages except for a couple of times, and those responses were brief reactions or dismissals when Kristy was mentioned in a joke which she identifies in her message as "flaming."<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, through direct reference to one another, affirmative response, and additive information, Dawn and Kristy exhibit a familiar, mutually respectful, and highly cooperative rapport. Throughout the conference, the two interlocutors remained focused and on-task:

Dawn: there are many problems when it comes to censoring pornography on the net; example: the university's blocking of alt.sex.newsgroups which discuss sexual topics but not the lt.binaries.sex newsgroups that contain sexual photographs.<sup>12</sup>

Kristy: Dawn: they did block most of those that upset the groups such as alt.sex.binaries, childporn, bestiality . . . etc.

Kristy: Dawn: by the groups\* I mean the Christian coalition that requested the blocking in the first place

Dawn: Kristy: good that they got some of the binaries, since I don't frequent such newsgroups I know little about them; though I know many of them got by when they just blocked that alt.sex. groups

Kristy: Dawn: the funny thing is the ECN never blocked any of it groups

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<sup>11</sup> As I became more aware of how important it is for clarity sake to identify the message or person to whom you are specifically responding, I realized that the two were highly computer literate which was confirmed during oral discussion and by the fact that their major field of study at the university was Computer Science.

<sup>12</sup> Only Dawn and Kristy's messages are being quoted from this conference for the sake of illustrating their rapport. See "Cyberporn," Session One in Appendix C for the complete transcript.

Dawn: Kristy: yup yup yup :-P [tongue in cheek]

Kristy: I saw the list of groups they blocked working in DCTS and I definitely don't see the fuss . . . most of the groups were bestiality.

Dawn: it usually takes at least some degree of computer knowledge to get to the files in alt.\* binaries newsgroups, unlike the world wide web; thus it would be smarter to start w/ the web as far as university control goes (though its a great deal harder to enforce)

Kristy: Dawn: the university only wants to take a stand when they have to. If they didn't block the newsgroups, they would have been taken to court . . . although they did anyway :/....

This transcript excerpt reveals patterns of participation among the interlocutors. The only time that either student expresses clear agreement is when Dawn affirms with sarcasm, "yup yup yup :-P," in acknowledgment of Kristy's message about the fact that the organization for which they work is hypocritical and inconsistent about their blocking practices for newsgroups with sexually explicit content. In this message, Dawn uses a more casual form of the affirmative, "yes," and includes an emoticon to convey her criticism of the institution's' blocking practices. This message confirms Kristy's previous comment, "the funny thing is the ECN never blocked any of its groups." In light of the context of their discussion which focused on different blocking phenomena and obstacles their institution has faced, Kristy's message conveys criticism about the fact that there is

censorship of some newsgroups and not other ones with similar content and that this inequity is peculiar or even unfair.

Throughout their exchange, Dawn and Kristy explore the issue, covering a range of legal issues, practical concerns, and types of sites effected by the attempt to censor through content blockers. While the two overtly express agreement only once, as just discussed, they show cooperation by adding information which extends the conversation. For example, Dawn explains her opinion that the university ought to turn its attention to the web, which contains sites that are easier to access than the newsgroups in question; however she emphasizes the difficulty of attempting to enforce such control over what students view on the web. In response, Kristy refers to “Dawn” by name and provides additional information, about the university’s actions and resistance to take action with regard to blocking content considered to be not suitable for an academic setting. Kristy’s message extends Dawn’s point about the difficulty of controlling student access to the web, but further articulates her cynicism about the university’s desire to take any course of action in this area unless prompted to by legal threat. While Dawn and Kristy rarely express overt agreement, their messages of information exchange build upon one another, suggesting agreement, collaboratively constructing their knowledge about the issue of content blockers within the context of their educational institution. I identified Dawn and Kristy’s messages as characteristic of empathic relationships over dialectical because of the high degree of cooperation and the undetectable levels of conflict in their exchange of information. Their messages establish an empathic

relationship based on cooperation and mutual respect of what the other knows and thinks about content blocking efforts at the university. Together, Dawn and Kristy investigate aspects of the issue, even aspects the other has not addressed, which makes this relationship exploratory as well as cooperative.

On the contrary, the ways that a sense of likemindedness and cooperation in empathic relationships can result in digression are most evident at the end of the “Dangerous Information Online” conference. During this conference participants came to a unanimous agreement about the participants’ discomfort with the accessibility of their personal information as well as the ethical dimensions of making such personal information available to the general public. In other words, participants displayed qualities and features associated with the category of empathic interlocutor relationships. Individuals exhibited very low levels of or no conflict at all, provided personal information and ideas which directly related or added to what others had written, asked questions to clarify each others’ opinions, encouraged one another to participate, joked light-heartedly in accord, and reaffirmed one another’s’ points of view. The beginning of the conference can be characterized as on-task discussion about the ethical implications for allowing dangerous information on the Internet such as instructions on how to build a bomb.<sup>13</sup> For the most part, participants agreed on the negative impact of releasing private and explicitly dangerous information; however, they communicated at times using light sarcasm and

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<sup>13</sup> The prompt reads, “Do you think that the internet ought to allow people to provide information which could be applied in harmful ways such as instructions on how to build a bomb? What are the arguments critical to this issue of ethics and computer use?”



hyperbole. Most messages sent indicated agreement except for a few which elicited clarification of another's point of view. In this conference, with each message, participants shift their views to achieve consensus, creating a community of likemindedness.

However, as discussed above, likemindedness can lead to productive exploration or to unproductive and unfocused exchange. In reply to Aggie's message, "SO. What does everybody think, about the answer to the question . . . do we all feel that the info on the internet is fair game for everyone to use?" Jeff expresses, ":",) Mario states, "I do," Fran expresses, ":",)" and Aggie declares, "Me too :D." All of the participants express their agreement as a team. Their empathic relationship to one another is displayed in their "smile" emoticons and reaffirming messages that indicate no degree of conflict at this point in the discussion. In fact, after this moment of consensus in the Interchange, participants begin to get off task and joke, going no further toward the goal of discussing the given topic, digressing into silly play in which they all harmoniously participate:

Aggie: <G>

Mario: <S>

Aggie: I do believe we have answered all the questions.

Aggie: good for us.

Mario: we're the greatest!!! :)

Jeff: I believe you are correct Aggie

Natalie: ME TOO...gmta

Mario: yeah!!!!

Aggie: YEAH!

Jeff: Why don't we all give ourselves a big pat on the back

Mario: let's do it on the count of three!!!!

This excerpt from the conference represents playful exchange as the participants emphasize their achievement of the classroom assignment and their group genius. The "gmta," which is an abbreviation for "great minds think alike," conveys a celebration of this group's likemindedness, adherence to values and thoughts which have been intensified among the members of the conference. The abundance of big smile (<S> and big grin (<G>) emoticons convey the groups pleasure with themselves. However, after this digression into self-indulgence, Mario states, "okay now I'm getting bored!!!" which signals that the conversation has ended and they have no reason to participate in an SCC conference in the classroom. Therefore, this passage indicates how once consensus is attained, the discussion ends, which is one argument for why some degree of conflict or controversy is useful in conversation, particularly in an educational setting.

### CHAPTER THREE: INTERLOCUTOR RELATIONSHIPS AND DISCOURSE THEORY

*Diminishing the temporal distance of the printed word decreased the impersonal distance between reader and writer. Eventually other forms of mediated communication will provide greater, more direct interaction beyond the immediacy of the event and increase the interactive nature of the discourse in ways that artificially simulate (but nonetheless approach) direct verbal communication. . . . new forms of mediated communication [will] compel us to adopt a more malleable notion of the text than our current predispositions allow. We need continued investigation of the ways in which these new uses of the technologies of the word affect the way we write fiction or essays or scholarly works, and how they affect the roles of readers when readers read such things today.<sup>1</sup>*  
Walter J. Ong, S.J.

In 1990, when Ong's essay was published in a collection focused on historical approaches to oral and written communication, he projected a future of writing and reading which would be electronically mediated. Responding to early work in synchronous computer conferencing, Ong accounts for the increase of immediacy that computer technology brings to the communication situation. More importantly, Ong points directly to the importance of investigating how these new forms of text will affect writer's concepts of readers and how readers will be engaged in new processes of reading.

In developing a theory of interlocutor relationships, I examined theories from print-based literacy, speech communication, computer-mediated communication, and feminist discourse from various disciplines.

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<sup>1</sup> Ong, Walter S.J. "Technological Development and Writer-Subject-Reader Immediacies." *Oral and Written Communication: Historical Approaches*. Written Communication Annual: An International Survey of Research and Theory. vol. 4. Ed. Richard Leo Enos. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1990, p. 214.

Relevant theories included work on writer-audience relationships and the composing process; speaker-auditor roles and styles of conversation; and types, topics, and ethical dimensions of electronic discourse. This chapter situates my continuum in relation to frameworks for discourse analysis and theories of encoder and decoder roles, particularly from feminist perspectives which present alternatives to dominant modes of discourse.

### **Print-based Theories of Discourse**

Scholars have presented various systems of describing and analyzing written texts and their consequences for writers. Each theory attributes particular values to discourse as well as assumes a particular epistemological position on the knowledge constructed in those texts by defined communities. Assumptions underlie the theories that characterize the composing process, genres of writing, and the communities that constrain both the processes and products of writing. Further, various theories assign differing roles for writer and audience in the production of discourse. I will discuss theories of writer and reader roles and writer-audience relationships in discourse in order to situate interlocutor relationships in contemporary rhetoric and composition, which, along with other disciplines, is just beginning to theorize computer-mediated communication.

An active area of research is the comparison and contrast between classical and modern rhetoric in terms of what the goals of rhetoric are and how those goals position encoders and decoders in relation to each other. In their collaboratively written essay, "On Distinctions between Classical and

Modern Rhetoric,” Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa S. Ede acknowledge that scholars often associate classical rhetoric with manipulation, skillful coercion, antagonism, and unidirectional communication, while modern rhetoric is related to inquiry, empathy, understanding, and dialogic communication (38).<sup>2</sup> Further, they provide another distinction often made between the classical and modern rhetoric which they claim is inextricably tied to rhetor-audience relationships, and that is the aims of rhetoric: “This distinction results from identifying the goal of classical rhetoric as persuasion, while the goal of modern rhetoric is identified as communication” (39). These aims motivate encoders to establish particular relationships with their decoders and to construct meanings, both of which are negotiated within the conference discourse among interlocutors.

While Lunsford and Ede strive to mend the conceptions scholars have had about classical rhetoric as coercive, I found this binary useful for constructing a range of interlocutor relationships. Both poles of this binary are represented in the interlocutor relationships continuum in order to present degrees of conflict and cooperation. Regardless of whether one interprets classical rhetoric to be manipulative and antagonistic or to be similar to a notion of modern rhetoric as cooperative communication, I find both inaccurate and falsely monolithic about how an entire society of rhetors discourse in all situations. Based on my observations of SCC, some interlocutors are highly antagonistic while others are highly cooperative.

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<sup>2</sup>On the contrary, Lunsford and Ede argue that these often-cited distinctions are inaccurate and, thereafter, explain the clear similarities between classical and modern rhetoric.

More importantly, most individuals at one time construct an antagonistic relationship, while at another moment in the conversation develop a cooperative relationship with other interlocutors. In other words, not only must I refrain from reducing how all students interact online to one particular way, but I must also avoid generalizing how one individual interacts in all situations. Nonetheless, some patterns of SCC participation and interlocutor relationships have emerged, which is the range this project describes.

Scholarship on print-based writing addresses how the rhetorical situation often calls a writer to “invoke” or “fictionalize” a reader, insert textual cues to guide an actual reader into accepting a constructed reader role, and imagine readers from disciplinary experience.<sup>3</sup> In their essay, “Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy,” Lunsford and Ede define the “audience addressed/audience invoked” dichotomy:

[audience addressed refers to] the concrete reality of the writer/s audience. . . [and assumed] that knowledge of this audience’s attitudes, beliefs, and expectations is not only possible (via observation and analysis) but essential (156). . . .[to invoke audiences writers use] the semantic and syntactic resources of language to create cues for the reader--cues

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<sup>3</sup> See the essays by Russell C. Long, Barbara Tomlinson, Theresa Enos, R.J. Willey, Louise Wetherbee Phelps, and Robert G. Roth in *A Sense of Audience in Written Communication* for a rich discussion of various conceptions of audience and their affect on the composing process.

which help to define the role or roles the writer wishes the reader to adopt. (160)

The difference here is a writer having knowledge of an actual audience to which a writer can adapt a piece of writing as opposed to a writer creating a audience role for readers to assume so that the readers interpret the text as the cues direct them to do. In order to enable a writer to more effectively respond to what are actual, potential reader concerns, print-based writers develop strategies for audience analysis which result in a sense of the audience. Successful writers have a clearer sense or more accurate sense of who the actual readers are and how they may respond to the text. Further, writers accommodate their perceived audience's views and concerns in the text in order to engage them and persuade them through an extended written work. However, Ong and others acknowledge that writers might very well know that the empirical audience is angry but invoke an audience which is calm and fair-minded in an attempt to construct a fictional reader role which is receptive to the text (1975). Having a sense of audience has pervasive consequences not only for the composing process but also for the interpretation process. For Barbara Tomlinson, writing for academic audiences is about understanding what real readers expect, and she argues:

Writers must both address actual persons and invoke fuller representations of audiences . . . specific readers of our research, readers with enough power over us to make them emphatically "nonfictional": for instance, those we depend on for esteem and affection, those who accept or reject our

various manuscripts, or, worse, those who hire and fire us.  
(86).

Tomlinson's concern is the material consequences researchers face as they may superficially understand the expectations and interests of real audiences as a result of the fictionalizing of those audiences. Developing strategies for the realization and construction of a sense of community has been a trend in current composition and rhetoric which attempts to increase a writer's knowledge of the constraints each community enforces as it identifies itself.<sup>4</sup>

In a later essay, "Representing Audience: "Successful Discourse and Disciplinary Critique," Lunsford and Ede acknowledge that these polar points of view on the audience's role in the composing process, and they posit an intermediate position:

Our own approach was to challenge the helpfulness of such dichotomous and polarizing views of audience as either wholly addressed or wholly invoked and to argue for a syntheses of these perspectives, one that acknowledges the creativity and interdependence of writers and readers writing and reading. . . .  
(169)

Lunsford and Ede critique their original conceptions about audience's role in composition and complicate the dichotomy with a third possibility which acknowledges how a writer's sense of audience may be a combination of knowledge from experience in the discipline or discourse community and of

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<sup>4</sup> See James F. Klumpp for a discussion on developing "rhetorical theory and criticism that strengthens communities and their ability to adapt and change" (75).



one's own construction of ideal or intended audience roles represented in the text.

More recently, poststructuralist theory on writer-audience relationships primarily addresses the dynamism of print-based writing situations between writer to reader. Through the concept of "discourse community," poststructuralist and social constructivist theorists have argued that even "single-authored" texts reflect multiple voices, strains of thought, and intertextuality. In *Audience and Rhetoric*, James Porter convincingly defines how poststructuralist theory has reconceived of the concept of audience and its role in composition and rhetoric:

We are now ready to dare a definition of "discourse community." A discourse community is a local and temporary constraining system, defined by a body of texts (or more generally, practices) that are unified by a common focus. A discourse community is a textual system with stated and unstated conventions, a vital history, mechanisms for wielding power, institutional hierarchies, vested interests, and so on.

(106)

When producing a text for a forum, which Porter defines as a "concrete, local manifestation of the operation of the discourse community," writers must be aware of the constraints upon the text and the writing process so that the text is accepted by the community members. The dialogic nature of this composing process rests in the writer who is constantly negotiating among rhetorical choices in order to write effectively for a particular forum. Writers express their membership in a discipline or discourse community

through their language choices, the positions argued, the research evoked, and by participation in designated forums of exchange. As discussed in Chapter One, SCC is a specialized medium of language exchange. As novices, students are unfamiliar with the language and behavioral conventions and need time to learn and adapt to this new computer program and rhetorical situation. The continuum of interlocutor relationships provides a theoretical framework for understanding how interlocutors participate and interact in SCC and for guiding text production through a greater awareness of audience. If identification is an important contemporary concept of effective rhetoric, then the continuum of interlocutor relationships is a useful schema for writers to strategize to meet this goal.

More specifically, Kenneth Burke's notion of *identification* is a widely recognized concept of rhetoric which promotes community among writer and audience within a print-literacy context which often means that writer and audience are not actually in direct contact. Burke's theory of consubstantiation, which establishes that the writer believe and represent in the text that she/he is the same as but different from the reader (1950), ideally results in the state of identification between writer and reader. However, in SCC, identification is actually a mutual process. Identification may be the end result of discussion among interlocutors from any one of the interlocutor relationship categories. Otherwise, the very definition of hierarchical and agonistic relationships suggests that the writers position themselves in a superior status to their interlocutors and tends to make identification difficult. But what is clear once again is that the construction

of interlocutor relationship is not always consistent with desired outcome and interpreted meaning; this is why the range of interlocutor relationships is a site for pedagogical work.

Often poststructuralists such as M.M. Bakhtin and those informed by his work are still dealing with the practical situation of a single person writing the text. Further, social constructivist theories which address the situation of collaboration among two or more individuals typically focus on the fact that one author received assistance, dispelling the notion of single-authorship from a vacuum and promoting the social aspects of communication (Phelps 1990). Nonetheless, these positions do not take into account the immediacy of conversation that is central to SCC. Karen Burke LeFevre does explicitly acknowledge collaboration involved in the composing of a text, activities in which writers seek the advice and critique of other writers, making the text actually multi-authored. While LeFevre's *Invention as a Social Act* is not specifically addressing the context of actual writers exchanging in real-time computer-mediated communication, her theory of invention is useful in understanding specific distinctions in the invention process when collaboratively constructing a text as a community, as opposed to composing "alone." But the immediacy in SCC is not addressed by LeFevre in her theory of collaboration in the construction of a text. In fact, in SCC the dialogue is explicit and interlocutors are constantly changing the direction of the discussion, accommodating and refuting other interlocutor's messages and it is this conversation that forms the text. The arrangement and content of the text depends on the spontaneous adjustments and initiatives interlocutors provide in their

messages, which can and do dramatically shift the course of discussion with just one contribution. Consequently, interlocutors do not have to imagine their audiences, but rather they learn to read their audiences. Further, SCC interlocutors do not have to artificially construct possible counter arguments in their texts, to anticipate audience's opposition, because interlocutors generally present their objections and concerns. As a result, SCC interlocutors must learn to effectively respond to other interlocutor's questions and challenges extemporaneously. Finally, the emphasis on writing being a collaborative, community-oriented activity is not difficult to make clear with students in computer-mediated writing classes. As they participate in SCC, students can scroll up and down the screen to see how, through written conversation, they have constructed arguments, solved problems, and performed discursive tasks as a conference community. However, raising students' awareness of their own involvement and construction in interlocutor relationships will enable them to more fully participate in SCC as an appropriate and effective writer.

### **Communication Theory and Interlocutor Relationships**

Theories from speech communication have been valuable in that they alerted me to the orality or conversational aspects of SCC, as discussed in Chapter One. Perhaps the most influential theory in the early stages of developing the continuum of interlocutor relationships was Deborah Tannen's theory about styles of conversation of men and women. In fact, the interlocutor relationship continuum began as an expansion of Deborah Tannen's gendered categories of "report talk" and "rapport talk"

which distinguish male and female styles of conversation. Hierarchical and empathic relationships are, in part, based on Tannen's categories. Further, our explicit motives for theorizing interaction among communicators is similar. Tannen's purpose is to teach males and females understanding of the differences between "report talk" and "rapport talk," public and private speaking, and/or men's and women's styles of conversation in order to enable better communication among the sexes. In contrast, my purpose is to identify, describe, and illustrate four distinct types of relationships which will serve to teach students more about the nature of their persuasion and language behaviors in written discourse online so that they will become more effective and ethically aware writers of electronic communication.

Tannen's work became more of a point of departure for my work on interlocutor relationships. I've substituted Tannen's use of the word "talk" with "relationships" because I wish to emphasize not just the discourse itself, which in Tannen's case is speech, but also the dynamic among interlocutors behind the discourse.<sup>5</sup> While I have appropriated Tannen's styles of communication, I have broadened my categories to include a greater range of the degrees of conflict and cooperation in SCC which manifest in different kinds of messages. Another way in which Tannen and I diverge is that Tannen has taken a developmental approach, which is apparent in her discussions about ways that males and females

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<sup>5</sup> See Virginia Hardy, Vivien Hodgson, and David McConnell for an application of Tannen's work to computer-mediated communication as they begin a theory of gender and electronic communication. While their work is useful in the area of gender research and for leading me to Tannen's work, the study is focused on larger generalizations about gender and participation in computer-mediated communication. I am remaining focused on description of the participation and interlocutor relationships constructed by my sample group.

are socialized from childhood through adulthood to behave and speak as they do. However, I am focusing on adult interlocutor relationships over an electronic medium within the context of the university writing classroom--a synchronic rather than diachronic approach. Finally, Tannen's work in interpersonal communication and linguistic theory varies also from this project in rhetorical theory within the context of writing pedagogy and computer-mediated communication.

Most obviously perhaps of all of the distinctions is that Tannen's theory rests on an opposition among male versus female styles of conversation. I am not relating a relationship category to a particular gender, and my categories include four which are used at different moments by both male and female speakers. Also, another reason I am not gendering the categories of interlocutor relationships is that I am making an effort to avoid making essentializing remarks about gender and discourse before having performed adequate analyses of SCC transcripts to generalize. With my sample population, half of which is technical writing students who are 90% male, I feel that I cannot make any definite claims about gender and SCC participation. While gender analysis is outside the scope of this project, there is much work to do in this area to uncover the power issues and language practices related to gender. Also, I find that essentialist arguments in classification theories create strict constraints that are not only difficult to work with and maintain in the face of "exceptions to the rule," but are also perceived as limiting to students who resist being labeled. To explain further about some of the difficulties of differentiating types or styles of discourse according to gender, in *Eloquence in an Electronic Age*:

*The Transformation of Political Speech-making*, Kathleen Hall Jamieson identifies the ambiguity between “natural” and cultural manifestations of linguistic performance:

Whether men and women are naturally disposed to different communicative styles is difficult to ascertain. The task of separating stereotypes about male and female communication from actual behavior is complicated by our tendency to internalize the behaviors and attitudes approved by society. Incorporating societal expectations into our concept of self can transform stereotypes to warn against and hence minimize disapproved behavior. Also difficult to know is whether dissimilar communicative behaviors are the by-product of nature, nurture, or the biased perception of the observer. Additional complications arise because much research on the role of gender in communication is suggestive rather than conclusive. (805)

These obstacles reveal how much we have yet to learn about our behaviors which are a result of biology and those which are a result of the process of gender socialization. Extending Jamieson’s point, a problem with gender binaries regarding language is that many of us have been educated and work within predominantly patriarchal institutions in which women as well as men become socialized into hegemonic types of thought/expression. In other words, “we all internalize the authoritative voice of patriarchy” (Bauer 672), to the extent that it feels “natural”; therefore women now replicate patriarchal modes of discourse which may serve to undermine

their own power behaviors (Bartky 1990). Further, in order to succeed socially and economically, women need to assimilate to dominant forms of discourse. As a writer who has been exposed, trained, and practiced in “masculine” and “feminine” forms of discourse, I acknowledge the power of these and other types of discourse for the building and severing of relationships with others in rhetorical situations. Various rhetorical situations call for the use of different types of interlocutor relationships, which exhibit a range of communication attitudes and behaviors.

On the one end of the spectrum of conflict and cooperation, William M.A. Grimaldi, S.J., elaborates on Aristotle’s role for auditors of public speeches. In his essay, “The Auditor’s Role in Aristotelian Rhetoric,” Grimaldi explains that Aristotle advocated a detailed audience analysis so that speakers increased awareness of how they could effect change in the auditors and dispose them to cooperation. Further, Grimaldi argues that in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, the primary role of audience is “cooperating partners” who assist in the rhetorical process of discovering that which is “suasive” in any subject. Rather than aiming to persuade audiences, Aristotle presents a collaborative model of rhetoric which calls the auditors to the role of “judge,” enabled by the speech, to arrive at a judgment:

[In the third of the first three chapters of the *Rhetoric*], we learn that the auditors are the final goal of all rhetorical discourse, for they are the ones who must reach a judgment on their own when that which is possibly suasive on the subject has been placed before them (1355b10-11, 26-27, 32-34). In this kind of role, in which they must make a judgment on their



own, the auditors cannot be totally passive partners  
completely subject to the technical skills of the speaker. (67)

First of all, this passage posits a dynamic model of Aristotelian rhetoric which challenges many traditional notions of classical rhetoric being unidirectional with the speaker having all of the power in oratory. Grimaldi argues against the notion that the audience is passive and identifies its role as “nonspeaking partners actively engaged in the exchange taking place” (67). Second, Grimaldi counters the view that Aristotelian rhetoric is aimed at persuading audiences by addressing the auditor’s role of “judge” from the *Rhetoric*. As “judges,” auditors are expected to discover along with the speaker what is suasive in the subject in order to determine the best course or the best supported position. Third, Grimaldi associates the notion of cooperation with Aristotelian rhetoric, which conventionally is referred to as antagonistic discourse or verbal contest aimed at persuading a passive audience within a speaker-auditor relationship based on agonism.

While Grimaldi acknowledges the dynamic of cooperation among speaker and auditor, he is positing one relationship or manner of interacting. His concept of auditor’s role in Aristotelian rhetoric is a singular type of relationship while the interlocutor relationships account for the variety of ways participants interact along a continuum, which offers choices rather than a narrow sense of audience and communication dynamics. Despite his argument, Grimaldi’s auditor role constructs a relationship among speaker and nonspeaking partner that is primarily passive in terms of the auditors actually contributing verbally to the oral text in ways other than are imagined and, then, accommodated by the

orator. On the contrary, in SCC interlocutors are actually active and significantly affect the electronically produced text with every message. Further, each reader is a writer, and each writer is an reader. However, Grimaldi's sense of auditor role as judge in Aristotelian rhetoric allows for a concept of rhetoric which is truly interactive, positioning the audience in an analytical role. In SCC, interlocutors share the responsibility of accomplishing assigned tasks and making judgments about each person's contribution. All interlocutors discuss and collaboratively decide what is suasive about a subject. Moreover, the interlocutor role in classroom SCC involves active, analytical engagement of ideas for intellectual growth and rhetorical training.

On the extreme end of the conflict and cooperation continuum, communication theory about agonistic, confrontational language provides an abstract understanding of how such competitive and, in some cases, malicious language functions in public discourse. Discussing some conventions of public discourse in her article, "Hecklers and the Communication Triangle," Ulrike Zinn Jaeckel explains that, traditionally since Aristotle, all three species of rhetoric--deliberative, judicial, and epideictic--have been based on specialized roles in communication which comprise the single orator speaking to a large audience of listeners. Jaeckel goes on to explain how the conventions of the public speaking generally required the listener to remain silent throughout the speech. However, brief expressions of approval or disapproval were permitted but limited. Given these constraints, public discourse does not correspond to conventions of interpersonal communication in which, ideally, the roles of speaking and

listening are interchanging among conversation participants who are ideally permitted to express approval and disapproval and they wish. Jaeckel's argument is that the communication triangle needs to be redrawn in order to accommodate contentious manifestations in rhetoric, "heckling," occurring in public discourse. Jaeckel defines heckling and its implications for communication research:

A comprehensive study of heckling, understood as vocal and otherwise noisy behavior that interrupts or stops a public speech, would doubtless reveal a multitude of intentions, types, techniques, and consequences of this method of disputing a speaker's authority. Heckling can be spontaneous or premeditated. Its purpose may be to gain a voice or to shout the speaker down. It may range from occasional interruptions to an uproar that shuts down the proceedings at hand, and it may turn into violence. The perpetrators may be members of the intended audience or outsiders who "crash" the meeting. What interests me here is the function of heckling as a deliberate violation of the rules that govern public speaking. (166)

Jaeckel's description of heckling and its range of intentions, forms, and effects correspond to my treatment of agonism in SCC. The passage addresses the impact that a powerful heckler can have in a public communication situation. Nevertheless, an oral heckler can assert more power over the situation and all of its participants than a writer in SCC can because of the emotional impact of sound, which is far more difficult to

ignore than the written word on a scrolling screen with every message.<sup>6</sup> Also, the interlocutor relationship continuum describes the relations and power dynamics among writers and readers behind the act of heckling, competing, and so forth, which are intertwined in rhetorical concerns. Further, this theory of heckling is focused on how the behaviors violate conventions, while the interlocutor relationships are focused on what I observe and note from the transcripts. The difference is that my work does not work from a standard of rules of SCC participation to which my observations are compared and contrasted. Rather, I am observing what might become the rules or norms of behavior in this new medium of communication. With a long tradition, public speaking as an action and as a subject of study has developed more narrowly defined expectations of behavior and perhaps even ideals of communication practices than SCC has.

Citing Nevin Laib and Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Jaeckel identifies a less “irenic” and more “territorial” model of rhetoric that displays conflicts of interest and political agendas and that does not assume equality among speaker a listener. While Jaeckel sees heckling as a violation of rules, I am examining contentious discourse in SCC as part of a range of ways that interlocutors interact. In SCC there is a concept of “netiquette” or the etiquette of writing in Internet chat rooms. Internet providers and chat room overseers make strong statements against abusive behavior toward

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<sup>6</sup> In fact, Internet chat rooms have a mechanism that allows one interlocutor to block out all subsequent messages sent by a given interlocutor to the conference. Daedalus does not have that capability at this time. Further, such a mechanism would not be productive in a class focused on rhetorical issues.

other participants and prohibit those aggressive discursive actions. Consequences for agonistic behavior online can involve the interlocutor being forced to leave the conference, and sometimes permanently. Nonetheless, agonistic relationships among interlocutors on the Internet are a well known phenomena which does leak into classroom SCC as well. Thus, it is important to have considered and theorized how agonistic as well as empathic relationships function in SCC.

### **Electronic Discourse and Interlocutor Relationships**

Theory of computer-mediated communication has been a fast growing interdisciplinary body of research. There is a wide range in the kinds of research being done which generally exhibits either “dominant discourse,” views characterized by an optimistic interpretation of technology’s progress in American culture,” or “antidominant discourse,” views characterized by “a skeptical interpretation of technology’s integration in contemporary culture and education” (Barton 56). On the contrary, the interlocutor relationship continuum does neither. Computers are neither the answer to all of our hopes for collaborative writing, nor are they the reason for the deterioration of our culture’s moral character or our writing abilities. What the theory does assume is that SCC is a new form of writing which needs to be theoretically studied in order to make the best use of it in our writing classes. Other types of research in computer conferencing I will address here includes theoretical descriptions of the medium itself and language conventions associated with computer

conferencing; classifications of messages, tasks or activities suitable for electronic conferencing; and types of unethical electronic transactions.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of a framework for understanding ways that people communicate through electronic technology as in television, radio, film, and computers, theorists such as Marshall McLuhan, Walter J. Ong, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Kathleen E. Welch, and others have considered the nature of the writer/speaker's language use. Before the age of television, hegemonic public discourse could primarily be characterized as information-centered, hierarchical, and competitive (Jamieson 1995). However, television, a medium which delivers messages and images to mass audiences in an interpersonal format of conversation, promotes "female" modes of discourse. Jamieson argues:

television invites a personal, self-disclosing style that draws public discourse out of a private self and comfortably reduces the complex world to dramatic narratives. Because it encompasses these characteristics, the once spurned womanly style is now the style of preference" (808).

Particularly with popular discussion format television shows, program moderators must respond appropriately to guests who are disclosing personal and emotionally charged information about themselves.

Conversation moves from one speaker to the next. Extended monologues by the guests and by the moderator are discouraged by the format which is set up to address several groups of guests over the program's length of

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<sup>7</sup> See Hawisher and Selfe's essay, "Electronic Meetings of the Minds: Research, Electronic Conferences, and Composition Studies" for a survey and discussion of the range of research on computer conferencing.

time, therefore, necessitating that speakers provide brief, concise reports or anecdotes about their situation as they relate to the central topic.

Generally, such are the communication conventions of SCC. In fact, some SCC programs do not allow an interlocutor to contribute more than four lines of message at one send. Limiting messages to small “chunks” of information requires that participants write collaboratively and concisely, allowing more interlocutors to participate at a given time.

Like SCC, television entirely depends on written discourse, or, more specifically, scripts. Ironically, viewers have the sense that the televised conversation is occurring spontaneously. Moreover, viewers report feeling that they are part of the conversation broadcast before them on their television sets. However, there are obvious limits to the degree of participation a viewer can experience with television. Similar to how readers participate in the meaning making of that a print text, a viewer participates in the construction of meaning while viewing television. SCC distinctly involves interlocutors in the interactivity of language exchange. While interlocutors may choose to “lurk” or passively view without producing messages, they are not fulfilling the classroom assignment which requires students to contribute ideas. Further, an interlocutor’s lack of participation in a discussion is a marked omission which affects the quality of the conference exchange and its final product, the transcript text. With television, if home viewers remain silent, the particular show being broadcast at that moment remains unaffected by the lack of input. In fact, the medium of television broadcasting uses formats which do not allow for the interaction of outside viewers except in the rare occasion that a live

program is set up to receive viewer contact; however, callers tend to be rigorously screened before being permitted on the air. In other words, the script guides even the most extemporaneous aspects of television broadcasting. However, in SCC, students have a great deal more control over the spontaneous writing of messages which become the final text. In SCC, interlocutors need to participate. Passive reading describes a distant, unidirectional engagement with interlocutors which is discouraged in SCC. Accordingly, interlocutor relationships is a theory which describes interlocutors in dynamic exchange and the development of relationships along a continuum of conflict and cooperation within the pursuit of communally constructed knowledge. The interlocutor relationship continuum provides a theoretical perspective on how one participant affects other participants and the conference itself.

Often the research on computer conferencing is focused on language product and technology rather than on the audience's role in the composing process. Consequently, in "A Social Influence Model of Flaming in Computer-mediated Communication," Philip A. Thompsen argues that previous theories and definitions of flaming are inadequate because they "have largely failed to incorporate the element of time, have exhibited a myopic bias toward face-to-face interaction, have suffered from meaning realism and have ignored the role of social influence" (3). Considering various and divergent definitions of flaming, Thompsen problematizes their reductive emphasis on the content of the language which lacks the "conceptual clarity" to address what he considers to be the central questions: "Is flaming a behavior, a message characteristic, or a linguistic



genre? Does flaming arise from a relaxing of inhibitions or an intensifying of hostility? Is flaming reflective of strong emotions, incessant banality, or immature histrionics?" (2). By focusing on social implications of flaming, Thompson argues that definitions of flaming are descriptions of the outcome of the flaming process created in a vacuum. Thompson's solution is a social influence model of flaming in which he defines the process of flaming in his conceptualization which is contingent upon an interpretive process: "Flaming refers to computer-mediated communicative behaviors that are interpreted to be inappropriately hostile" (3). In this definition, Thompson acknowledges that flaming requires an "interpretive sense-making act, leading to the shared understanding that the expressed hostility is inappropriate in a given context" (3).

What my spectrum of interlocutor relationships has in common with Thompson's social influence theory is that we are both acknowledging the communication process in defining particular types of behavior. Our theories rest on the assumption that communication is a socially constructed act which manifests in various forms. However, the continuum of interlocutor relationships takes the social aspects of computer-mediated communication a step further by identifying the dynamics that flaming, for example, establish in the discourse among interlocutors. In other words, flaming is a symptom of an agonistic relationship established by an interlocutor. Further, my research addresses questions about the types of relationships expressed in SCC, ways that other interlocutors respond to particular constructions of relationships, and how different types of interlocutor relationships affect

the development of a collaboratively written conversation, the text. While Thompson argues that context and writer/audience matter when identifying flaming and its hostile nature, this project applies that position and demonstrates how these components of rhetoric operate in SCC discourse.

In an effort to reclaim flaming as a useful form of communication, Hongjie Wang and Yan Hong classify its types of manifestations in Internet chat rooms. In “Flaming: More Than Just a Necessary Evil for Academic Mailing Lists,” present three types of flaming analyzed from chat room discussions: “the personal attack (venomous remarks), taunting (sarcastic barbs), and didactic (admonishments, rebukes, reprimands)” (1). Further, the authors argue that flaming may play a positive role in the electronic exchange such as educating the ignorant, enforcing the rules [of netiquette], facilitating effective communication, and reshaping society. Moreover, flaming may also have positive effects in an Internet chat room: punishment, education, and regulation (from “policing”) of the violators which brings “order” to the group and frightens off commercial advertising. Most importantly, Wang and Hong argue that “flaming also encourages clear writing and no-nonsense communication” (1). While much of this may be true in some cases, I find that flaming has as many negative effects such as dominance, hurt feelings, silence, and loss of task’s focus that I am critical of the virtues of flaming. My own research in this project is less concerned with the validation of agonistic relationships in SCC and more interested in how interlocutors construct agonistic relationships through inflammatory discourse. While Wang and Hong’s categories and descriptions of flaming were useful in identifying agonism in SCC, their final

argument that policy and taunting lead to clear writing would only prove to be true if the other interlocutors weren't personally offended by the abusive, hierarchical behavior from an interlocutor. Using scare or punitive tactics within a highly hierarchical relationship from one peer to another may not prove to be an effective mode of education among students. In fact, when the students in this study displayed considerable condescension, inappropriate language, and correctives, other interlocutors tended to flame them, dismiss them, or not address them at all. However, Wang and Hong's research context is based on Internet chat room discussions whose demographics vary a great deal more than in classroom SCC with my undergraduate students of writing. Being in a classroom with the conventions of behavior associated with and enforced by educational institutions affect students' relationships with other students as well as with the instructor in ways that are not within the scope of this project. Rules of Internet chat room behavior are far more informal than in our classrooms, a place conducted according to university policies which discourage and even prohibit forms of harassment that would include flaming. I question not only whether flaming is an effective means of educating others but also whether it is an ethical means of doing so. The continuum of interlocutor relationships acknowledges agonistic relationships as one way among many to interact with other interlocutors. Each category has its own power issues which can bring about a variety of consequences in terms of how other interlocutors are going to respond to a particular construction of interlocutor relationship. Chapter Two demonstrates some of those consequences, which are never completely

predictable. As rhetoricians, we use strategies and forms of communication with goals in mind, but not certain outcomes.

Unfortunately, often our rhetorical goals conflict with ethical consequences of our rhetorical actions, and, therefore, place us in the difficult position of having to decide among effective and ethical language use within the particular context at hand. Moreover, Richard Rubin argues that there are diverting characteristics of technologies themselves, the “Seven Temptations,” which distract individuals’ ethical attention when using information technologies. In his essay, “Moral Distancing and the Use of Information Technologies: The Seven Temptations,” Rubin discusses some of the social and ethical effects of the computer revolution which presents new dilemmas about ethical conduct which professionals are not being adequately trained for either in school or on the job. Rubin acknowledges but critiques some organizations’ codes of ethical conduct: “They are less ethical codes than rules of conduct designed to protect an organizations’ interest from dishonest actions on the part of its employees” (126). In other words, employees are trained to not do certain things purely to prevent damage to the company, but are not prepared to consider ethical consequences to consumers, the environment, allied organizations, and so forth. The introduction to ethical consequences is incomplete and biased, which results in the moral distancing from the technology user to the consequences caused by the technology and that user at work. Rubin describes seven characteristics of information technologies which promote moral distancing and the diversion from ethical concerns:

(1) **Speed:** The speed of gathering and transmitting information is greatly increased with computers (127). . . . (2) **Privacy and Anonymity:** Computer technologies, especially now that they are often home or office based, permit unethical actions to be performed in absolute or near-absolute privacy--literally in the privacy of one's home (128). . . . (3) **Nature of the Medium:** The nature of the electronic medium permits one to steal information without actually removing it (129). . . . (4) **Aesthetic Attraction:** I think that there are many non-technologically minded people who fail to recognize that work with computers requires creativity, inventiveness and artistry in the solution of technological problems. . . . This fascination with overcoming difficult challenges with simple or clever solutions may be magnified if the results lead to the "defeat" of a worthy opponent (129). . . . (5) **Increased Availability of Potential Victims:** In essence, the opportunity to behave unethically toward thousand of people with relatively little effort is well within our grasp (129). . . . (6) **International Scope:** It is not only that acts can be done to so many people at great speed in the privacy of one's home, but the geographical reach of information technologies has few limits (130). . . . (7) **The Power to Destroy:** Normally, we think of ethical violations as consisting of inappropriate access, dissemination, and use of information, but there are those whose purpose is to destroy it as well (130).

As Rubin points out, these seven different characteristics of information technologies make it “very easy to be bad.” Due to these technological qualities, the user often feels less likely to get caught, physically distant from the damage caused, and challenged as in a game by the barriers of access to the information. Therefore, with the high probability that computers will be used unethically, Rubin argues that organizations need to present a clear position on ethical conduct by writing policies, hiring and promoting ethically conscious individuals, and conducting orientations and training programs in ethics.

While Rubin’s taxonomy of temptations provides this project with a range of concrete characteristics of computer use by which to begin ethical considerations of SCC, his work is very general , accommodating diverse forms of technologies. A few of issues Rubin raises apply to SCC such as the speed of communication transmission, the power to humiliate, and the increased availability of “victims” of derogatory commentary. However, the extent of damage or destruction that Rubin considers goes beyond the discursive manipulation available in classroom SCC. The essay acknowledges the access of private information which could have serious financial, emotional, and political ramifications for the victim. Further, Rubin’s other concerns which relate to distance, privacy, and anonymity do not apply in our SCC situation at all since students were identified in the conference by their names and were all gathered in the same room. Perhaps the most important distinction to make is that Rubin’s work is focused on the user’s relationship to the technologies in the act of access, transmission, and dissemination of information, rather than the user’s

relationship to the audience. While he acknowledges that damage is being done to someone, somewhere, Rubin has a vague concept of “victim” or audience affected by “destruction:” he is somewhat morally distant from the audience, certainly more so than the users he cites in his essay.

However, ethical considerations need to go beyond the act of violation in order to reach the affected party. The reason the acts of stealing personal information and purchasing with it, for example, might be considered unethical is because they violate a code of conduct which prescribes that it is wrong to cause harm or bring about negative consequences for another.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, if the act did not injure or affect anyone negatively, then, the act would be ethical.

More specifically, my work focuses on the attitude the writer projects in relation to other interlocutors in the text in order to address ethical dimensions of various constructions of interlocutor relationships. However, as long as research remains focused primarily on “the individual’s attitude toward a particular discourse,”<sup>9</sup> rather than toward the interlocutors within the exchange, the inquiry ignores some vital aspects of the rhetorical and ethical implications of electronic forms of discourse. The theory of interlocutor relationships is not only calling students awareness to their relationships with each other in conferences but also to how those

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<sup>8</sup> See Diana C. Reep for a brief discussion of ethics and technical writing in her textbook, *Technical Writing: Principles, Strategies, and Readings*. Third Edition. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> In “Computer Conferences and Learning: Authority, Resistance, and Internally Persuasive Discourse,” Marilyn M. Cooper and Cynthia L. Selfe classify three types of discourses identified in computer conferences: internally persuasive discourse, which is “the discourse that is internalized and modified to suit one’s purposes,” authoritarian discourses, which are related to various authorities such as “the authoritativeness of tradition, of types of authorities,” and “discourse that doesn’t matter,” which is discourse that is mostly ignored because it doesn’t speak to the individual’s concerns (859).

relationships position interlocutors within a power dynamic which produces emotional, intellectual, and social consequences for individual interlocutors.

### **Feminist Theory and Interlocutor Relationships**

The very nature of the interlocutor relationship continuum compels the participant to acknowledge the ethical dimensions of the composing process in SCC through an awareness of how interlocutors affect, represent, and position one another in discourse.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, language theorists working from a feminist perspective have worked to identify, theorize, and “re-vision” the inequities in language usage and power among communicators as associated with gender. Feminist theory and criticism presents inquiry into male/female and feminist/masculinist models of written, spoken, and electronic discourse. These theories and feminist methodologies for studying language use have served to illuminate some key differences in styles of exchange related to gender, either biologically or culturally, which have been used to explain and document the historical bias against women’s discourse in Western culture.<sup>11</sup> Many feminist theories of discourse influenced the construction of hierarchical and empathic interlocutor relationships as addressed in Chapter Two.

The predominance of male-centered, scientific discourse in academic and political rhetoric has been a factor of preventing women from thriving

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<sup>10</sup> However, the interlocutor’s motives for recognizing these representations and interrelations may not be for the purpose of being ethical, but rather for being rhetorically successful. In Chapter Four I will discuss more about the intersections between rhetoric and ethics through the interlocutor relationship continuum in SCC.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussions of feminine and masculine theories of discourse, see Gilman 1899, Cixous 1975, Gilligan 1977, Belinky et. al., Tannen 1991, Sullivan 1992, Moss 1992, Van Nostrand 1993, Kirsch 1993, and Fulkerson 1996.



as professionals. Feminist language theorists have appropriated this negative relationship between masculine and feminine discourse by validating, through theory, the language used by women. By historicizing men's and women's language, theorists create contextual spaces for women's discourse within traditionally male-dominated arenas. My work here incorporates these theoretical conclusions and endeavors by openly placing, on an equal plane, those types of SCC discourse which reflect traditional feminine styles along with those which display traditional masculine styles. By doing so, I have created an analytical framework which values multiple discourses and finds rhetorical exigence from participant relationships online for various approaches to interaction in SCC. I explore a full range of relationships present in computer conferencing among students using Interchange, which vary in degrees of conflict and agreement.

In response to my inclusion of this range of relationships, some critics may argue that the incorporation of conflict into this classification of relationships counters feminist pursuits since conflict is associated with the hierarchy of masculinist interactions. However, to ignore that patriarchal arguments and styles of conversation are taking place does not allow for a rigorous examination of why, when, and how they are used and received online. The interlocutor relationship continuum describes the wide range of ways students related to one another and established relationships with other interlocutors. Another issue associated with the role of conflict in the interlocutor relationship continuum is that conflict necessarily involves discord, but does not necessitate the presence of hostility. Consequently,

participant interactions may reflect differences of opinion a hierarchical relationship among the participants. Therefore, manifestations of conflict may be embodied in a feminist or egalitarian relationship among participants as well as in a hierarchical or agonistic relationship. Thus, the interlocutor relationship continuum addresses smaller degrees of conflict present within each category of relationship and larger degrees of conflict differentiating each category. Therefore, the categories represent a particular shift in the ratio of cooperation and conflict, but possess variations internal to each classification.

A different concern among theorists may be that agreement in communication does not guarantee resolution in problem solving. For example, Jurgen Habermas's communicative action has been posited as an "ideal speech situation" which depends on consensus (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 1991). According to Habermas, communicative action is

the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations. . . and seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement" (quoted in Foss, Foss, and Trapp 262).

The ideal of communicative action exists as a possibility but not as a regular occurrence in daily transactions. Habermas promotes this model of exchange and cooperative action as something to work toward in the communication process. While I do not hold purely cooperative communication as the ideal for human problem solving, I have observed moments in the transcripts in which an interlocutor established an

empathic relationship with other interlocutors, a dynamic manifesting high degrees of cooperation and consensus. Further, these identified constructions of empathic relationships produced both rich, elaborate exchanges as well as digressions in conversations and expressions of “boredom.” In other words, cooperative relations at times produced an ideal communication situation for the classroom context, while at other times, lead to a deterioration in discussion productivity. Constructing an alternate concept of cooperation in communication in the context of print literacy, Mary Louise Pratt attacks Grice’s cooperative principle, which she argues is an oversimplified concept that assumes rational cooperation toward the achievement of shared goals. In other words, Pratt argues that cooperation does not require that individuals have identical agendas nor that they have similar approaches to resolving problems: “One must be able to talk about reader/text/author relations that are coercive, subversive, conflictive, submissive, as well as cooperative, and about relations that are some or all of these simultaneously or at different points in a text” (70). Pratt is aware that people, even when they are allies, don’t always agree on task objectives or on the process of completing particular tasks. Discourse communities, while defined by similarities among members’ behaviors and values, experience internal conflict and resolution as part of routine collaboration and administration of group tasks. Moreover, cooperation is not always the most effective nor the most common means of decision-making. For example, once a group reaches consensus, they may not feel there is anything left to discuss. Since everyday transactions in our capitalistic economy are performed at times in a competitive manner and

at other times a cooperative manner, and our students need to be prepared to respond appropriately within a variety of contexts. Cooperation and conflict are antithetical dynamics among communicators which the interlocutor relationship continuum acknowledges in order to present rhetorical choices to be made by participants in SCC.

While some feminists, who are deeply committed to opening up dialogue particularly among typically silent speakers and writers, have advocated a highly cooperative approach to teaching and group dynamics.<sup>12</sup> I am concerned that such a receptive guiding principle may mislead students into the belief that any and all positions or even opinions are valid. Such instruction may foster an uncritical perspective of other participants' ideas and arguments. In Chapter Four, I will argue further how a dialectical relationship among interlocutors in classroom SCC may be the most productive type of relationships because of the critical, collaborative, and respectful mutual inquiry that is characteristic of this category along the continuum. Another potential problem with pure cooperation is that, ironically perhaps, some participants may become silent in order to maintain consensus which would be broken by the expression of an opposing point of view. In this case, conference moderators must instill in participants the value of discovering multiple positions on topics of discussion. Creating an atmosphere of exchange in which participants feel a sense of obligation to be attentive and critical toward one another in conversation will allow participants to challenge one another into scholarly

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the positive effects of cooperation in communication, see Belenky et. al. 1986, Gilligan 1982, Kramarae 1981, Schaef 1981, Nilsen et. al. 1977, Thorne and Henley 1975.

growth and the development of interpersonal skills. Through the interlocutor relationship continuum, consensus is seen as less of a goal and more of a phenomenon which does occur when interlocutors share views on topics and solutions to problems. By learning to recognize degrees of conflict and cooperation, interlocutors can more successfully build consensus or challenge it for the exploration and discovery of the available procedures and sequences of action.

On the contrary, some feminists have commented that a danger of losing conflict and disagreement in dialogue is the loss of multiplicity of languages, voices, perspectives, and so forth (Cixous 1975; Bauer 1988; Spolsky 1990). Such productive conflict, which explores possibilities and options, may facilitate the use of language to negotiate differences and power relations among participants within problem solving situations. This project represents a search for the multiplicity of approaches to interaction that manifest online in the discourse of synchronous computer conferencing. By analyzing how different degrees of conflict and cooperation create particular relationships, I have described a multiplicity. Acknowledging multiplicity of relationships promises to alert scholars' and teachers' attention to the various ways that interlocutors present points of view and weave together those arguments through a collaborative effort. Unlike, the "current-traditional"<sup>13</sup> print-based composition which is typified by an individual writer in the composing process attempting to accurately represent "reality," collaboration in SCC is explicit as interlocutors

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<sup>13</sup> In *Rhetoric and Reality*, James Berlin defines a historical movement in composition studies and pedagogy as the current traditional approach, which is objectivistic in epistemology, corrective and formalistic in assessment, and product-focused in orientation.

establish relationships and exchange views accordingly while working toward the achievement of a pedagogical goal, but, more importantly, toward the construction of text.

### **Implications for Research and Scholarship**

As research on computer-mediated communication has tended to focus on genre, the technology itself, and ethical issues in general, the interlocutor relationship continuum poses new possibilities for research in the areas of audience awareness as discourse community, the role of audience and writer in the composing process, and, more specifically, of writer-audience relationships and their impact on computer conversations, community action, and composition classroom instruction. However, before embarking on these research pursuits, future scholarship is needed to increase the reliability of the interlocutor relationship continuum with larger sample populations of interlocutors being observed and the transcripts of their real-time computer conferences analyzed to enable the scrupulous generalization of the types of interlocutor relationships present in classroom SCC. The interlocutor relationship continuum must be further tested for validity with larger and more diverse populations of students in a variety of levels of writing courses across the disciplines.

Interlocutor relationships moves away from a focus on either writer or reader to an examination of the community of writer/readers in the act of composing discourse. This emphasis on interlocutor relationships and their corresponding language behaviors which form within discourse communities takes social models of invention a step further by investigating and

describing the range of ways individual members interact and perform discursive tasks in a conferencing community. Research on interlocutor relationships must acknowledge how the community works together to construct the knowledge promoted, extended, and also challenged by its members.

If we were to extend our analysis of the role of interlocutor relationships in the conferencing process, we could identify not only dominant ideas and procedures for performing tasks adopted by a particular discourse community, but also recognize the process of how these ideas become dominant for a given group. Moreover, how alternate ideas are dismissed would also be available for examination. Understanding how definitive views emerge from conflicting ideas within an organization's conversations allows us to better define discourse communities by their modes of interaction and patterns of interrelationships, knowledge which is vital to successful communication for any member participating in that community.

In addition to learning more about the process of discourse community formation and the ways that members relate to one another, research on interlocutor relationships can also provide insight in to the enculturation process for individuals joining a community. Analysis of types of relationships which are well received by established members of a discourse community can facilitate the socialization process, and , therefore, the success of the new member. Identifying ineffective attempts to convey information, ally with other members, and initiate innovation reveal an organization's assumptions, values, and preferences which are

integral to the inner workings of the community. Further, these elements of the conventional relationships associated with a discourse community reveal the appropriate personas members adopt in order to effectively communicate their research in the designated forums.

Ultimately, the value of research on interlocutor relationships is that researchers are in a more pedagogically informed position to address how we can instruct students about the enculturation process within discourse communities using SCC as well as the variety of ways specific organizations may interact. Students need strategies for identifying relationships conventional to a conference community, which is what research on interlocutor relationships provides. Conversely, electronic writing instructors need an abstract means of relating to students not only strategies for effectively discoursing with others but also connections between rhetoric and ethics when writing in SCC. More specifically, the ethical dimensions of interlocutor relationships in SCC reside in the roles writers construct for their audience members, the ways writers relate to their readers, and the relationship that manifests in the language according to these designated roles and attitudes between interlocutors. Ideally, research on interlocutor relationships will bring students and teachers to a greater awareness of the ways their attitudes toward interlocutors are displayed in the discourse's textual features and that their language has the power to build, sever, and destroy relationships and rapport among interlocutors in SCC.

In this chapter, I have compared and contrasted pertinent theories of writer-audience relationships by scholars working in the areas of rhetoric



and composition, communication, electronic discourse, and feminist discourse. While this project is indebted to these previous theories, they are also inadequate because they do not account for the dynamic nature of SCC, the various types of interlocutor relationships present in SCC, nor the rhetorical impact of interlocutor relationships on the composing process. Conversely, this project succeeds in describing some of the ways that writers and readers relate to one another as they engage in constantly shifting writer/reader roles in real-time, written exchange. Further, the interlocutor relationship continuum provides a heuristic for SCC students by describing a wide range of relationships to establish with specific interlocutors and for various rhetorical situations. In the next chapter, I will discuss the rhetorical and ethical implications of teaching students a greater awareness of interlocutor relationships in SCC.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS AND THE INTERLOCUTOR RELATIONSHIP CONTINUUM

*"The more dance steps one knows in the abstract, the better able one will be to dance no matter what the circumstances."* Barry Brummett

Teachers of writing must rethink their pedagogies in light of how our literacy practices have been affected by technology and how they require new, appropriate teaching approaches and activities that engage students in the language ethics and technology that they are using and will need to be proficient in using for their livelihoods (Hawisher and LeBlanc 1992). My teaching of SCC was a series of successes and failures. However, the successes prevailed, leaving me with the confidence that teaching students how to communicate in synchronous computer conferencing was worthwhile for the development of their audience awareness as rhetoricians and for the securing of their future success in business and other social environments. The purpose of this project is to contribute to the theoretical study and practice of electronic rhetoric by providing additional rhetorical resources and strategies to students and scholars. My objective is to provide teachers and students with awareness of how electronic discourse affects other interlocutors and resources to help students work effectively in this medium. The theory should serve students by providing them with strategies and questions that assist with the writing process. Barry Brummett explains more on the issue of practical theory:

If we regard ordinary people (students) as the primary audience for rhetorical theory and its criticisms, then rhetorical theory and criticism's goal and justification is pedagogical: *to teach people how to experience their rhetorical environments more richly. . . .* The more rhetorical theories one is familiar with, the more one can consciously and richly see, understand, and appreciate rhetoric no matter what the circumstances. (658)

Making students more aware of the dynamics and power implications of their electronic involvement with other communicators will enable students to make more conscious choices about their language use. My hopes are that the end result of such theoretical and practical training is that students enhance their rhetorical power and ethical awareness as rhetoricians.

In this final chapter, I will address pedagogical implications of the interlocutor relationship continuum in synchronous computer conferencing in the writing classroom. The first part addresses theoretical issues of interlocutor relationships which suggest a social perspective on teaching invention, a collaborative approach to writing, and a student-centered classroom. The second part offers strategies for implementing the interlocutor relationship continuum in the computer-mediated composition classroom. The third section discusses the intersections among rhetoric and ethics embodied in the concept of interlocutor relationships through which an instructor can negotiate with students what their potential

interlocutor responsibilities may be as they strive to produce effective discourse in classroom SCC.

### **The Interlocutor Relationship Continuum: Pedagogical Theory for the Computer-Mediated Classroom**

In constructing an analytical schema for understanding interlocutor relationships in SCC, my goal was to conceptualize relational categories which would be comprehensive enough without being too rigid or acontextual. Further, I worked to make this theory useful to SCC teachers, scholars, and writers in the examination of their own patterns of interaction and the quality of their discourse. Theoretical issues pertinent to the teaching of interlocutor relationships in classroom SCC include social construction of knowledge and the composing process of public discourse, collaboration and the decentered classroom, and assessment of student performance.

#### **SCC as a Social Act**

Establishing with students that SCC is a collaborative process of composing a conference text is not a difficult task since Interchange involves each writer in the social act of integrating and synthesizing the views posted during the exchange<sup>1</sup> In fact, the text comprises a collection of multi-authored messages recorded in the transcript which comprises the

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<sup>1</sup> See Karen Burke LeFevre's book titled, *Invention as a Social Act* for an in-depth discussion of various approaches to rhetorical invention, particularly her argument which posits that invention involves the "demonstration of one's ability to integrate and synthesize social heritage and social influence . . ." (131). Her final chapter, *Implications of a Social Perspective*, provides a coherent and practically useful discussion of how the social perspective of rhetorical invention impacts pedagogical practice.

text. However, most undergraduate students have not been exposed to social constructivist theories of language which would lead them to attribute the ways they participate in SCC to a more complex set of social and cultural factors, conventions, and practices, that go beyond the more obvious content or basic skill associations they acknowledge. Therefore, discussing theories of how language, cultural values, and social practices affect and shape how we think and respond to situations in language are of importance for developing students' awareness of language use as rhetorical. Discussing this concept with students is difficult because often they must challenge the very nature of all that they have come to accept as true in their lives. However, understanding social aspects of knowledge and language use aid communication in a medium which is socially contingent and in flux from the moment one logs on until the point one exits the conference.

Since many users are online at the same time and can be considered the audience for any given message, the conversation-like forum of classroom SCC calls for public communication with a limited display of personal information. In an article entitled "Rogue Cops and Health Care: What Do We Want from Public Writing," Susan Wells bases her argument for creating exigency for public writing in our composition classes on Habermas' conception of the public. Providing a "real" reason and context for discourse with an audience allows students to view audience more specifically in relation to the composing of a text. By addressing people's various and conflicting needs, concerns and counter arguments first-hand

rather than having to imagine what those issues might be, students engage in the practical experience they need for learning to write rhetorically. Peculiar to SCC is the availability of that “live,” real-time audience with whom students experiment, play, develop their strategies for conciliation and persuasion, and critique the content and presentation of each other’s views. Such activities promote students’ awareness that interlocutors in educational, social, and work settings not only share concerns and opinions but they also oppose one another’s views and opinions. Moreover, in order to solve problems and negotiate procedures for action, interlocutors must develop strategies for acknowledging, accommodating, and refuting conflicting views among members of discourse communities in ways that are acceptable and productive .

To further problematize the multiplicity which writers face when addressing the public, Wells claims that the practices of public writing are in flux along with our cultural values, social practices, and language needs. Therefore, it is difficult to construct a coherent sense of the public to which composition students can direct their writing:

The cynicism that we encounter daily in our students and ourselves responds to a fragmented and contradictory public, a public that must be constructed and reconstructed, that requires multiple negotiations and positionings for every possible speaker. (333)

What this means for students in SCC is that analyzing audience in order to construct an appropriate interlocutor relationships is not a simple endeavor

of applying the correct formula. Rather, students engage with strategies and pedagogical heuristics for the closer understanding of the audience members with whom they are exchanging. Though SCC is a more interactive form of writing than most forms of public discourse which would suggest that addressing audience needs specifically would be more plausible due to the immediate feedback, in SCC an interlocutor has to interact with several interlocutors, all of whom may be constructing various interlocutor relationships. In other words, establishing an interlocutor relationship in a computer conference needs to be carefully done so that one interlocutor can present effectively to a group of interlocutors and still reach individuals effectively as well. The interlocutor relationship continuum is a theory through which SCC writers and readers can analyze and construct various relationships to best suit their situations and contexts of public discourse.

#### Teachers and Students Negotiating Authority in SCC

More and more, scholars are writing about pedagogies of resistance and the negotiating of authority among students and teachers by changing the political arrangement of the classroom from teacher-centered to student-centered.<sup>2</sup> A major area of this enterprise is the research on how computer classrooms decenter the teacher's authority by allowing students to participate with each other in class activities such as computer-mediated conferences, revision, and research. However, a computer classroom does not guarantee that the authority is actually shared among

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<sup>2</sup> See Selfe 1990 and 1993; Brown Lady Falls 1992; Susser 1993; Flores 1990; Wahlstrom 1994 for discussions about decentering authority in the classroom.

students and teachers. Depending on how teachers construct in-class activities, the computer classroom may mimic traditionally structured classes based on a model of dyadic interaction, “emphasizing the role of the all-knowing teacher discussing a topic with quiet, attentive students who may respond to the teacher but not directly to one another” (Cooper and Selfe 847). However, teaching students to be more conscious agents of their own language use requires that we construct forums of learning which allow them the opportunity to invent, critique, and re-invent with authority, that the constructions are worthy of being acknowledged and that they offer the class some part of her or his experience and knowledge. As a result, students and teacher fuse their knowledge, negotiate conflicts, and form a community-based learning system.

The computer classroom can be a site for egalitarian interactions (or at least a site which has the potential to become more democratic) due to the redistribution of central authority from the teacher to the students.<sup>34</sup> Particularly in SCC, when students have the opportunity, at least hypothetically, to participate as often as the instructor, ideas presented by students can largely outnumber those presented by a moderator. Therefore, idea exchange, argumentation, and constructions of knowledge by the class can be primarily a product of student interaction. More

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<sup>3</sup> Selfe, Hawisher, Cooper, Record and others have focused their attention on the “personal power,” authority, and freedom that even marginalized students experience in an electronic classroom.

<sup>4</sup> The computer classroom, while it has the potential for greater equality among participants, it still exhibits sexist forms of language use and exclusionary practices. Therefore, we need to watch for these manifestations of communication and work to create a truly democratic environment for learning.



importantly, perhaps, is that instructors can use student knowledge to build the collective knowledge of the class as well as to challenge students to expand beyond what they know into new territories of understanding and rhetorical experience.

However, it is hard to determine how much authority teachers ought to share or give up to students in order to create a productive learning environment within this dynamic medium. While encouraging students to be critical of texts and intellectually resistant promotes agency and authority in students, excessive freedom of expression and broad tasks which allow for much off-topic play may result in an abundance of unproductive and inflammatory discourse that Internet chat rooms display. Instructors have to construct a moderator role for themselves in SCC which provides guidance for students in their general participation and in the development of interlocutor relationships. As facilitators of learning, the teacher in the moderator role can monitor the effectiveness of interlocutor relationships as students are exchanging and can provide feedback for increasing their awareness of the ways they interrelate with other interlocutors in SCC by applying Interlocutor relationship theory. Instructors need to be aware of the boundary between sharing authority through the exploration of various viewpoints held by students and letting a conference exchange become a session of unproductive bantering. This interlocutor relationship continuum provides teachers and students alike a way of understanding particular relationships as well as the ethical implications of the various relationships.

The danger of not monitoring SCC exchange is that “within our current educational system--even though computers are associated with the potential for great reform--they are not necessarily serving democratic ends” (Selfe and Selfe 484). While the computer holds the possibilities for more democratic types of communication, classroom discussions are often sites for the reproduction of gender inequalities in terms of power dynamics during interaction (Swann and Graddol 1989). As instructors committed to feminist and democratic learning environments, we must be alert to group dynamics and conversational trends. In order to facilitate more egalitarian discussions involving all students, we need to encourage a greater mix of students who come from diverse backgrounds to communicate and work together.

#### Assessment of Writing and Collaboration

Assessing individual student's contributions to a classroom discussion in a conference is simply a matter of reviewing the transcripts. With the tremendous opportunities for students to participate and share in the responsibility of classroom learning through their interactions in conference discussions, instructors/moderators facilitate exchanges and conference activities by assessing the productivity of the interlocutor relationships established. In assessing the interlocutor relationships students are constructing in their computer conferences, instructors may wish to consider the following questions: Do the interlocutor relationships, which are established by the discussion members, encourage or inhibit participation in the computer conference; do the established interlocutor

relationships promote a democratic learning environment; do the established interlocutor relationships display discourse which is in violation of university policies against harassing language use; do the interlocutor relationships promote intellectual inquiry and the exploration of various viewpoints on a topic; do the interlocutor relationships suggest that students are equally contributing in a spirit of fairness and mutual responsibility?

Assessing students' contributions to a collaborative project is quite a bit easier when the groups brainstorm, plan, and invent in SCC than when they work in face-to-face discussion. Teachers can monitor the discussions while students are conferencing without being an intruding presence. As students report their individual contributions to the project and discuss their progress, instructors can provide input to facilitate the group's organizational communication among the members. In addition, instructors can review the transcripts in order to get a fuller understanding of all of the group's collaborative activities to make sure that all members are participating fairly. If there is an indication in dialogue of the SCC transcript that a particular student is not contributing to discussion, accomplishing the tasks he or she has agreed to perform, or participating effectively with other interlocutors, instructors can intervene in order to investigate the situation further. Once it is confirmed that an individual is indeed not fulfilling his or her commitments to the project group, teachers can clarify and reinforce with students the project objectives which include the display of respectful attitudes toward group members in the

construction of interlocutor relationships, for example. Most importantly, interlocutor relationship theory provides students and teachers with a way of assessing the dynamics of communication among conference participants.

### **The Interlocutor Relationship Continuum: Pedagogical Practice in the Computer-Mediated Classroom**

In teaching SCC, my underlying assumption is that students must read theory, view models, practice written discourse, and get feedback in order to develop their understanding of how interlocutor relationships impact SCC discourse. Teaching interlocutor relationships in a computer-mediated classroom can be approached by engaging students in defining, analyzing, challenging, and producing various ways of interrelating in SCC.

#### **Students Reflecting on SCC<sup>5</sup>**

In order to gain a sense of what students understood about participating in SCC, I constructed a questionnaire with nine questions which was based on my own research on computer conferencing.<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire addressed a wide range of issues related to students' views on discourse in SCC and the process of exchanging such as the nature of the medium, the physical situation, their style of language, oral and literate

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<sup>5</sup> Prior to the distribution of this questionnaire, students were asked to participate in a couple of Interchanges so that they would have some familiarity with SCC, if they had not already.

<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire along with students' responses are located in Appendix A. Students' names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

language qualities, their personal backgrounds, and their social and educational experiences with computer technology. My reactions to students' responses varied from delight to confusion to concern. While some students reflected a sophisticated awareness of their print and computer literacy education and experiences, other students demonstrated a lack of self-reflection in evaluating their levels of proficiency in language use, recounting past experiences and relating them to the current situation, and analyzing the medium of SCC. However, I will focus my discussion here on those prompts and student responses which specifically apply to interlocutor responsibilities and roles in SCC, in order to illustrate how teachers can construct their own sets of questions which require that students be reflective about their construction of interlocutor relationships and how they affect the process of composing in SCC.

The sense of distance and depersonalization that individuals experience even during real-time computer-mediated communication with an actual audience has been discussed by a number of scholars (Parnes; Hawisher and Selfe 1992; Takayoshi 1994; Rubin 1996; and Selfe and Selfe 1994). Because ethical considerations are on the top of my agenda as a teacher of rhetoric, I was very interested in finding out how students perceived their relationship to one another through the computer, if they felt the sense of depersonalization, and if so, how did that distant feeling from their audience members affect their participation. I constructed a question which asked them to describe the roles and functions they

perceived for participants. Further, I asked how students thought that this perceived participant function affects the way they participate in SCC.

In order to make interlocutor relationships a useful and practical theory for student writers, instructors need to analyze transcripts, identifying constructions of specific interlocutor relationships. Not only do students need to be able to identify the qualities and features relating to a defined category, but they ought to be able to connect those constructions of interlocutor relationships to rhetorical context, goals, and task. In doing so, students will see the practical value in applying the theory. For example, one student, Penny, considers the style of her Interchange participation in relation to her rhetorical goals and to her audience of classmates who are peer readers/writers. Moreover, Penny, a self-described moderately computer literate user, demonstrates how she had to modify her communication strategies in order to be successful in Interchange:

The persona I constructed for myself was a casual tone that tried to convey my interest in a topic and desire to join the group. I don't think I expressed my desire to contribute the best way possible because my first choice in groups did not allow my participation. I think this exclusion changed my personal persona a bit. I changed to a more direct tone to discover a new group that was available to me. I helped form a new group with the other people interested in the initial idea, but also not part of the initial group.

Speculating that her first attempt at joining a group was unsuccessful due to her passivity or lack of assertiveness, Penny changes her strategy for communicating her interests and goals. Indeed, she was successful once she took more initiative in forming her own group by conveying ideas in a way that would interest others in joining in with her. The defining aspect in constructing her persona is the role she assumes for herself while conferencing as an interested and open-minded student who is willing to contribute to the success of a project. She needed to build a stronger rapport with a group who share an interest in developing a particular project. The example suggests that a highly cooperative yet critical relationship would express the desire to join a group as a team player and also that she is an intellectually challenging individual with much to offer in the collaboration.

In another example, Ashley, an environmental engineering major with a project idea, discusses his role as leader in the Interchange during the formation of a collaborative group:

In the Interchange I had the task of explaining my ideas for a class project. I think this influenced my Interchange by causing me to participate more because people were asking me questions [about the project idea] that I had to answer. . . . I represented myself in the Interchange as a leader because I was in charge of the topic we were talking about and knew the most about the topic.

As a conference leader, Ashley recognized his role as the “boss,” as he put it. His job was to generate interest in his topic that would spark discussion at least. He expected students to inquire about the project idea, which meant that he needed to be ready with responses. He needed to be a facilitator of discussion if he was going to organize a group of participants into a collaborative unit. The role Ashley describes displays a blend of critical but respectful dialectical relationship and a slightly superior dynamic of hierarchical relationships among the “leader” and the other interested interlocutors. Ashley needs to be critical in his tasks of answering questions as well as asking them of the inquisitive classmates in the Interchange conference; all conference interlocutors are mutually engaged in the decision of whether or not to select each other to be peer collaborators.

Having students respond to questions about their own SCC participation provided me with a context-specific means of introducing students to a range of issues which are unique to computer conferencing, preparation crucial to effective use of the medium of SCC. Further, after reading and discussing students’ responses to the questionnaire, I became more aware of what information and strategies they lacked in their computer literacy training. Consequently, I could teach students greater audience awareness knowing that students felt a sense of emotional distance while conferencing or that they privileged their personal points of view over the effective presentation of those views for the particular audience members, to name a couple of examples. They were then



prepared to study the interlocutor relationship continuum for application in SCC.

### Audience Analysis and Analyzing Interlocutor Relationships

Before students can self-consciously construct various interlocutor relationships in conference texts, they must grasp the operational definitions for each category and locate the textual features characteristic of each category within transcripts of SCC. After reading material on the continuum of interlocutor relationships, students can discuss how the categories blend into one another, expressing varying degrees of conflict and cooperation, as well as how they differ characteristically. Students need to understand how the interlocutor relationships are constructed in text and how those constructions affect the directions and outcomes of discussion in SCC. Most importantly, students need to raise their awareness of audience in order to consider how their relationships with interlocutors affects the composing process of rhetorical exchange. Once the theory of interlocutor relationships is internalized, students can begin applying that theoretical lens to the analysis of conference transcripts they participated in before they understood the interlocutor relationship continuum.

As in other mediums of rhetoric, successful SCC demands that decisions to establish a particular interlocutor relationship ought to respond to communication factors such as project objectives or arguments, audience, and the project tasks. Prior to interlocutor relationship theory and instruction, a student, Phyl explains how he analyzed the rhetorical

situation of the Interchange conference which was designed for the formation of groups in the collaborative projects:

For myself the purpose of participation in the Interchange was to discover the nature of my fellow student's proposals and to evaluate them in terms of appropriateness to my individual preferences. That purpose affected my participation by making it a rather passive one, only becoming active in as much as it encouraged or provoked others to expand their ideas in answering my questions.

Phyl demonstrates his intuitive awareness of how his persona operates in the Interchange to achieve his goal of finding a project. As a participant in search of a project, Phyl decides to present a more passive character, primarily asking questions, in order to gather enough information on the various proposed projects so that he can make a choice. A bit later in his response, Phyl performs an audience analysis to show that he is trying to anticipate how his "inquisitive persona" will be received by the conference leaders. He writes, "They may have found it promising, that I showed interest in their proposals, or they may have noted the directness of my questions and judged that I was using an ability to focus upon the subjects at hand." Such insight from a student was exceptional in terms of his making conscious decisions about using language to construct a persona which would work effectively with other interlocutors during the Interchange. While the great majority of students generalize vaguely about the role of audience in the composing process in SCC, Phyl demonstrates a

concern for how his audience would respond to him. However, even Phyl's strategies for constructing a persona were limited in his notions of "passive" and "active." While he acknowledges that encouraging other interlocutors to participate was an important to fulfilling his purpose in the conference, his terminology is vague and lacks any recognition of textual features which would enable him to construct such a person. In response to this need in students, the application of interlocutor relationship theory would assist them in the location of textual features for both the decoding and encoding of interlocutor relationships. Once interlocutor attitudes and implications of power have been analyzed by readers/writers, those same writers/readers can construct effective relationships which respond appropriately to the discourse of other interlocutors. The theory of interlocutor relationships focuses the elements of rhetoric on the analysis and construction of suitable and effective interlocutor relationships in computer conferences. Further, the continuum provides students with a range of relationship possibilities in terms of how they can interrelate with and impact audiences through their rhetorical choices. Attentively analyzing the types of relationships other interlocutors are constructing in SCC will enable writers to make more appropriate judgments about the types of interlocutor relationships they ought to construct.

On the other hand, participants assume particular roles based on the context of school, for example. The expectations of behavior associated with the discourse community of this university classroom in turn affect how students relate and address each other and their instructor/facilitator.

Based on the policy statement for the course, students know that it is a requirement and an expectation of the class that they participate actively if they desire to earn a high evaluation for their final grades. Years of being in classroom education have provided students with experiences of prescription, correction, and reward that have more or less reinforced particular behaviors and conventions of language. As a result, these experiences, training, and explicit and implicit expectations affect how students construct interlocutor relationships. For example, my students are expected to actively criticize and comment during Interchange so that multiple points of view can be explored and evaluated by the conference participants. Such exchange allows for groups to problem solve through a project assignment, to evaluate the value and effectiveness of their claims and those of the opposition, and, ultimately, to strengthen the persuasiveness of their own arguments.

The point here is that such exchanges embody dialectical relationships among interlocutors, comprising critique, inquiry, challenge, and alliance in messages. Consequently, I argue that dialectical relationships are the most productive and appropriate relationship to share among students and the instructor alike because interlocutors contribute to each other's intellectual growth in a mutually respectful manner. Discussing the connections between effective interlocutor relationship construction and discourse community constraints and character provides students with the power to analyze audience toward productive ends.

### Constructing and Reconstructing Interlocutor Relationships in SCC

When students have some theoretical and analytical background with the interlocutor relationship continuum, they are ready to consciously construct particular interlocutor relationships. Students must be given a narrowly defined task in order to provide exigency for rhetorical action within computer conferences. Instructors can select particular students to establish a specific interlocutor relationship in the computer conference. For example, the conference task may be the formulation of an argument for why it is unethical to pirate software, and each student in the discussion may be assigned a different interlocutor relationship. For example, a student will be responsible for contributing to the formulation of an anti-software piracy argument by presenting messages which display the attitudes of condescension and the textual qualities of directives in their construction of a hierarchical interlocutor relationship. Then, in a second computer conference discussion, each student would have a different interlocutor relationship to construct than they had in the first conference discussion. Each student should have the experience of constructing all four interlocutor relationships during the in-class SCC.

During the electronic conferences, students need to be reminded of the various textual features and qualities through which interlocutors establish relationships. The moderator's task is to guide students as they are constructing specific interlocutor relationships to make sure that students' constructions of hierarchical relationships do not resemble their empathic relationships, and so forth. Further, the moderator's role is to call

attention to vague or ambiguous constructions of their assigned role. Each type of interlocutor relationship has distinct qualities and features which display a particular degree of conflict and cooperation along the continuum. Once students better understand the distinctions among the categories of interlocutor relationships and the various ways that they affect others and the discourse in the exchange, they will be more effective at analyzing and constructing specific relationships in SCC.

While reviewing the electronic conference exchange, moderators should evaluate with students how and why a given message successfully or unsuccessfully establishes a given interlocutor relationship. Every member of the small conference groups (4 students) should collaboratively evaluate each member's construction of a particular relationship and provide explanation and suggestions for how to make each more distinct and effective. Comparing and contrasting each other's representations of the dialectical relationship, for example, will allow students to view a range of the textual features and qualities which establish degrees of conflict and cooperation. Further, students will work toward revision as they ask other students to discuss how and why they constructed the empathic relationship, for example, in the way they did and in a way that differs from other renderings among the group members of the empathic relationship. In doing so, students should be able either to justify their rhetorical decisions underlying the construction of the empathic relationship or to modify their textual manifestation of that relationship to be more successful. Students collaboratively re-imagine more successful

constructions of interlocutor relationships. Consequently, their conceptions of the distinct categories along with the overlapping characteristics which blur the convenient demarcations along the continuum have to be negotiated in terms of identifying a text as a construction of one relationship over another.

The final exercise is to have students conference on a topic by constructing interlocutor relationships as they see fit for the occasion, the group of interlocutors in the computer conference, and the purpose. After a twenty minute exchange regarding the counter arguments for the justification of software piracy, for example, students ought to analyze the transcript of the conference and identify their constructions of interlocutor relationships, evaluating the effectiveness of each in terms of being appropriate and persuasive for the occasion, the other interlocutors' participation, and the purpose of the conference. Moreover, students will benefit greatly by discussing alternate ways they could have chosen and established an interlocutor relationship, and how those revisions might have affected their success as a collaborative group in their efforts to discover and present counter arguments for the justification of software piracy.

Intellectual challenge and mutual support from peers and moderators create a collaborative educational environment for the development of rhetorical sophistication in applying the interlocutor relationship theory. Students get much feedback as they are made responsible for each other's development through the collaborative writing

model. Furthermore, this collaboration is reinforced by the collective assessment of each group's participation in the conference session as well as the heuristic itself through which they've been asked consider that participation.

### **The Intersections of Rhetoric and Ethics in SCC**

Ethical concerns are explicitly implicated in their choices about successful interaction with one another in SCC--reviving the deep connections between ethics and rhetoric included in the concept of pedagogical praxis.<sup>7</sup> With SCC being so interactive, rhetoricians can again not ignore questions concerning the roles and value assigned our audiences in the production of our writing. I argue that the dynamic and interactive nature of the medium of SCC creates a rhetorical situation which blurs boundaries among issues of rhetorical effectiveness and ethical communication, particularly with regard to how users interact and interrelate. Interlocutor relationships are key to determining effective and ethical communications, depending on the interlocutors involved who mutually determine what appropriate and inappropriate discourse is. Therefore, it is important to address both at the same time and teach students the peculiar concerns communicating synchronously poses for interactive users. As a result, students will be better equipped to make decisions about their language use which suit their particular goals and

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<sup>7</sup> See "Praxis" in the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition*.



their ethical dispositions. Silent, offensive, as well as supportive participation have ethical implications which need consideration.

First, students fear that when they do participate, they won't be acknowledged or responded to when so many are online at once. Students worry about the possibility of being ignored: "When one participates, electronic conferences foster an intense need for response and to be ignored is to be rejected" (Hawisher "Electronic Meeting of the Minds" 92). Even though there are many reasons why an individual interlocutor's message may not be addressed, the lack of response can have devastating effects on that interlocutor:

Silence [the blank screen] can be both brutal and ambiguous. One can interpret it as complete rejection, or lack of understanding, or laziness, or equipment breakdown. In each case, the results are equally chilling upon the communication process. (Spitzer 20)

The ambiguity of silence creates insecurity and can lead to a negative interpretation. Within a conference, silence can be understood as "metaphorical death." Attempts at participation that are met with silence, as if the person did not send a message at all, discourage further participation due to feelings of invisibility and nonimportance. One Asian female student told me in an office conference "I have something to say, but they don't want to hear." Research and my experience have shown that many women and minorities feel this way in public speech communication settings, having to insist on their right to speak. From this perspective,

shy participants of SCC share the same concerns about a potentially resistant or indifferent audience that primary oral speakers dread. If teachers aim to establish the semblance of a truly egalitarian learning environment, we must take these fears into account and develop communication strategies which account for various levels and types of interaction that encourage and enable equal participation. As facilitators of SCC, we need to be prepared to identify such silences, teach students to be more inclusive during class discussion, and to articulate and demonstrate that reserved students' contributions are as valuable and needed as those coming from active users.

Besides the ethical implications of neglecting interlocutors in SCC, there are consequences of exchanging messages with others in terms of how we represent and affect our audiences. Interlocutors have the power to affect interlocutors in SCC in positive as well as negative ways. Computer conferencing can enable professional transactions, social exchange, harassment of others, honest communication, degradation of others' opportunities for bravado and deception regarding unproven achievements, and so forth. In other words, besides the accomplishment of tasks and building rapport, SCC can also produce negative effects such as uninhibited behaviors which deserve ethical consideration to raise students' awareness of the consequences of their relationship choices with other interlocutors.

In fact, when I read over a conference transcript from technical writing students discussing the ethical aspects of flaming in Internet chat rooms, I was concerned over the flippant, obnoxious, and blatantly

disregarding attitudes some students expressed about other participants whom they could not see and did not know. It seemed that the more anonymous the communication, the less the sense of ethical responsibility, at least according to this group of students. Jay, a student, asserts, "I think it is cool to piss people off on-line <g>...." Another student, Tad, adds, "yeah. when I was a freshman me and my suitemate used to get on the lesbian chat line and piss em off." Then, Jay goes on to say, "If you are not in person with them, who cares what goes on. That is how my friend gets his jollies off." These detached, insensitive, and even cruel sentiments about the act of flaming, or as a student, Kristy, put in "cutting someone down" and deliberately making other participants angry caused me great concern. These students are aware of their rhetorical power online. They abuse that power and express enjoyment in doing so perhaps because they are under the mistaken impression that communication via the computer is not experienced as reality unlike face-to-face communication with the real presence of human beings. Since they do not feel it is "real" on some level, they assume others feel the same, as expressed in the messages and particularly Tad's which reads, "no one has any feelings behind a monitor."

In response to these detached attitudes, instructors of SCC need to call students to specifically examine issues of ethics, of how we address and communicate with others and what impact we may have on others. With the depersonalizing effects of technology, writing instructors, more than ever, must discuss the relationship of rhetoric and ethics, how effective discourse relates to ethical discourse. With such great opportunity to

emotionally injure participants through rudeness, hostility, and silence, instructors need to make students aware of the paradox of SCC that interlocutors sometimes feel emotionally distant from other interlocutors even though they are mutually participating in a very interactive, interpersonal medium of communication.

Certainly not all students or even a majority of students felt so indifferent towards other participants nor did they relish in the act of inflammatory communication. Some students feel offended, hurt, angry, frustrated, and so forth upon receiving obnoxious, degrading, and emotionally distant messages. The concern that teachers of rhetoric can train people to perform harmful acts through persuasion is the dark side of effective language instruction. In fact, the ethical dimensions of rhetoric have preoccupied rhetoricians since the ancient Greeks. In the *Gorgias*, the teacher of logos, Gorgias, is accused of training his students to be cunning and deceitful rhetors. However, individual rhetors have the choice to use their rhetorical power in harmful or helpful ways.

### **In Closing**

As instructors, we can provide pedagogy which promotes the careful consideration of rhetorical choices and ethical consequences of our language use, but we cannot hope to control the outcome of our students' rhetorical practices. We can provide students with questions, strategies, conventions, forms, and models of application for their training to guide their development and their understanding of the choices they have as

communicators who are in possession of a moving force capable of bringing about changes in people's attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Confronted with each new rhetorical dilemma, students must make choices about how to effect a given change, accepting the consequences the rhetoric may bring with it.

With the trend in research on rhetoric and composition, more and more, teachers will have to address, as part of the curriculum on text production and consumption, ethical considerations. This does not mean that we can force students to become ethical communicators and workers beyond the span of the course, but what we can hope to accomplish is the raising of students' awareness of the impact we make on each other in SCC. Users will have to adapt to this apparent sense of isolation, which is actually a moment of communication in which one user is connected to and affecting other users. We can explore the fact that, contrary to what a student, Todd, felt about his fellow participants, writers in computer conferences do have consciences behind the screen, and it does matter what you say and how you say it, because you can and do hurt people with messages just as easily as you can help them and work with them. This work attempts to help us make conscious those relationships mediated by computer technology as we work in electronic communication praxis at the brink of the twenty-first century.

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## **APPENDIX A: CONTEXTUALIZING THE SCC TRANSCRIPTS**

Researchers have discussed how and why SCC can be used to accomplish particular tasks in the electronic classroom such as exchanging ideas and arguments (Leppanen and Kalaja 1995), making decisions (Hiltz, Johnson, and Turoff 1986), and collaboratively writing documents for corporate interactions (Rubens 1989). The Daedalus Interchange conference transcripts<sup>1</sup>, located in Appendix B, present four conference sessions in which technical writing and composition students participated during the semester. Four times during the semester, students discussed prompts that I constructed about pertinent issues to the course: the midterm examination, ethics of computer use, proposal assignment topics, and the ethical concerns of their proposal projects. In my technical writing class, for the first Interchange, I asked students to speculate on possible assignments I might present as a midterm examination, which was to be taken the following class session. While students offered sound ideas supported by good reasoning for why a given type of exam would be plausible or not, there was a fair amount of experimentation with the medium through off-topic discussion. Margaret Daisley describes such language play as a normal part of literacy practice. In fact, an experienced conference participant, Tad, explains what students were trying to accomplish during the Interchange: “the purpose of the Interchange was not just to familiarize ourselves with the midterm topics; it was to familiarize ourselves with the new technology available to us.” Students, most of whom were new to SCC, were testing out the boundaries and conventions of this

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<sup>1</sup> The students' electronic exchanges were transcribed just as they were printed from the software program, without editing from me.

unfamiliar form of classroom interaction. In order for SCC to be useful as an educational and rhetorical forum, students must become reasonably comfortable with the technology and the constraints of the medium. Instructors must play an active role in this socialization process by progressively but slowly engaging students in increasingly more complex and specific tasks to accomplish in SCC.

### **Conference One: Experimenting with Interchange**

For this first conference, I decided to place my two sections of technical writing students in a communication task of answering a simple question on an issue that affected each of them: the midterm examination. In this conference, the entire class participated in a single conference room to answer the question, "What do you think the midterm will or could be about?" The task served dual purposes. Due to the fact that for many students, this was their first experience writing on synchronous conferencing, I thought that it was useful for them to have a brief session communicating on the medium, just to get a feel for how it is unique in form, language, and mode of communication. Also, we were able to productively explore midterm examination possibilities, to dispel some anxiety or confusion about the test, and to offer some study strategies. In fact, besides the humorous responses, students presented many viable options for a midterm exam to which I provided reasoning for why I would or would not administer a given type of test. Through the discussion, we were able to eliminate certain types of exams from the list of possibilities and brainstorm on the pro's and con's for such a decision. Since this topic would have been traditionally delivered in an oral discussion format, I found that it

served to clearly contrast face-to-face with computer conferencing so that we could discuss the differences, advantages/disadvantages, and characteristics of SCC at a later date.

### **Conference Session Two: Ethics and Computer Use**

In this second set of conferences, two classes of Computer-mediated Technical Writing and two classes of Computer-mediated Composition participated. The first part of Conference Session One contains the participation among technical writing students, and the second part consists of composition students' interactions. Both the technical writing and composition students were responding to the same question prompts. Students who were familiar with online chat rooms were also familiar with emoticons and how to use and interpret them. To facilitate the introduction of emoticons, I provided a sheet that listed about thirty of the more common of these graphic symbols which are a means of "better defining emotions and intent regarding a particular phrase or statement" (Rezabeck and Cochenour 3). This transcript includes the handout I gave students on some commonly used emoticons and chat room abbreviations, along with the topics and prompts I gave them for beginning their Interchange. After having read scholarly material on ethical considerations of electronic delivery which we orally discussed as a class, students were asked to participate in an electronic discussion in which they were not only producing electronic writing but also analyzing that participation. Students were free to join any conference room and to switch conference rooms at will. Notably, some conference rooms contained a greater

degree of activity than others, reflecting students' interests, knowledge, and curiosities.

As the instructor, I told students that I would not participate in these discussions. In fact, I did not even stand at a terminal to monitor the discussion because I wanted students to feel more comfortable exchanging freely. However, I explained that I would be viewing these conference transcripts at a later date. During SCC in the networked classroom, participants are not only in an educational context, which shapes the nature and purpose of their electronic communication, but they are also physically present during the exchange, which decreases the sense of anonymity online. In fact, my presence or lack of, as their instructor and as the facilitator of exchange, had a clear impact on the conference. More specifically, students were more respectful, professional, and on-task when I was circulating from conference room to conference room. On the other hand, students played much more when I was not in the conference as in Conference Session Two. My sense is that the less responsible and connected a student felt about the context of the conference, the more playful and even agonistic their messages were. For example, in Conference Session Two, a few of the technical writing students suggested that I go to a party with them, a situation which would be clearly inappropriate to and compromising the student-teacher relationship I had worked to establish. By discussing my possible attendance to this party, students expressed condescending attitudes of power over me in my absence. During this brief portion of the conference, students "talked" as if I were not there, which was the case during the conference session, but not when I reviewed the transcripts. Through reading, I participated in the conference. It



felt as if I had listened in on a discussion I should not have heard. Overtly, this discussion was not directed to me as their audience. However, depending on their motives for including this playful and borderline derogatory discussion, they may or may not have intended for me to read their exchange. The students may have forgotten that I would be reading the transcripts at a later date, or they may have been wanted to play with my emotions about the breach of rapport that this exchange represented. I won't know for certain. The main point is that, when I was not present in the conference, discussions were less on-task, more playful, and more agonistic.

The instructor who taught these two sections of Computer-mediated Composition constructed conference groups of students who had been working together all semester. Each group was placed into a conference room, which had a specific question or topic for discussion. The placement of the groups into specific conference rooms was decided in part according to their interests among the possibilities and in part according to her discretion and the limited numbers of certain popular topics. The two classes of composition students were asked to respond to the same question prompts as the technical writing students: ethics and computer use. However, based on the lack of interest the technical writing students showed regarding some of the conference room topics, I eliminated a few of the conference topic options such as altruistic uses of the internet and software piracy. Consequently, to ensure active participation, more than one conference room was created for the few, more popular and more provocative topics such as Cyberporn and Dangerous Information Online.

The drawback to constructing the conference rooms around students' preferences is that the participants presented more spontaneous, less thought-out messages, many of which showed a lack of self-reflexivity regarding their participation. Students presented arguments which were in some ways self-contradictory or naive, such as Aggie's comment in "Dangerous Information Online Two." She comments, "I think the infor. on the internet is fair game for everyone, too. If people didn't want the info to be used, they shouldn't put it on there in the first place." Based on subsequent comments by other participants who do not critique her statement at all, Aggie doesn't address the fact that those writers who put dangerous information on the net, such as instructions for building a bomb, are the ones who made the choice despite the ethical dilemma about the information getting into the wrong hands. The presenters of such information are obviously taking a huge risk in that someone can use the data to harm others. It's the general public who must be wary of such information being used against them. The point of view of the question on ethics and internet information involves not only the writer but also the readers (herself included), who could suffer fatal consequences of the application of dangerous information. However, without a facilitator's involvement, perspectives such as Aggie's could go unchallenged or at least unquestioned.

Also, another problem relating to my approach to conference room formation was that some topics did not elicit interest from students. Perhaps for many of the composition as well as technical writing students topics such as altruism online and software piracy are uncontroversial. In other words, those topics seemed uninteresting perhaps because they have already made

up their minds on the issues; for them, there is nothing to discuss. For example, among the technical writing students who participated in the software piracy conference room, the consensus seemed to be that illegally copying software is justified by the unreasonable expense of the software products. Therefore, if software companies were to lower their prices, computer users wouldn't have to resort to stealing. With the burden of responsibility clearly placed onto the software companies in this ethical dilemma, the student has no choice to make and no ethical consequences to consider except getting caught doing something illegal.

A third concern relating to conference room formation was that students gravitated toward topics which could be joked about more easily than, for example, altruistic uses of the internet. Discussions about pornography on the web resulted in much play in the forms of teasing, exaggeration, and sexual innuendoes. Initially in the discussion, some students presented personas of apathy regarding the consequences of the presence of pornography on the internet and the fact that it can be easily accessed by children as well as adults. Then, later in the conference, after much jest about the subject, some participants would send a literal message articulating the position that, indeed, children ought not to have access after all and that we should come up with a blocking system to limit their access. While playful exchanges are an important part of this study as one of several ways that interlocutors interact in computer conferencing, those comments may not necessarily represent the student's position on the subject, only attention-getting fun. Therefore, interpreting the playful messages was challenging because I needed some sense of intention or at least the spirit of meaning if I were to make valid

assessments about the types of interlocutor relationships presented on Daedalus Interchange. For this task, emoticons were helpful in better deciphering the meanings of messages. For example, in the “Dangerous Information Online Two,” Jose expresses boldly that all information online is “fair game” along with a straight faced, dry-delivery symbol, :| , which conveyed the meaning that he may have been joking. Then, a few messages later, he confirms the fact that he was joking by saying, “I don’t know how we could prevent it! :( “ At first, Jose wants to joke with the other participants, not taking the task seriously, but then he provides a serious message which considers the limitations of eliminating the information and access if the data is agreed upon, by some undefined group, to be harmful or unethical for children. In my analysis, I had to be careful to read subsequent messages in order to interpret meaning within the context of the conversation so that I wasn’t misreading a joke as a serious position on the subject or wasn’t limiting my understanding of a person’s contributions to play.

### **Conference Session Three: Group Formation**

The third set of conferences consisted of two classes of Computer-mediated Technical Writing discussing a collaborative assignment which did occupy the remainder of the six weeks of our semester. Effective group organization and communication were emphasized from the beginning as essential elements of success in collaboration. Their Daedalus Interchange activities were geared toward the goals of beginning the Proposal Unit. Students were asked to discuss possible project topics for the final proposal, a collaborative assignment that requires students to write one proposal

document amongst them and to give a team oral presentation. The following conference rooms were organized according to project topics of students' design. Students' task was to form groups according to mutual interests in project ideas. Once again, students were free to participate in conference rooms of their choosing and to move from one conference room to another, investigating possible group projects. Those members who came up with project ideas were the leaders of each conference group, required to present a description of their project idea with which to begin the discussion and to answer questions about the topic. After viewing this transcript and seeing the results of established proposal groups, I realized that SCC is particularly useful for this educational and rhetorical context. Geoff, a student, explains further:

There were two main goals of the Interchange. The first was to form groups for the upcoming proposal project in class. Secondly, we were attempting to develop topics for the proposal project. The method in which this was accomplished was very well thought out. Different chat rooms were created for different subjects, and the students formed their own groups. I think this is the best way to go about forming groups because it allows for group formation without really hurting any individual student's feelings.<sup>2</sup>

As Geoff argues, the Interchange was successful for allowing students to exchange ideas about different project ideas until the most popular topics received the most serious group consideration. While group formation largely mimicked the membership of groups I had already seen during face-to-face

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<sup>2</sup> This quote is located in Appendix C from questionnaire one.

group work in class, some students joined groups of people with whom they had had little previous interaction; this leads me to believe that there is a unique opportunity to engage in communication with strangers or barely familiar participants in the classroom that is not as available or as inviting in face-to-face communication. Indeed, some students did pursue their search for group members according to topic and dialogue dynamics instead of relying solely upon familiarity from oral interaction. Further, students could interrogate conference leaders about their project ideas and ask how they might contribute to such a project in a less emotionally risky way than face-to-face. Consequently, discussion was more topic-focused than speaker-focused, which successfully encouraged the task of project selection.

As the instructor, I participated in these conference discussions, moving from one to the other, facilitating with questions, comments, and observations. On the one hand, reflecting on these transcripts has made me aware of my own successes as a moderator, helping students to remain focused on the task and question at hand and to extend their ideas more fully. On the other hand, I became aware of moments of inadequacy as a conference user, which revealed to me a need for development in my own conferencing literacy skills and strategies. At times, my contributions to the discussions revealed a lack of awareness of the conversation that was taking place among the students. Since I was changing conference rooms continuously, some of my comments seemed to come out of nowhere. At times, I would present an issue that came up in another conference room, unique features of SCC, for example, causing a dramatic shift in the direction of the current discussion. On the one hand, such shifts and fragmentation are often characteristic of synchronous computer

conferencing (Faigley 1992). On the other hand, my messages were at times disruptive when students were making some progress in decisions about their projects. While students were achieving the objectives of the task of conferencing, which I gave them, I would send them into a sort of digression. Then, I would leave the room without warning and find during the review of the transcripts that students were asking me questions, and I was no longer there to address them or even be aware of them. Therefore, as a facilitator, it's important to be aware of the flow of the discussion by scrolling up the conversation so that you have a sense of what is being addressed and how before providing input and inquiry in the manner of an interruption. All participants must become accustomed to the fragmentary nature of electronic writing by adapting our presentation of information and ideas as well as our expectations of how to interpret and respond to other's short messages. We must change our perceptions about SCC messages from the view that they are incomplete arguments to a view that they are part of a larger argument which is collaboratively constructed by all of the conference interlocutors. Novice conference participants must adjust some of their individualistic thinking and writing behaviors to community-based writing practices in order to successfully interact and perform rhetorically online. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, instructors/facilitators of SCC must acknowledge that what students are discoursing about matters, not just what we have to articulate. Therefore, this respect for students' ideas may translate into greater patience and listening time before immediately giving further instructions. Consequently, students may feel that their work in discussion groups, whether it be in face-to-face or in SCC, is valuable and valued, instead of just an

exercise that an instructor designed to keep them busy in class. Not to forget, instructors may learn from students' contributions as well.

**Conference Session Four:  
Ethical Dimensions Related to Projects**

The fourth set of conferences involve two classes of Computer-mediated Technical Writing students who were asked to discuss ethical considerations of their chosen projects, a requirement of the written proposal assignment. Conference groups were organized according to their selected project topics and remained in that conference room for the duration of the Interchange. During this conference session, the most interesting excerpts in the exchanges were those which presented students critiquing their own language use. The transcripts present discussion which indicate their awareness of how and why they are affecting other participants. Ultimately, engaging my students in critique of language use and the use of technology for communication is one of my goals in teaching computer-mediated writing. These conferences demonstrated that some students did reach the level of evaluation and self-reflection, which really pleased me. However, the conferences were only moderately successful in achieving the goal of exploring ethical issues related to their projects. With the numerous interactions which were not focused on the task, I feel that these students required more facilitation from me than I had given them in order to keep them on track and developing their analyses, which would have made the session more productive and valuable to the progress of the project. Further, some projects were obviously geared toward rectifying some of industry's ethical breaches, which made the discussion seem trite, rendering the discussion a simple classroom exercise instead of a moment



of discovery. On the contrary, other projects' ethical considerations were difficult to uncover for students who had never been asked to imagine before what the negative consequences of their technical work might be. For these groups, discussing ethics was a troublesome and an annoying requirement. Better facilitation on my part would have helped to alleviate both types of shortcomings in the exchange. It was my responsibility to evaluate their rhetorical action in the conference room so that I could assist them in addressing the ethical component of their proposals. Based on their questions which emerged in subsequent class session, it was obvious that students did not have a firm grasp on the ethical dimensions of their project, and, therefore, I had to work with groups in class and in office conferences to clarify the requirement for them.

## **APPENDIX B: SCC TRANSCRIPTS**

### **Conference Session One**

#### **Midterm Examination: One**

**Berzsenyi:**

What do you think the midterm will or could be about?

**Kristy:**

Hello?

**Dawn:**

'allo

**Thomas:**

howdy

**Tad:**

The midterm will probably be about writing a short report or something, integrating ideas we've learned in class.

**Yip:**

Yip: hi everybody

**Kong:**

Kong: hi!

**Kristy:**

you don't have to type your name...it does that automatically

**Yip:**

Yip: I agree with tad

**Tad:**

well i'm glad SOMEONE in this world agrees with me :)

**Thomas:**

This midterm will be about writing a technical report. Short enough to use basic ideas of technical writing.

**Thomas:**

hey kong what are you going to study for the exam

Terry:  
I think the midterm will be about ginibginab.

Kong:  
Tom, I don't know.

Phyl:  
gininginab?

Tad:  
who cares about the midterm. I'm ready to get the hell out of Norman

Ed:  
Watch your mouth!

Matthew:  
Oh shit. Screw the midterm

Nancy:  
justkidding

Phyl:  
hmmmm....well...the midterm will be about spring break, right?

Tad:  
absolutely. I'm going home, and then to Vail.

Freddie:  
a little down Matthew this is school

Ed:  
Chicago here I come.

Tad:  
School sucks. And then you die.

### Midterm Examination: Two

Berzsenyi:  
What do you think the midterm will or could be about?

Rod:  
We can write about what we did over Xmas break

**Jerry:**  
Testing, one, two, three...

**Penny:**  
got your test message Jerry

**James:**  
I think we will have to write a sample letter or report

**Jerry:**  
I'm betting it's not multiple choice...

**Ron:**  
I think we will have to write a report concerning a subject related to our major

**Marcy:**  
I think we will have to write a proposal relevant to our field

**Robert:**  
I think it will seem like a unitops lab report

**Yip:**  
I think it could be a report on one of our lab work

**Rod:**  
Who else is in here?

**Geoff:**  
Topics of the composing process maybe?

**Nick:**  
me, but I can't think of anything

**Nick:**  
We may have to write a letter of application for our resume

**Geoff:**  
unitops?

**James:**  
I hope we do not have to recite chapter information

**Penny:**  
She might have some information on various topics, hand them out randomly and ask us to generate a report or a section of report about the info.

Berzsenyi:  
What would be the benefits of reciting a chapter?

Geoff:  
There will be something about the composing process, I think.

Berzsenyi:  
What do you think is important about the composing process?

Robert:  
I think it depends upon your purpose: its either the discovery or the revision if the final product is very important i.e. job/school related

Robert:  
but the discovery is the fun part for sure...:)  
Ron:  
We will probably have to include some sort of visual aid.

James:  
I agree, I think it would be the best to write something :)

Jerry:  
Is our midterm on a Tuesday or a Thursday?

Penny:  
Tuesday

Jerry:  
If it's on a Tuesday, you can bet it will include some heavy duty writing.

James:  
Penny: I hope we are not asked to write about Tray Hydraulics or Shell and Tube Heat exchangers...

Ron:  
I'm an expert on tray hydraulics

Jerry:  
Okay, so we know we are going to be able to use a word processor, what does that mean?

Penny:  
Well, call it the preliminary report for Unit opps.

Penny:  
Afterall, isn't it a subject you just looove writing about?

James:

Nomore report writing , unit operations is fun enough.

Matt:

Is the midterm going to be open book?

Jerry:

It means that on the mid-term you will have to worry about Font size, bolding, etc....

Ron:

I think the word processor means that this will have to be a pretty good report, spell checked, and everything

James:

I hope there is no memorization involved with the mid-term :<

Berzsenyi:

It probably will not be open book. Generally on midterms, I'm trying to see what students have internalized and can make practical use of when called upon to do so.

Ron:

You're a retard James

Penny:

Format of the report is fairly subjective. As long as it is presentable and easy to follow you can do what ever you feel is best in your report

Jerry:

Remember, the \*real\* question is what does Christyne want to know if we learned?

Berzsenyi:

Yes, but there are certain expectations of you from your reader.

James:

If you are going to reduce yourself to this, go to Todd's private chat lounge

Matt:

Some of us have not used microsoft word, this will put us at a disadvantage if the test is on the computers!!!

Ron:

I'm scared of Todd

James:

I think we can best show what we have learned by actually writing something.

Jerry:

Hmmmm, good point.

Jerry:

Hey look, these names are too long, I'm goinf to use initials from her on out.

Todd:

we have the best teacher

James:

Isn't learning to use Word at least a small part of this course?

Jerry:

C.B. probably won't want to penalize anyone for not knowing how to use Word...

Ron:

This is going to be a very short report if we have to proofread and worry about boldfacing and things like that

Penny:

Being unfamiliar with the program can be a problem, I know its a pain, but if you are unfamiliar with Word you should probably make the time to come and \*play\* with it before the test.

James:

Todd: Go easy turbo...

Matt:

Not if you only have wordperfect.

Jerry:

But you can get into the lab anytime...

James:

"Thomas" huh?

Jerry:

All the computers behind us have Word for you to practice on.

Geoff:

Hey, is Todd in here?

James:  
Word is really much easier to use than Word Perfect.

Jerry:  
Of course, that's assuming you can actually get on one. (Assuming no one is wasting time on the "net")

Ron:  
I think I'm just going to memorize the book.

James:  
I smell Todd somewhere...

Geoff:  
I think I'll buy the book

Geoff:  
Is that what that is...

Nick:  
can't think of anything worthwhile to say

Ron:  
I don't want to sit next to Todd during the midterm

Todd:  
that not funny

Marcy:  
Maybe the report will be over how this class will benefit us in our fields

Penny:  
We only have an hour and 15 minutes so it can't be a very long or complete report, it might just be a section of an already drafted larger report that we have to edit and reformat to fit a certain audience.

James:  
Great grammar for a technical writing course Todd

Geoff:  
Me Todd. Me know how type. Me smart?

Nick:  
grammar?

Todd:  
funny, funny



Geoff:  
LOL

Ron:  
Todd is neanderthal

Berzsenyi:  
Great idea Jenny.

James:  
"My mama done me, go get sometin for dinner..." says Todd

Todd:  
okay we can play!!!!!!!!!!

Nick:  
Is all this gonna be on the midterm?

Geoff:  
Hey, Todd, is Aggie still calling?

James:  
Yeah, it is an open ended mid-term.

Penny:  
If we have to write an original report for the midterm we may get stuck trying to think of ideas instead of showing that we know how to \*write\* the report. Its hard to be creative under a short time limit

Nick:  
seems our technical writing skills are paying off...

Geoff:  
Somehow I think we got way off track in here

James:  
Hey, Todd, I heard you made 10 out of 100 on the last separations test :)

Ron:  
Todd is proof man evolved from apes

Geoff:  
What was your quiz grade, Todd?

Marcy:  
I think you're right, Penny. It would be hard to get a full report off the ground in an hour and 15 minutes

James:

Wickershams open ended mid term: Discuss how you made it to be a junior in Chemical Engineering.

Berzsenyi:

Timed writing is definitely a challenge. Some are better at it than others.

Ron:

C's get degrees

Geoff:

I think we should have separations lecture in here

Nick:

D is for Diploma

James:

I agree. It is sometimes stressful to write with a time limit.

Marcy:

I can't write under pressure. I hope it will be a re-write

Ron:

Time limits suck

Berzsenyi:

I wonder why Todd is the target of heat here...

Geoff:

CB--some of us get additional practice outside of class (AOL)

James:

I hope it is a take-home mid-term

Nick:

Speaking of the time...isn't it almost time to go?

Geoff:

Besides it's fun to pick on Todd

Berzsenyi:

It won't be a take home. Sorry.

James:

I can truthfully say that I have never been or will ever be a member of AOL

Geoff:

Hey, I put my 50 free hourse to good use.

Penny:

Timed writing isn't what I think of in tech. writing. Most cases, when your preparing something technical you have time to check your data and your write up several times before you submit it to anything final.

James:

Oh well, Maybe next time.

Geoff:

Bye, everyone.

Nick:

Let's go

Jack:

there's notin wrong wit a C.

I hopw spelling and grammatical erros don't account for much.

Penny:

Adios

Casey:

bye

Todd:

!!!!!!

P.D.:

Todd, I want to be in your group

P.D.:

Penny, Nick, Todd, May I be th fourth person in your group. I am a biochem/chemistry major

P.D.:

Is anyone in this conference?

P.D.:

I hope this get sorted out by the end of Thursday class.

Chi:

I am her :-O

P.D.:

Hi Chi

P.D.:

How was your weekend?

## Conference Session Two

### COMMON EMOTICONS AND CHAT ROOM ABBREVIATIONS

Use these emoticons to clarify your intentions, reactions, and the spirit of your meanings while interchanging online in more personal ways or with familiar contexts/audiences. Remember, when using all caps, it means you are shouting your message.

<b>:-) or :) or &lt;S&gt;</b>	<b>smiling</b>
<b>:-( or :(</b>	<b>frown</b>
<b>:-  or : </b>	<b>keeping a straight face</b>
<b>:-O or :O</b>	<b>surprise</b>
<b>;-) or ;)</b>	<b>wink</b>
<b>:-X or :X</b>	<b>keeping a secret</b>
<b>:-/ or :/</b>	<b>“hmmm,” considering something, in puzzlement,</b>
<b>@--/---</b>	<b>a rose</b>
<b>*&lt;O)</b>	<b>a clown</b>
<b>:-D or :D</b>	<b>laughing</b>
<b>&lt;S&gt;</b>	<b>big smiling</b>
<b>&lt;g&gt; or &lt;G&gt;</b>	<b>grin/big grin</b>
<b>LMAO</b>	<b>laughing my a** off</b>
<b>ROFLMAO</b>	<b>rolling on the floor, laughing my a** off</b>
<b>OIC</b>	<b>oh, I see</b>
<b>gm ta</b>	<b>great minds think alike</b>
<b>{{{{{A}}}}}}</b>	<b>hugging this person</b>
<b>BRB or TTFN</b>	<b>be right back or ta ta for now [exiting the room]</b>
<b>oic</b>	<b>oh, I see</b>

## Flaming

Berzsenyi: How do you define flaming? Do you think that it is unethical to flame others online? Why or why not? Is there an ethics of internet communication? If not, should there be an ethics of chat room communication? Why or why not?

Ed:

What is flaming? How can you flame a person?

Freddie:

What is this flaming thing?

Kristy:

Flaming is like cutting someone down.

Tad:

where I come from flaming has the meaning of a very woman-like homosexual.

Kristy:

not on the internet

Freddie:

I am with Tad all the way if you know what I mean 8)

Tad:

Freddie, you're a sicko ;)

Keng:

sometime, people do play around the internet. we need to cut them out.

Kristy:

true but some people taking the flaming to extreme

Keng:

Oh! I see.

Keng:

how extreme? what is the situation?

K.D.:

w;) anyone here flamed b4

Kristy:

extreme like not leaving the person alone after awhile. . . continuing with email

Ed:

So is the question--is it OK to rip people on the net? That is because the other person isn't there to punch you in the nose--you feel free to be bold/rude/hateful?

Tad:

flaming is tupic. no one has any feelings behind a monitor

Tad:

it serves no purpose

Jay:

Flaming is something that I am unfamiliar with but it seems cool. I think it is cool to piss people off on-line <g>...

K.D.:

I think that flaming is kind of useless as a punitive measure. Sometimes there is no substitute for emotions and facial expressions.

Tad:

yeah. when I was a freshman me and my suitemate used to get on the lesbian chat line and piss em off

Phyl:

Well, as far as I can tell, flaming is part of life in general to the degree that people choose to practice it or expose themselves to it. I don't recognise that it has any special place in cyberspace. I suspect that it stands out as being notable in people's minds because people havn't had much experience with personal active access to mass communication. The opportunity for such communication has expanded, and flaming is a subcategory of communication in general.

Jay:

If you are not in person with them, who cares about what goes on. That is how my friend gets his jollies off.

Tad:

phyl: limit your responses to one or 2 lines please.

Kong:

I get pissed off when somebody flame me. I think flaming is meaningless

Tad:

was that considered a flame by me?

Keng:

I do not think so.

Kristy:  
Tad: no

Tad:  
ok

### Flaming Two

Berzsenyi: Define Flaming. Do you think that inflammatory communications should be monitored, censored, or prohibited online? Why or why not? Are there extreme examples, acceptable examples, and borderline examples that you can think of for exploring the boundaries of this issue?

Nick:  
I don't think that flaming should be censored. The only times that I've flamed or been flamed (being put down, usually harshly, online) is when it was deserved.

Phan:  
I believe that people have the right to their own opinions without malice on another individual's well-being.

### Cyberporn

Berzsenyi: What is pornography? Do you think that pornography should be available to children on the web? Do you support content blockers which would inhibit children's access to certain types of subjects? Why or why not? At what age do you think pornography is acceptable for viewing, if at all? Why?

James:  
It is so unfortunate that people like Todd log onto the internet and put all that porn and beasiality on the internet. :-)

Marcy:  
LMAO

Geoff:  
I think all forms of naked people should be available to everyone. :-)

Matt:  
:-D

Ron:  
<G>

James:  
Don't even think that I am kidding around :-D

Marcy:  
even children, Geoff? You are a pervert!

Nick:  
This entire conversation is composed of emoticons, obviously gmta

Geoff:  
Perversion is in the eyes of the beholder, ML

Ron:  
I support content blockers ;-), ;-)

James:  
I really hate pornography. . . ;-)

Geoff:  
If I were in Josh's family, I would be conservative ;)

Ron:  
gmta

James:  
Yo, all I can say is gmta

### Cyberporn Two

Tad:  
I want access to **HARDCORE PORN** :)

Freddie:  
Anybody Naked :)

Terry:  
Pornography is quite simply naked people. Personally, I don't think anyone should have access to it because it breeds deviant behavior which could potentially lead to violent crime like rape and molestation. I think it should be unconditionally banned.

Tad:  
It's just a form of entertainment



Matthew:

I think everyone knows what pornography is. Only adults should be able to access pornography. The internet does a good job of limiting access.

John:

I am definitely for some sort of blocker to limit access to pornography in the case of children. Children should not be exposed to such material because of the possible harmful effects.

Terry:

pornography's effects are just as harmful to adults as it is to children

Matthew:

:O definitely at some of the stuff that is accessible on the internet

Dawn:

"internet does a good job of limiting access"? :-O ummm...the internet does little censoring at this point in time, though individual internet service providers do control material

John:

Terry, I also agree with you!

Nancy:

I think that pornography is more than just naked people. I think it is naked people doing certain things, you know? :) Ideally I don't like censorship to even children. it's a hard call. but if parents would just communicate with their children and explain porn then. . . I don't know.

Freddie:

I heard of this great site called persiankitty

Tad:

it's still freedom of expression in my mind

Ed:

It's a hard call, it's the desire for pornography to be combated, but while that is being dealt with in people, it is good to make it hard to get to--and impossible (if possible) for children/early teens.

Tad:

more like perversion kitty, Fred

Terry:

I think it's ironic these days when the supreme court wants to disbar a judge because he has the ten commandments posted on his wall but the same court will say porn is okay.

Freddie:

The biggest problem that I have is the question why?

Matthew:

Many times trying to get into certain porn websites is stopped and asked for a credit card therefore limiting access

Ed:

I think pornography is the exploitation of sexual acts of any kind which isn't geared toward education or awareness. I think that anyone with the proper knowledge of computers can have access, but I think how a person deals with the material depends solely on what he or she has already learned in his or her home environment. Based on this, I cannot set an age limit on pornography, only a specific maturity level. I am pretty much indifferent to the blockers, because today, everything can be overridden. <S> means Tracy

Eric:

There should be some ban for children but if adults enjoy it let them contribute is a form of freedom of the press

Tad:

yeah james but there ways around it. not that I would know :)

Nancy:

I saw a special on HBO about cybersex and I personally don't think I could get into it. <G>

Ed:

Fred, you're not making it hard for people to get to it... <g>

Tad:

nancy I saw a picture of someone who looks just like you on one of those sites 8)

Jay:

pornography is the state or essence of being photographed while unclothed. These are humans. Any woman over the age of 16 is alright by me :D I guess I do. I wouldn't mind showing my son some of the stuff when he was young like my father showed me. Pornography should be free to everyone. Afterall the person that is nude had to of consented to the photography process in the first place. . . I personally like looking at some pictures every once in a while :). . . It gives another meaning to the word meaning. I am not looking at men either, because I may envy them <g>...

Terry:

me too Nancy

Freddie:

In this day and age you cannot keep people from doing anything

Dawn:

there are many problems when it comes to censoring pornography on the net; example. OU's blocking of all sex newsgroups which discuss sexual topics but not the alt.binaries.sex newsgroups that contain sexual photographs.

Eric:

Don't take that Nancy.

Tad:

just play'in Nancy

Matthew:

There are sick enough people who do anything to get into porn on the internet. It is rather sick.

Phyl:

uhhhh...hhmmmm. uh...

Eric:

To much time on there hands Matthew

Tad:

they have problems and addictions

Terry:

I don't like porn on the net but I just got up-to-the- minute odds of the second race at Aqueduct and Delaware Park at the Daily Racing Form's site [www.drf.com](http://www.drf.com)

Kristy:

Dawn: they did block most of those that upset the groups such as alt.sex.binaries.childporn, bestiality. . . etc.

Nancy:

tad-yea right. :)

Tad:

speaking of cybersex eric, how's nancy??? :) :) :)

Ed:

Why do so many people desire porn? (not a rhetorical question)

Kristy:

Dawn: by "the groups" I mean the Christian Coalition that requested the blocking in the first place

Eric:

childporn is taking it to far I think

Jay:

Yeah it seems to be cool to look at the stuff. If you never get to look at the real thing like me, then there is always the net. . .

Matthew:

Eric, that's not all they are doing with there hands

Tad:

Christian Coalition bugs

Dawn:

Kristy: good that they got some of the binaries, since I don't frequent such newsgroups I know little about them; though I know many of them got by when they just blocked the alt.sex groups.

Tad:

jay: don't get so down on yourself

Phyl:

I don't have anything to say in this conference. . .

Nancy:

I guess its like phone sex. but I'm not into that either. I need an actual person. <G>

Kristy:

Dawn: the funny thing is the ecn never blocked any of it's groups

Tad:

nancy: not even a little? <im being serious here>

Dawn:

kristy: yup yup yup :-P

Freddie:

Define an actual person Nancy :)

Matthew:

Nancy I think you are shady :)

Tad:  
I bet Matthew's phone bills are pretty high

Jay:  
Real people are cool but if you are lonelyl one nite, then you might have to improvise.

Eric:  
I think it will be a long time until they ban porn because it will be hard to do.

Matthew:  
Tad no but my credit cards bill is <G>

Tad:  
yeay eric I agree, there is a big grey area between what is and what isn't

Kristy:  
I saw the list of groups they blocked (working in the DCTS) and I definitely don't see the fuss, most of the groups were beastiality

Tad:  
Matthew, 1-800-we-are-18

Terry:  
Its already illegal in oklahoma anyway. it can't be banned anymore than it already is

Keng:  
It cost few dollars per minute

John:  
Where does a person draw the line on porn? Either you are for it or against it, but everyone seems to like to be in the middle of the road these days. Nobody seems to take a stand on anything!

Freddie:  
You know too much Keng :0

Dawn:  
It usually takes at least some degree of computer knowledge to get to the files in alt.\*binaries newsgroups, unlike the world wide web; thus I would think that it would be smarter to start with the web as far as university control goes (though its a great deal harder to inforce)

Keng:  
I always watch tv.

Terry:  
PORN SHOULD BE BANNED!!!!that's not middle of the road

Nancy:  
john--you are ight. then no one makes anyone mad.

Matthew:  
John there are certain things I people like about porn

Tad:  
porn should not be banned

Tad:  
first amendment baby!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Freddie:  
I think it should be treated like TV if you don't want to see do not watch it

Matthew:  
some guys need porn

Eric:  
I agree with Fred

Freddie:  
@--/-- Hey guys I drew a rose

Ed:  
I think porn is: Anything that excites you (sexually) or gets you aroused .  
...is porn. That can even be a curvy sports car--if you are wired that way.

Kristy:  
Dawn: the university only wants to take a stand when they have too. If  
they didn't clock the news groups they would have been taken to court. . .  
although they did anyway :/

Matthew:  
Fred--I agree with you. If you don't like it, don't pay attention to it.

Terry:  
what's one benefit to society from pornography? Also why are people  
against child porn? What's the difference? They're both sexually deviant  
behavior which sometimes causes people to act out their fantasies in the  
form of rape.

Freddie:  
Ed likes to make love in the Backseat

Tad:  
fred: too much information

Terry:  
yeah--with his wife driving in the front seat.

Kristy:  
woah...you guys are starting to flame :)

Tad:  
and nancy in the trunk

Freddie:  
Let's pick on someone else

Tad:  
with jay

Keng:  
who?  
Tad:  
and matthew

Tad:  
and ms. b

K.D.:  
what?

Matthew:  
Who is in the trunk with marci

Ed:  
I'm staying in the flaming exchange...

Freddie:  
Here another gmta

Kristy:  
poor nancy

Mike<sup>1</sup>:  
Before I became a professor at the university of oklahoma, I was considering adult movies. I am completely kidding (this is actually Mike writing this). I am the one that was considering adult movies before

---

<sup>1</sup> "Mike" had been using "Berzsenyi" as a screen identity for the day because there had been an administrative problem with logging Mike into the chat. In this moment, he is pretending to be me.

becoming a student and persuing a science degree. I have been on the Ricky Lake Show, Rolanda, and numerous other talk shows.

Tad:  
kristy strapped to the hood

Matthew:  
Good one!

Freddie:  
Homw much were you going to get paid

Nancy:  
I don't think porn necessarily leads to rape. maybe a persona that would possibly rape get off with cybersex and then wouldn't feel the need to rape.

Matt:  
:-)

Kristy:  
oh :/

Nancy:  
thanks kristy

Tad:  
are you serious about that last part Mike?

Jay:  
I would enjoy animals in the pics in order to help arouse me. I believe in bestiality.

Phyl:  
all rightee...

Terry:  
nancy: I think a more realistic approach would be to obliterate the deviant behaviors and feelings in the first place

Kong:  
Christyne: is this a flaming or what :P

Freddie:  
This is definitely flaming

Phyl:  
yikes..."all rightee" was a general response, not a response to a specific statement...



Terry:  
anybody else like nascar?

K.D.  
What's nascar?

Terry:  
nascar is better than sex anyway

Freddie:  
Rusty Wallace Rocks :)

Tad:  
nastar is better

Terry:  
just imagine: 3500 pounds of thrust at your disposal

Terry:  
#2 ford thunderbird rocks

Freddie:  
I love the car cam

Terry:  
his brother kenny is pretty cool too

Tad:  
with horsey sauce, right terry?

Phyl:  
nascar...:)

Terry:  
Did you ever play nascar racing on the computer?

Terry:  
Jeff gordon's wife is hot

K.D.:  
No, how's it like?

Freddie:  
Is she on the internet?

Terry:  
no, she's a good girl

### Altruism Online

Berzsenyi: What utilitarian uses of the internet can you think of which have helped people in important ways? One example is information regarding diseases such as AIDS which get updated daily, making the internet the ideal forum and medium for conveying that information to millions of people. Can you think of other ways we have or can use the internet as a source of such communication and the benefit of the general public?

Jack:

CB's text seems to be saying that information about AIDS comes from anal explosions ...:-)

Jack:

I'm willing to bet that no one sees my last comment because everyone is too busy fixating their attention on pornography ...;\_)

Berzsenyi:

Well, not exactly.

### Altruism Online Two

Thomas:

One of the positive uses I have found for the internet is the transferring of technical information.

K.D:

It gives me a lot of information.

Dawn:

\*not\*, internet is a good platform for dispersing huge amounts of info, especially useful if they provide good search methods.

Lori:

besides that, I feel that the most recent updated info can be found there.

Keng:

when I type in any words, the search will give me some answers

Thomas:

Lori what types of sites do you usually find on the internet

K.D.:

I would browse around to save time and gain useful info

Lori:

thomas, I believe I didn't quite get what u mean?

## Intellectual Property Rights Online

Berzsenyi: Do you think that whatever information is on the internet is fair game for using in whatever capacity or for whatever purpose? Why or why not? This is an issue of intellectual property rights. Can you give some examples that are borderline cases? What is complicated about the example?

Phan:

I believe that whatever info is fair game for using in whatever capacity or for whatever purpose. Once the info is in the internet, it is open to everyone in the first place. If someone wants to have intellectual property rights, he should not put his stuff in the internet the first place.

Yip:

:-) Hi Phan.

## Software Piracy

Berzsenyi: Do you think that it is ethical to pirate copy software from a friend to save money? Do you see that as stealing? Why or why not? How do you think that software piracy affects you, other consumers, or the company that produces the software?

Jerry:

The question I have is "Who is pirating who?"

Jerry:

60 buck a game lord, what incentive do I have \*not\* to pirate software...

Rod:

But, I have to make a living.

Jerry:

If game companies would charge less, ther would be less pirating going on.

Jerry:

sure, so charge a reasonable rate.

Rod:

I don't consider trading one or two copies with friends pirating.

Jerry:

Neither do I, I guess she didn't really define pirating. ...

Rod:  
If I pirate several thousand copies of a game to china then that is pirating

Jerry:  
Are we talking about copying a game to share with your friends, or a guy who makes 200 copies of a commercial product to sell

Rod:  
Oh by the way, I have a copy of the new MS Money and Office 97 if someone needs a copy :~)

Jerry:  
Right, right. But the FBI considers a felony since your are not making money on the deal, only saving money

Rod:  
Yep, ever watch a video? Same thing, different technology.

Jerry:  
I don't think its a crime, but it *\*is\** a felony.

## **Conference Session Two: Composition Students**

### Cyberporn

Willy:  
who is in group 3?

Lyssa:  
hi, everybody :)

Susan:  
hello group 3.

Lana:  
hi! everyone

Lana:  
So who want to start on the subject pornography?

Jeff:  
We are software piracy

Willy:  
Ok guys looks like we got the topic of pornography. How do you guys define it? :)

Jeff:  
nevermind

Willy:  
Jeff what arse you trying to say buddy! :D

Susan:  
He was in the wrong group

Lyssa:  
I don't think porn should be available on the net. I think there should be some kind of stop or something so little kids can't see it like maybe a password.

Lana:  
Somebody define "pornography" :-)

Willy:  
I totally agree about the password. Little children shouldn't be able to view it.

Susan:  
I agree with the password too.

Lyssa:  
Porn is gross people doing gross things while their naked and putting it on some type of film.

Lana:  
I agree also that there should be some kind of censorship on the internet.

Willy:  
At what age do you think that pornography should be able to be viewed? Are you just going to make the password available at that time?

Chrystal:  
Last time I said, and still think, that the age limit on the viewing of pornography should be 18.

Susan:

18 because that is when you can buy or rent this stuff at stores, but I doubt that it would work to wait till that age because people will just get their older friends pass words.

Lana:

I believe people over the age of eighteen should be able to have access to pronography on the net.

Lyssa:

Porn should be able to be viewed at 17 years because I think "Showgirls" was rated NC-17. That movie is as gross as it gets.

Chrystal:

That is true. If you want to see an R rated movie you only have to be 17 to see it, and let's be honest half the time that stuff could be counted as porn.

Lyssa:

The paper said that there are content blockers and asks if we agree with having them. I agree with content blockers.

Susan:

Some of the porn stuff on the internet can get much more gross than that on a rated R movie.

Willy:

How are you going to put a block on children under 18 watching the films. I really don't think that you could. If a teenage boy the age of 16 wants to see porn than how are you going to stop him from getting the password.

Lana:

So, let's say at the age of 17.

Lyssa:

True, but if you've seen a naked person then you've basically seen porn.

Chrystal:

I think whoever pays for the internet access should receive a password via registered mail, because most of the time, the parents are going to be paying for the access.

Willy:

I think you should be older also, but let's face it people that disagree with us are going to think that it is a little far fetched.

Lyssa:

okay, so what do we agree on, besides having content blockers

Chrystal:

If there were a law about restrictions of porn based on age, then that could be included the letter with the password letting parents know that they would be breaking the law if they gave the password to their children who are under the age of seventeen.

Lana:

It might not stop all children under the age of 17; however, it will stop some kids.

Susan:

If a sixteen year old is caught viewing a porn on the internet their parents would really be the only people who could do something about it.

Chrystal:

Nakendness doe not mean porn. Porn has to do with the activities occurring while someone is naked or partially naked or whatever.

Lyssa:

Little kids shouldn't watch porn. It could mess them up for life. Little kids might make their own porn movies or learn to take naked pictures of their friends.

Lyssa:

Showgirls is porn.

Willy:

I think that pornography is ethical. It relates back to freedom to do what you chose. I personally don't agree with it, but I don't think it is fare to limit those who want to see it.

Chrystal:

You think it is okay for some ten year old t sit up and watch pornography all day?

Lana:

O.K., my opinion about pornography on the net is that it shouldn't be put on there in the first place. However, that is very idealistic, and I agree it will happen anyway. Children watching porn is ethically wrong, however, adults have the right to have access.

Susan:

I don't fel that it would be ethical to take porn away from those who are old enough to watch it because it is there right to get to see what they want.

Lyssa:

I agree with Willy, but I think that a person should be at least 17, before they view it. It's just like having to be 21 to buy liquor. Of course people break this almost every weekend but it is a good law. It's ethical!!!

Willy:

I don't agree with the whole moral principal of it, and my kids sure are not, but I feel as though their parents should take action and see to it that it is not done.

Willy:

You just cannot limit it because you don't like it.

Susan:

exactly

Lyssa:

You go, Willy!!

Lyssa:

so what are our answers???

Chrystal:

I think pornography, if watched for a long time, begins to warp someone's mind. If you're an adult and you're looking at that kind of stuff, your mind is already warped, but we should try to keep children from starting down that path. I do not think it is my business what other adults do, but I do think that we all have to be responsible for what happens to the children of our country and I think part of that is limiting what goes into their minds. We need cultivate them and help them grow and learn, not show them sexually provocative things.

Willy:

I agree, but how do you plan to do this?

Lyssa:

Sometimes sexually provocative things help kids grow and learn.

Lyssa:

We don't need to plan this we just need to answer the questions.

Chrystal:

:-/ How can sexually provocative things help a child grow and learn?

Lyssa:

sorry answer

Lyssa:

What's our definition???

Chrystal:

If it were against the law to view pornography under the age of seventeen that might stop some of the children from viewing it. However, just like R-



rated movies, lots of kids are going to sneak into the net and view it anyway, but a whole lot more aren't. Why do they need to learn how to reproduce before the age of eighteen?

Willy:

What is our definition of pornography?

Lyssa:

I think we need to focus on our definition.

Susan:

:O

Willy:

face the facts, many teenagers want to learn about sex before they come to college.

Chrystal:

Yes, but they can learn it in other ways than pornography.

Susan:

:O

Lana:

I agree with you Chrystal. It might seem that we are taking away rights, when we censor the net. However, children should not thinking about porn. It is our responsibility to see that children of the future have a clear view of what is right and what is wrong. If we put porn on the net and have children viewing it are we justifying that it is right to watch porn at a early age.

Chrystal:

gmta

Lyssa:

Porn is naked or partially naked people performing very provocative sexual acts.

Willy:

I'm not saying that pornography is right, I am just trying to make it fair for the people who do not agree.

Chrystal:

I agree with that, Lyssa.

Willy:

Good definition lyssa

Lyssa:

Excuse me, just what do we agree on??

Willy:  
Who is our spokesperson

Susan:  
What are the answers to our questions?

Chrystal:  
It is fair, there are lots of things that we are not allowed to do at the ages of 16, 17, 18, and 21, and they are all for our welfare.

Lyssa:  
I asked that question a long time ago!!!

### Cyberporn Two

Kamal:  
Let there be porn.

Willis:  
hello:)

Willis:  
oh god

Maggie:  
I think we established that last class

Mark:  
hello

Kamal:  
so what do we have to do?

Chuck:  
This is a loaded question.

Kamal:  
I mean, So what do we have to do?

Maggie:  
discuss and come up with...uh...

Chrystal:  
First we have to establish whether or not we think pornography should be available to children on the net.

Kamal:  
first, lets define porn.

Kamal:  
first lets define porn.

Kamal:  
It should be up to the parents

Chrystal:  
Does anyone have a definition of porn?

Maggie:  
20 minutes????!!!!!!

Chuck:  
No, porn should not be available to children, but it is inherently legal that it be available on the internet. Who in there right mind is going to say that an 11 year old should be able to see...well "certain things" and then go to school and tell his teacher about them in front of the whole class. I am sorry that this is so far behind the conversation. My computer only updates every two or three minutes.

Kamal:  
PORN= People fornicating in public.

Chrystal:  
Sorry guys I'm leaving. I'm in group four answering question one.  
Bye!

Chuck:  
no.

Maggie:  
We need to figure out a definition we may all different ideas of what porn is.

Chuck:  
Porn is not just bikinis and speedos. That should be legal. So, yes Baywatch is not porn.

Kamal:  
That's right Baywatch is definitely not porn

Chuck:  
Actually, now that I think about it. Should we not just decide how to regulate it, and make it inaccessible to kids? There is no way that we will be able to restrict it ability to be present on the net. Someone please answer.

**Maggie:**

I think that the internet should be able to show porn. It is up to the parents to regulate what they think is right for their kids. If the kids are curious, then the parents and the kids can work something out.

**Maggie:**

Did that make any sense?

**Kamal:**

I agree with you Maggie!

**Maria:**

Pornography is images that contains frontal nudity of a female or a male. I don't think that it should be available to children. And there should definitely be blockers to prohibit children from viewing it on the internet. Children's innocence should be guarded as long as possible because the more they know about sex, the earlier they will start experimenting. Instead of sixteen year old mothers, we'll start seeing eleven year old mothers. Pornography should be legalized for sixteen year olds at the absolute earliest.

**Maria:**

How can you expect parents to regulate what their kids see on the computer when most parents both work?

**Chuck:**

Great idea Maggie, but it does not follow with standard procedures regulating porn now. You can not even see "soft-porn" rated NC-17 movies if you are under 17--technically.

**Kamal:**

The parents need to talk about the birds and the bees with their kids, because sex is becoming more and more prevalent in our society today.

**Maggie:**

Maria, I don't agree with you one bit. I think that the more sheltered we make our kids, the less educated they are and the quicker they will make stupid mistakes, therefore producing 11 and 16 year old mothers. Anyway, you can't get pregnant off the internet.

**Chuck:**

It is currently illegal in most places for anyone under the age of 18, and in some places 21, for anyone to view porn.

**Kamal:**

Is Porn ETHICAL?

**Chuck:**

Sex is only more prevalent because we let it be. Sex has always been there, it just was not a public. Kids used to get married at thirteen, so you cannot say that they are just starting earlier now.

**Chuck:**

That was a dumb question Kamal :-)

**Maria:**

The adults should be responsible for maintaining the innocence of today's children because if they do not the kids will begin to lose their childhood. If exposed to sex and porn at early ages they will have to begin to deal with adult problems at childhood. **GETTING MARRIED AT THIRTEEN FOR ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL REASONS IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN SLEEPING AROUND AT THAT AGE! DON'T EVEN TRY TO COMPARE THEM.**

**Kamal:**

To some people Porn is ethical and they don't see anything wrong with it.  
<s>

**Maggie:**

Don't yell

**Maggie:**

What exactly are we trying to figure out here? whether it should be on the internet? What age? I think we have lost our focus.

**Chuck:**

Again the question here is not whether porn is ethical, but rather should children be allowed access to it on the net.

No it is not legal anywhere else for kids, so what special right does the net have to be the exclusive provider to the toddler generation of porn. Kids are not allowed to be photographed, etc, or even have sex with a partner of the wrong age, remember the whole 18 is legal law?

**Kamal:**

People are going to have Sex and people are to watch porn the question is whether we should let kids watch porn?

**Maggie:**

So is there an age, currently to watch porn? I know there is for magazines.

**Kamal:**

So then are we saying kids under the age of 18 should be banned from porn?

Chuck:  
BS (new icon thing)

Maria, I do not want kids to have access either, but porn is still legal, ethical, and all the above--for any individual who has reached a point in their life where they have a certain understandin.....

Yes. There is an age for porn.  
Do not take this the wrong way but ==> in order to access a porn site on the net, one must agree to the fact that there are of a legal age to view the material in the site.

Maggie:  
I think that "banned" is a very strong word. Do you really mean banned or what?

Kamal:  
So what's our answer?

Maggie:  
So, there is actually a question: Are you of legal age? And you simply type yes or no? Please....

Kamal:  
That's is already in effect. Right?

Chuck:  
There is an age for everything. Blocker sites are a good idea. They to be more effective in the manner in which they regulate. Currently they will block out a site if any porn related word is in it. The blocker companies get paid big bucks to do their job, so they should be more carful in which sites are dubbed as "adult." There are some sites for breast cancer research that are blocked.

And yes, you just hit the button yes or no.

Maria:  
In a nutshell, my answer that I don't think it's ethical for children to view it and I do believe that a blocker should be used.

Kamal:  
I agree with everyone. Are we done?

Maggie:  
Well thanks!!!!!!:-)

Chuck:

Well, obviously kids should not view it. And obviously it is illegal for them to so how do we stop them?

### Cyberporn Three

Lidy:

I think pornography is the sickest thing in the entire world!

Shane:

hello?

Lidy:

Hi Shane! Whitley's on here too.

Ally:

I don't think its sick, but sometimes it is rather gross

Shane:

ok Lidy, we know your stand on this position.

Shane:

ok Lidy, we know your stand on this position.

Suzette:

I believe pornography should be banned from the internet.

Lidy:

I do too Suzette!

Mr. Dick Long [Bill]:

You shouldn't feel that way guys.

Ally:

moi aussi (me too)

Abbey:

I agree that it's totally tasteless, (not to mention stupid) but should it be banned?

Kadah:

TRUE, but if people want to do it, what right do we have to say its wrong?

**Whitley:**

I don't think that pornography should be available to children on the internet, but how are you going to prevent them from joining? If it is available than children are going to view it.

**Shane:**

Porn whether or not you like it has a right just like everything else.

**Ally:**

Bill you are soooooo gross

**Amanda:**

I don't think that it should be banned on the internet!

**Suzette:**

Why should children under age of, let's say eighteen, have access to stuff like that?

**Lidy:**

Nothing that disgusting has a right to do anything!

**Mario:**

it's everywhere anyway :P

we won't be able to stop what has already gotten out of control...it would be very hard to get rid of

**Amanda:**

Their parents should step in and monitor what they read on the internet!

**Kadah:**

They might like that kind of kinky stuff.

**Alsad:**

I think it should be banned but there is no way that you could accomplish that

**Mario:**

it should not be available to children through

**Alsad:**

I think it should be banned but there is no way that you could accomplish that

**Whitley:**

It is your decision of whether or not you watch. But I think it is gross.

**Shane:**

I feel that porn should have blocks up to restrict their access.



Amanda:

How do blocks to certain areas work? I think that's a good idea.

Suzette:

It's everywhere, but does that make it right.

Do you want your children watching pornography at the age of nine or ten?

Mario:

there is a new system taht I read about that you have o have a password froman age check system that would make it possible to access the porn

Jane:

I agree

Lidy:

NOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Lidy:

NOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Ally:

Little kids shouldn't be able to watch stuff like that. there should be restrictions

Amanda:

Hey, I wouldn't want my children to watch porn, but I would watch them closely to see that they didn't.

Whitley:

Lidy is out of control about the situation.

Kadah:

Think if you were 15 it would suck if porn ws banned from the net.

Shane:

Children today often do acts worse then what they would see on the net.

Lidy:

No I'm not!!!

Bill:

Really it should be banned but you will always have those people who want their inalienable rights and will try to go to the Supreme court

Mario:

they sure do

Whitley:  
Kadah it seems as though you have had experience in this field!

Lidy:  
Kadah is out of control!!!!!!!!!!!!!!I feel sorry for your kids!

Amanda:  
It's just like porn movies...they haven't actually destroyed society.  
It's freedom of speech we're talking about here. I think it should be legal.

Mario:  
the Adult Check seems to be a good idea to control the problem :)

Ally:  
Kadah has had experience in every field dealing with sex

Amanda:  
Yep, I agree Mario :)

Mandi:  
is there anything where you can ban it from your own computer?

Kadah:  
you gotta think of both sides of the situation? We are mature adults now  
but we all were kids once.

Suzette:  
I understand people over the age of eighteen should have access to  
pornography, but what about having a system where access is not available  
to children.

Mario:  
a would you know ally!!!!!! :)

Shane:  
There is no way to stop this. Why should people be kept from this if this is  
what they want.

Whitley:  
Do we really have to talk about Kadah's sex life?

Lidy:  
Whitley, could ya not!

Amanda:  
It seems to be more interesting that any of the other topics.

**Ally:**  
somebody told me ;)

**Mario:**  
we can't ban people from doing what they want...it is a constitutional right!

**Bill:**  
:-0

**Shane:**  
Some people have no other way to satisfy them selves but looking at porn on the net. :D

**Amanda:**  
Yeah! Right on, Mario!

**Mandi:**  
Come on now, you can't get into a R rated movie, but for sure you can get kicks from the internet porn stuff  
I agree with then constitutional right

**Ally:**  
I thinkk shane is talking about you, Kadah

**Lidy:**  
Yes, we can!!!! Porn is not in the constitution as a constitutional right!!!

**Mandi:**  
Shane, are you referring to yourself

**Kadah:**  
That's all I am trying to saY! IT'S CONSTITUTIONAL baby!

**Kadah:**  
That's all I am trying to saY! IT'S CONSTITUTIONAL baby!

**Amanda:**  
That's true, there should be blocks to children under 18. But porn should not be banned altogether.

**Mario:**  
but freedom is!!!!

**Mario:**  
but freedom is!!!!

Suzette:

We are not talking about what is constitutionally right, but what does pornography do to children?

Shane:

No names mentioned Ally. :-)

Whitley:

I think that this discussion is not about pornography anymore but about Kadah.

Mandi:

LET THERE BE PORN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Lidy:

Whatever Kadah!! I think Kadah is SICK in the head!!!!

Fran:

I agree with Amanda that porn is a freedom of speech. No one should have the right to decide what other people can or can not see. Subscribing the internet is still a personal choice. Parents who subscribe internet should have a password for accessing the net.

Mario:

we all know that

Mario:

we all know that

Shane:

no mandi, but some lonely 60 yo man sets at home and enjoys himself. Why take his satisfaction. LMAO

Ally:

okay I promise to stop talking about Kadah and start talking about PORN.

Amanda:

When you start to ban pornography, then you'll ban something else...and then we won't have NEARLY as much freedom as we do now.

Kadah:

I not SICK. Ima just be REAL. We all have Hormones, we outta be more open about.

Whitley:

That is sick Shane. That will be you in 60 years.

Mandi:

PORNPORNPORNPORNPORNPORNPORN

Cassidy:  
the pursuit of happiness is

Bill:  
You guys are crazy :-@

Whitley:  
Mandi is there something I need to know here

Amanda:  
OKAAAAAAAAAY...more porn, please.

Mandi:  
Lidy's future job.

Ally:  
LMAO

Mario:  
LMAO

Lidy:  
mandi--  
Get out of our group!

Amanda:  
LMAO

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Mandi:  
Can people make pictures and put them on the internet?

Suzette:  
LMAO

Mario:  
so what age is it good for people to look at porn? :/

Amanda:  
Yep. I think so.

Ally:  
If this is going to be Lidy's future job then she isn't going to be very successful

Whitley:  
ROFLMAO

Nate:  
I wouldn't know

Bill:  
sure they can

Suzette:  
I think people can take pictures and put it on the internet.

Mario:  
they can  
there are scanners

Bill:  
All they have to do is scan them

Shane:  
whit, I agree with Kadah. Everyone has seen some sort of porn before.  
Everyone these days are so uptight about sex. Why not up open and talk  
about it ;)

Whitley:  
I think every student in our class is logged onto the subject of Porn.  
That is sad.

Lidy:  
Yes, they can. Isn't that disgusting to think that if we had kids, they could  
see that stuff?

Mandi:  
So could someone take my face and another's body and put it on the net?

Mario:  
you can put anything on the net these days

Bill:  
why is it sad?

Lucy:  
I don't think that they should be banned from the internet because it is your  
right to do whatever you want with them, but I do think kids should be  
monitored some how so they don't watch it. :)

Kadah:  
But how about naked pictures? Should that be allowed because some  
people don't need to be doing that?

Cassidy:  
oic

Ally:  
Mandi, are you getting ideas?? :/

Amanda:  
Yeah, I agree, Lucy.

Shane:  
mandi will be on next month. :-)

Mario:  
yup they can mandi

Shane:  
mandi will be on next month :-)

Jim:  
Kids will find porn anywhere they want to.

Suzette:  
I don't think it's sad, because all of us have our own personal opinion about pornography. Why not express them?

Whitley:  
Shane, I'm sorry but I guess I am just a little more modest than you! No I'm not in fifth grade but I don't get my kicks from porn!

Christy:  
:-( I don't think pornography should be available to children on the internet. Some sort of blocker to keep children from being able to view it would be good. I think a good age to remove the cap for viewing pornography would be eighteen. That's when all the other responsibility is put off on you anyway. If you are supposed to be responsible for yourself, then being responsible for what you choose to see should be a part of that.

Cassidy:  
why not

Mandi:  
**SHANE--PORN STUD OF THE INTERNET**

Lidy:  
Because they shouldn't be able to see stuff like that at an early age. My kids are going to be good kids! :)

Bill:  
really whitley

Whitley:  
yes really bill

Bill:  
okay :O

Lidy:  
What are ya'll talking about Bill and Whitley?

Bill:  
That Whitley gets her kicks from porn

Shane:  
Whit, I don't believe that Porn is always a good choice but people should have the right to view what they feel proper to them.

Lucy:  
Most kids are doing alot of the stuff of porns anyway.

Cassidy:  
if we get rid of porn on the internet we have to say goodbye to BAYWATCH. :)

Whitley:  
Oh, really.

Lidy:  
I think it's probably the other way around Bill!

Christy:  
Just like lots of other things are kept out of the hands of minors, pornography should be also. Once you're old enough to take care of yourself, what you do and watch is your business. Thank God! <G>

Ally:  
I agree, you are soooo right, cassidy!!!!!!!!!!

Bill:  
What do you mean?

Christy:  
Bawatch hardly qualifies as pornographic!

Cassidy:  
have you seen it



Amanda:  
Well, it's kind of close to it...

Mario:  
it shows more than most other shows

Whitley:  
I totally agree, if you want to watch porns than I feel as though it is your right. I was just stating that I chose not to.

Bill:  
Alley has a crush on David Hasselhoff

Jason:  
Everyone go to the Ethics????room!!!!

Lidy:  
Good thought, Christy!

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Amanda:  
Yeah, maybe Baywatch should be banned, too.

Suzette:  
So, what does everybody agree it should be available on the net, but it should have some kind of censor.

Kadah:  
Some people just like porn, not me of course, and we can't ake away that right from them?

Christy:  
Yes unfortunately. I think the story lines stink. It's just like a copy of Sports Illustrated.

Mandi:  
I agree with Christy. If you want to see the porn and parents don't object than that should be no prob

Lidy:  
Yes, we can and I will!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Jim:  
Sounds like a Neil Diamond song Kadah.

Amanda:

NO. WE shouldn't Kadah, because that would just lead to more rights that would be taken away. Awww yeah.

Ally:

yes it does!!!! those girls have hardly anything on. Baywatch is wannabe porn.

Mario:

there is a sensor that started a couple of months ago :|

Whitley:

NO, I don't think it should be banned

Mario:

there is a sensor that started a couple of months ago :|

Cassidy:

it does have a censor, parents can put a block on all pornographic material with a small monthly fee of around \$30

Lidy:

What are you smoking Whitley

Shane:

there is no way to stop porn from being available to minors. If they can't get it then a older friend gets it for them. maybe they even sneek a peek at their fathers.

Bill:

What di you mean Lidy? :/

Lidy:

when?

Cassidy:

I was upset when my parents got the block

Jim:

OIC

Christy:

Hello Shane. Exactly what did you mean by that?

Mandi:

Their father's what?

Cassidy:  
just kidding

Whitley:  
Do you really think parents want to pay \$30 just to block out porn.

Bill:  
When you said it was the other way around.

Mario:  
there isn't really a block. you have to have a password from the to get the porn

Jim:  
Yeah what about their fathers

Lidy:  
I was just kidding.

Lucia:  
Basically its going to come down to the fact that parents are just going to have to watch over their kids shoulders while their on the internet. :-(

Cassidy:  
no they don't want to spend any money, their cheap

Whitley:  
When did we get on the subject of fathers

Amanda:  
I think parents would be more than willing to pay thirty bucks to block out porn. Please, they are so paranoid about that stuff...

Ally:  
Bill has a crush on that skinny lifeguard who has no body

Bill:  
yOU MEAN YOU Ally

Lucy:  
If they are going to go to all that trouble to get to use the porn part of the internet then they should be allowed to. ;)

Jim:  
Any kid surfing the net for porn is a nerd anyway and should be left alone

Whitley:  
Ally I'm on your side

Ally:  
I don't know how to swim, buttface

Suzette:  
:-|, That was funny!

Cassidy:  
yea, smart kids deserve to see porn

Shane:  
Porn is everywhere today. If not on the net then they will just grab a dirty magazine and enjoy it just much.

Fran:  
I think age cap of 18 is a little too conservative. Alot of kids begin to have questions about their sexuality. Maybe rather have them find out through having sex, porn on the internet would be a better way for them to discover thing like that :).

Christy:  
They're not a nerd, they're a freak. Unless you're talking about the fourteen and up group.

Ally:  
thanks whit

Whitley:  
sure

Amanda:  
Yeah Cassidy maybe pron should be blocked from all dumb kids. Like they have to pass some kind of I.Q. test before viewing...

Cassidy:  
gmta

Christy:  
If they have questions about their sexuality, they're not going to find the answers in a porn magazine.

Amanda:  
I mean, PORN

Lidy:  
Any one that will do anything for porn is a FREAK!!!!

Mario:  
true, Christy

Cassidy:  
oh, porn I thought you meant porn

Whitley:  
Lidy is a closet porn watcher!

Shane:  
calm down Lidy :)

Suzette:  
I agree with Christy they are not gonna find answers in pornography.

Mandi:  
How graphic is the porn on the internet?

Cassidy:  
porn, that's a fun word to say

Lidy:  
:O

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Jim:  
Ask Lidy

Christy:  
I don't know, let's ask Kadah. ROFLMAO

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Bill:  
HOW graphic you mean hOW UNGRAPHIC? :(

Mario:  
@---/---

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Jim:  
OIC

Suzette:  
:-(, So what do they really show on the net.

Amanda:  
Thanks Mario :)

Shane:  
Lidy is going to have the most perverse kid ever. LMAO

Whitley:  
OIC- Kadah sure has been quiet lately

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Mandi:  
;-)

Amanda:  
How pretty ;)

Ally:  
ROFLMAO

Mario:  
you're welcome amanda

Kadah:  
But really who really sits down and watches porn it boring? People rather be doing it the watching it!

Shane:  
Lidy is going to have the most perverse kid ever. LMAO

Ally:  
ROFLMAO

Mandi:  
;-)

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Christy:  
What ever, that will be Kadah

Lidy:  
Ask Lidy what?

Bill:

But back to the skinny lifeguard who always happens to lose her underwear in the pool

Cassidy:

oic

Amanda:

Such a one-track mind, Bill..... ;)

Lidy:

LMAO

Whitley:

Kahah is surfing the internet right now for a porn scene

Ally:

bill, stop talking about your mother

Nate:

oic

Mandi:

Skinny lifeguard? I want to know what they show on the net?

Jim:

LMAO

Mario:

is he really!?!? :O

Kadah:

/

Shane:

Mandi, go look some up! :)

Ally:

yes!!!!!!mao

Cassidy:

so is porn on the net good or bad?

Suzette:

Kadah, so what do they really show on the net?

Bill:

WE can't even talk about yours cause your mother doesn't wear any lmoa

Cassidy:  
they show everything on the net

Abbey:  
who would want to look at a computer image?

Ally:  
that's because yo dady keeps stealing them and wearing them. :)

Whitley:  
LMAO--When did we start talking about mothers? Don't even start with mine

Amanda:  
It's just like t.v.

Jim:  
Bill Gates

Bill:  
No wonder I can't get any from her

Amanda:  
It's just like t.v.

Mario:  
those who can't see it anywhere else :)

Mario:  
else that is

Amanda:  
IT'S JUST LIKE T.V.

Whitley:  
Bill do you really have to talk about someone mother? Is that all you can get?

Cassidy:  
it's worse than t.v.

Ally:  
You couldn't with that no matter how hard you tried :)

Suzette:  
NO it's not! On T.V. you have ratings!





Amanda:

Well, probably because it's just a fantasy type thing.

Lidy:

Ask Kadah, Abbey. He should know.

Mario:

everyone has got a fantasy!!!

Jim:

:O abbey, Jason gets them all the time

Abbey:

Kadah, why do you watch? :-/

Kadah:

Exactly! they would be a \*(<O)

Suzette:

:-(), LMAO, think this conversation is crazy! <g>

Amanda:

And what is YOUR fantasy, Mario?? <G>

Abbey:

Jason? :-O

Mario:

let's not go there!!!!

Whitley:

Sorry I'm not trying to pick on you Kadah. It's just that you are so open about sex.

Bill:

Whitley you sure ask Kaday alot. Future info perhaps.

Amanda:

okay.... ;)

Lucy:

Jim, your talking about Jason and he is not even in this one.

Mario:

who isn't anymore?!?!?

Suzette:

:-D, :-D, :-D, Kadah what are you implying????

Lidy:  
Kadah is the SEX MACHINE!!!!!!!!!! (hey, that rhymes)

Mario:  
hmmmmmm...../

Cassidy:  
oic

Whitley:  
:/

Mandi:  
LMAO

Jim:  
Its your suitemate that has them, that what they all say <S>

Amanda:  
No, that's just what he wants us to think! <G>

Suzette:  
:-/

Lidy:  
<G>

Suzette:  
:-/

Amanda:  
No, that's just what he wants us to think! <G>

Shane:  
I think that everyone should be more open about things like Kadah is.

Ally:  
ROFLMAO

Amanda:  
No, that's just what he wants us to think! <G>

Amanda:  
No, that's just what he wants us to think! <G>

Cassidy:  
uh, no, uh, really

Whitley:  
Go Amanda!

Mario:  
hehe

Whitley:  
Go Amanda!

Kadah:  
WHERE do you get the idea from Lidy! <g>

Lidy:  
and another Go Amanda!

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Amanda:  
THANKS WHITLEY! :)

Kadah:  
Nope! no SEX Machine HERE!

Mario:  
okay....what was the question again?!?

Lucy:  
Bye everybody! {{{{{{{{{{{AL}}}}}}}}}}

Mario:  
porn....good or bad?????!

Amanda:  
Something about porn or something

Cassidy:  
is sex on the porn good only for kids

Whitley:  
Bill I haven't heard from you in a while. What are you doing?

Christy:  
As if! Mr. Porn.

Cassidy:  
sorry i got confused



Shane:  
stress breaker!

Mario:  
it's susan powder

Christy:  
Hey Kadah, I thought you didn't know anything about sex.

Ally:  
get her from the back?? what???

Jim:  
LMAO

Christy:  
I guess that porn watching is paying off for you.

Mario:  
it's susan powder

Amanda:  
ALLY!

Suzette:  
I agree Lidy, STOP THE MADNESS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Ally:  
you are gross, bill

Whitley:  
Maybe if you had fun elsewhere than you really wouldn't look at the internet

Cassidy:  
who did what to who with how many jellybeans

Lidy:  
Thanks, Suzette!!!

Bill:  
Why is everone on me. Actually, I was downloading Whitley's pictures from the internet.

Mario:  
hehe :D

Shane:  
correct whit

Mandi:  
JELLYBEANS????????

Cassidy:  
roflmao

Lidy:  
LMAO

Suzette:  
You guys are disgusting!

Christy:  
No one is on you, maybe that's the problem

Ally:  
LMAO

Amanda:  
Bye all!

Whitley:  
Bill your sick

Shane:  
see ya!

Mario:  
b-bye :)

Bill:  
ha ha

Christy:  
bye :-)

Ally:  
bye! Au revoir!!!!

Shane:  
ciaos!

## Dangerous Information Online

Berzsenyi:

Do you think that the internet ought to allow people to provide information which could be applied in harmful ways such as instructions on how to build a bomb? What are the arguments critical to this issue of ethics and computer use?

Dana:

hello, group 2. :)

Abad:

hi

Matt:

hello

Cache:

:-|

Linette:

helloooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Linette:

What's up?

Dana:

What do you all think about our question?

Cache:

so

Linette:

What is our question?

Dana:

number 3

Abad:

I think that information on the internet can be used in whatever way, especially because there is no way you could regulate it

Cache:

censorship



Cache:  
censorship, sorry

Linette:  
I think that some information on the internet shouldn't be accessible to everyone. Yes, censorship is a good idea. I just don't really have a clue how we will be able to do that.

Abad:  
I agree

Cache:  
Yea, censorship would be hard to do, are we done? :-D

Linette:  
I wish. What are we supposed to do with this?

Cache:  
answer the question

Dana:  
If it's on the internet it is fair game, BUT isn't it possible to pick-up personal information on the internet. That should be put on the internet by choice. Maybe I'm completely off, I don't use the internet that often.

John:  
what are we doing linette?

Linette:  
I don't know. What ARE we doing John?

John:  
I just got here. Someone help me out.

Cache:  
what about plans to make bombs or how to kill people, should that be on there? :-/

Dana:  
NO, the only people to know how to make bombs are those in the military.  
:(

Linette:  
I don't know much about the internet, but what I do know is that there are things that children can see that they shouldn't be able to. What are we going to do about this? Something has to be done.

Cache:  
yes

Cache:  
what?

John:  
NO. I do not feel that the internet is fair game because of cases where people are personnal at harm because of things that are obtained from the net.

Abad:  
So what is our solution

Dana:  
:-/

Cache:  
quit making computers!

Matt:  
We need some examples

Linette:  
That's what I'm talking about. Plans to make bombs or how to kill people shold not be on there for children or even adults to see. Some psycho would make a few bombs and blow us all up. That's sounds like lots of fun, don't you think? :-D!!!!!!!!!!!!

Cache:  
ethical or unethical

John:  
answer: NO  
why:  
1. because lives can be ruined.  
2. It can cause harm to others.  
3. Technological advances need not be readily available to the public.

examples: The moive "The Net"

Cache:  
hurting people is wrong, but is telling how to hurt people wrong? :-/

John:  
It is unethical!

Dana:

YES Why would anybody want to help the world's knowledge of how to hurt someone? :-/

Linette:

Go Dana!!!!!!

Cache:

They can't really do what they did in the net because written documentation such as a birth certificate still exists and most people have family or friends who will say that you are you.

Linette:

I agree with Dana. It is extremely unethical, but what should we do about it? :-/

Cache:

We need reasons why it is unethical?

Matt:

Bomb building is clearly not suitable for the internet, but what about a KKK homepage or something like that. It spreads hate and racist beliefs. I think it's wrong but some would say it should be available to whoever wants to read it.

John:

I think that the information on the net is far to indepth for some of the freaks out there today. Take the OKC bombing for instance!!!!

Cache:

does that make it unethical, because people can't handle it

Abad:

I agree, but too much information already exists on the internet, how can you put a sudden stop to it

Linette:

Are you saying John that the all freaks are stupid? I think it's actually the other way around. Most of them are genius'.

Dana:

I believe that they can find out anything and completely delete a life. I don't understand how it is possible, but I believe it is. The world is getting so up tight about who we really are that one of these days you aren't going to be able to walk into a "public" restroom without showing them an ID.

John:

It makes it unethical because innocent people are harmed at the hands of some STUPID PSYCHO!

Cache:

like who?

Dana:

right on John. <s>

Linette:

John, are you saying that Cache is a stupid psycho?

John:

I think that sometimes freaks are too smart for their own good!

Cache:

do we lock up smart people

Dana:

the world is eccentric ;-)

Cache:

do we lock up eccentric people?

Linette:

Yes!!!!!!Lock them all up!!!!!!

Matt:

If they threaten the population

Cache:

now we're talkin' :-D

Linette:

That's right, Matt!!!!

John:

I am saying that people have more compassion for mankind. If they hate themselves they should commit suicide. Others should not be FORCED to die because of the eccentric people.!

Cache:

old people who drive cars threaten the population, but we won't lock them up

Matt:

We take their licenses

John:

I think that we all better watch out for Cache. He will be the next mass murderer.

Linette:

Wait a minute John!!!!!!!!!!!!No one should commit suicide--AT ALL!! No matter what!!!!!! I'm sorry, but that is totally the wrong thing to do. I don't care who they are or what they're like. SO THERE!!!!!!

Dana:

No, who is to judge who threatens who. Maybe the people who want to lock them up, is a threat to the population. They are the one's judging who should be locked up by their own opinions. What if they just simply didn't like someone. It wold be possible for them to make up some lame excuse for that person to be locked up. It pisses me off to think of how unfare people can be and how judgemental. (Sorry this was so long) :-(

Cache:

because they are blind, not because they are old

Cache:

linette is cool

Matt:

Are we still talking about the internet?

Cache:

I don't know

Linette:

Thanks Cache!!! No, we aren't talking about the internet. We're talking about psychos!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Cache:

we NEED a reason why disclosing any type of information on the internet is unethical.

Matt:

Because it is accessable to possibly dangerous people.

Cache:

good

Linette:

GOODBYE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## Dangerous Information Online Two

Jose:  
okay...do we do question 3 or 4?

Jose:  
:/

Aggie:  
question 3

Sammy:  
We do question 3

Aggie:  
which is so unfair because I wanted to talk about pornography again.

Jose:  
okay...do we think that the info. on the internet ifs fair game? I personally think it is .:|

Jose:  
sodidI!!!!!!!!!!!!!!:)

Aggie:  
I think the infor. on the internet is fair game for everyone, too. If people didn't want the info to be used, they shouldn't put it on there in the first place.

Jose:  
anyone can do a search and find out basically anything that they want to about a person...e. SS#, or credit card #

Aggie:  
So do you think that's fair?

Jose:  
I don't know how we could prevent it! :(

Sammy:  
I think that info on the internet is fair game for using as long as people acknowledge its author and the source :)

Aggie:  
:)

Jose:  
I guess....-{}

Jeff:  
But if you are downloading a game or program for free you aren't going to acknowledge the source

Aggie:  
Look at me, I'm using my emoticons. :)

Jose:  
true...there will always be the person out there that will not be willing to relay who their source is.

Sammy:  
I think the example of social security and credit card information could be a borderline example. :-)

Jose:  
:|

Jose:  
border line? :/

Aggie:  
Yeah I agree. I don't particularly want everyone to know my s.s. number, let alone my credit card numbers.

Jose:  
how could those be complicated?!? :}

Jose:  
amen :)

Aggie:  
I really don't feel that that info. should be available. But then again, what can you do? And I haven't really run into any problems with that online before.

Sammy:  
The free shareware on the internet would be an exception b/c people/company willingly place them on the internet for people to download in order to advertise for their product :O

Jose:  
that is true sammy...that makes it fair game!!!!

Jose:  
:)

Jeff:  
I haven't had my SS or credit card number exposed through the internet. I think it mostly occurs in the movies rather than real life.

Aggie:  
What other stuff isn't fair game to use? (like credit card and s.s. numbers)

Aggie:  
Yeah, I agree with you Jeff. That's never happened to me, either. I honestly don't know how you would go about getting someone's credit card number off the net. But I guess it's possible.

Jose:  
addresses and phone #s ...anyone can find out anyone's phone # or address just by looking them up on the ou page! :|

Jose:  
but the again that stuff is in the phone book too :)

Sammy:  
The complication in the border line example is that there is nothing that we can do to prevent our private info being on the internet. I think this happens in real life a lot more often than we think. People can hack into a bank's system and download people's SS info or into credit card companies; system and get your CC#

Aggie:  
I don't see anything wrong with phone numbers available to anyone. Does anyone agree with me?

Jeff:  
What's wrong with looking up someone's phone number

Aggie:  
Nothing! :)

Sammy:  
What about prink calls

Jose:  
nothing really but I guess I have just had bad luck in that department. :(

Aggie:  
What's a prink call?



Aggie:  
Just kidding! ;)

Jose:  
just bad experiences...i won't go there!!! :)

Aggie:  
Wait, Jose, what "department" do you have bad luck in?

Sammy:  
Did I miss spell that :(

Jeff:  
I think that it is ethical to use the internet to find out certain info. or  
download programs. It becomes unethical when it is illegal.

Sammy:  
I agree <S>

Aggie:  
RIGHT! I agree with you, Jeff. :)

Jose:  
I won't go there either aggie!!!!!! :)

Aggie:  
okay Jose.....;)

Jose:  
I agree jeff.....sorry i'm all late :)

Jeff:  
Are we done. Finish the joke Aggie

Matt:  
I agree also. I just got logged in. Sorry :(

Jose:  
:)

Aggie:  
SO. What does everybody think, about the answer to the question....do we  
all feel that the info on the internet is fair game for everyone to use?

Jose:  
it's all good matt!!!!

Jeff:  
:)

Jose:  
I do

Sammy:  
:)

Aggie:  
Me too :D

Jose:  
ROFLMAO

Jose:  
don't ask where that came from!!!! :)

Matt:  
I do to... ROFLMAO

Aggie:  
<G>

Jose:  
<S>

Aggie:  
I do believe we have answered all the questions.

Aggie:  
good for us.

Jose:  
we're the greatest!!!! :)

Jeff:  
I believe you are correct Aggie

Matt:  
ME TOO...gmta

Jose:  
yeah!!!!

Aggie:  
YEAH!

Jeff:  
Why don't we all give ourselves a big pat on the back

Jose:  
let's do it on the count of three!!!!

Matt:  
{{{{{Al}}}}}}

Jose:  
j/k

Jose:  
why are you hugging al???

Jeff:  
:)

Matt:  
becuz we want to

Jose:  
hehe

Jose:  
asdfsdfasdf<---okay now i'm getting bored!!!!

Jose:  
:[:

Aggie:  
heheheheeeeeee Jose you are very funny

Aggie:  
:D

Jose:  
I try !? @?

Jose:  
:)

Jose:  
dooodeedooodeedoo....

Jose:  
@---/---

Aggie:  
Hey look what I made up.... :\$

Jose:  
what is it!?!?

Aggie:  
and look at this :9

Matt:  
didaaadidaadidaadidaa, lets make a song

Jeff:  
impressive

Jose:  
“let’s talk money !!!!”

Aggie:  
yeah, yeah yeeeeeah.....

Jeff:  
.%

Aggie:  
very cool

Jose:  
:\*((<----have you seen this one

Jeff:  
(\*)

Matt:  
impressive

Aggie:  
YES that one is my favorite! :)

Jose:  
but aren’t they all ?!?! :)

Aggie:  
well, yes of COURSE.

Jose:  
hehe

Matt:  
hahahaha

Jeff:  
hohoho

Aggie:  
bye bye! :)

Jose:  
|  
-----  
|  
|  
|

Jose:  
bye

### Dangerous Information Online Three

Mandi:  
Is anyone here?

Cassidy:  
ROFLMAO

Mandi:  
Oh, I'm just LMAO

Cassidy:  
no bombs

Jason:  
Ya'll have problems. Of course it is ethical.

Cassidy:  
:-(  
bombs are bad

Cassidy:  
they hurt people

Jason:  
So does crack.

Cassidy:  
roflmao

**Mandi:**

**Why?** I think it is okay, the government monitors who taps into the bomb stuff

**Cassidy:**

they don't tell you where to get crack on the internet

**Jim:**

What kid doesn't want to build a good old fashioned draino bomb

**Cassidy:**

a normal one

**Alexia:**

I think that its ridiculous to allow information about something that if it feel into the wrong hands could kill a lot of people

**Mandi:**

It isn't that hard to build one anyway. Someone is going to figure ot out.

**Cassidy:**

\*<O)

**Jason:**

The very day of the Murrah boming, my physics teacher in OKC told us in class exactly how the bomb was made. This was only hourse after it had happen. Anyone can find it by going to the library, so it is pointless to restrict it if you can find it elsewhere too.

**Cassidy:**

a lot of people wouldn't even think about building one if they didn't see the instructions somewhere first

**Alexia:**

that is exactly my point

**Jim:**

Anybody ever read the Anarchists' Cookbook

**Mandi:**

If they take it off the internet, someone who really cares about it is going to find it somewhere else anyway.

**Jason:**

Just because you know how does not mean that you do. I know how to puul the trigger on a .45 and shot stupid people in the head, but I don't.

<G>

Alexia:

Yes, they will find it somewhere else if they really want it, but many strange people who hadn't thought seriously about it before may decide to do it since the instructions are in front of them.

Cassidy:

someone wants to blow up YOUR house, they don't want any record of them researching how to make a bomb so they won't be caught, so they get the stuff off of the computer because it is more difficult to trace, is it still o.k.?

Jason:

Anybody ever seen the movie "Sandlot." I have a new expression for big smile. "WP" (for Wendy Peppercorn--remember Squints.)

Cassidy:

ROFLMAO

Jason:

Sorry to go off on a tangent thre. : |

Jim:

O | C

Nate:

"The Sandlot" was a good movie

Cassidy:

- - -

O O

%

- \_ \_ -

Jason:

Fine film. One of the best movies ever made for child viewing. I wonder what would have happened in the flick if the kids knew how to make a bomb and just blew up the dog instead of building the erector set thing.

Abbey:

I heard that Sandlot wasn't very good. Is that a Disney?

Abbey:

: - O Is that the movie with the ugly dog? Their ball goes into his yard?

Jason:

Abbey, you have serious problems, sweetheart. @-->--

Abbey:

Thank you for the rose, Jason. What are my problems? :-/

Jason:

Yes it is. Rent it some time and sit and watch it when you are in kid mood. Watch it with a little boy, it will be touching. You have to be about 13 to appreciate it though. The narration is the best part.

Jason:

So much for bombs.

Jane:

You don't have any. :-)

Abbey:

O/C Yeah, have you seen any other good movies?

Jason:

I bet to differ, she does not think that "Sandlot" is a good movie. That is definitely an ethical question.

Abbey:

Last week, I couldn't stop watching "Dirty Dancing." You've seen that right?

Jane:

:-/ what about the bomb issue?

Abbey:

The love story is remarkable. It's a girl's dream. <g>

Jason:

Go to the Ethics????? room.

Abbey:

Jason, what ethics room.

Christy:

:-( I think it's wrong to have instructions on the internet for something that could be used to harm someone.

Christy:

It is an infringement on the personal right of safety to all those in the area surrounding the person trying to make the bomb.



Christy:

:-/ I don't think there's anything on the net that could not be used for many purposes. Even when I comes to things like phone numbers and addresses, they're only on there if you want them to be.

Flaming

Cassidy:

ROFLMAO

Abbey:

Is there anyone still in this one?

Christy:

:-(

Lucy:

:)

Christy:

I don't think people should be allowed to go off on random people on the net.

Nate:

This kind of information can affect a large amount of innocent people so it should not be open to anyone.

Abbey:

me either, I'm a lover not a fighter. But, there are instances if someone says something rude to you then you definitely have a right.

Lucy:

I really don't feel that it should be monitored strictly because people should be able to say what they want. In real life people are not monitored as the walk down the street.

Abbey:

\*>:O

Sorry, I needed to check this little guy out. <g>

Abbey:

Is anyone here afraid of clowns?

Jim:

I don't think they should be monitored. If a person pays \$20 bucks a month to talk dirty to someone they should be allowed to.

Christy:

There isn't really a realistic way for people to censor it. It's going to happen no matter what.

Kalah:

If people get offended by someone talking dirty over the internet they need to get a life.

### **Conference Session Three**

#### **Biofiltration**

Nancy:

Biofilters are used more in europe. the epa has asked tinker to treat volatile gases that are emitted from their ground treatment of these gases from the jet fuels that they use. anyway--the prof that I work for wants to find an optimal bioliter treatment system to treat the gases at tinker. I am researching the variation of moisture contents with the biofilter. I guess I need to explain more. the biofilter is packed with a filter matrix made of forestry and sewer sludge compost. lime is added to stabilize the ph, etc. there are many parameters.

Matthew:

Nancy: Have you learned all about this thru research of thru classes you have taken thus far?

Nancy:

Matthew--research

Berzsenyi:

I have a couple of proposals from the past that you can look at regarding their treatments of biofilters and bioremediation for this proposal project.

Matthew:

I'm very interested in this kind of stuff. I think therer is going to be a high demand for items such as biofilters after we get out of college in the future.

## Bioremediation

P.D.:

What is bioremediation anyway?

Marcy:

using microorganisms to degrade pollutants, like an oil spill

Geoff:

Marcy--are you doing research in this field right now?

Marcy:

yes, I'm working on a landfill project that has a bioremediation aspect

P.D.:

Marcy, I am a chemistry major. Presently my senior thesis deals with synthesis of chelating agent that helps take up pollutants such as lead and other toxic metals.

Marcy:

I've got quite a bit of research, but I don't actually have a report

Penny:

Do you have any background in this subject. It sounds like a topic I would be interested in, I have a biotech option with my degree.

James:

Marcy, you also mentioned something about degrading grease in food products.

Penny:

Since you've done the research, do you have enough info to produce the technical proposal, leaving the other sections for fleshing out in this project?

Ron:

I think we could model a company after a company that worked on the Exxon Valdez oil spill

Marcy:

James, the food industry bioremediation in my microbiology teacher's pet project--we should be able to get a lot of info from him

Geoff:

Yeah, Ron, Natural disasters are always fun to work with

Marcy:

Penny, I think so--we would just have to decide on a particular aspect of bioremediation

Todd:  
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

James:  
Marcy, if we could get some information from your professor, we could potentially set up a kind of food processing plant.

Penny:  
Is your research on the bioremediation that is associated with food processing or with oil spill clean up, or some other area?

Casey:  
What aspects are you considering Marcy?

Geoff:  
Bioremediation sounds pretty good. What kind of equipment is needed though?

Marcy:  
That would be good, James--the food industry problem would be economically advantageous, plus have the environmental ethic

Penny:  
How many people do we have interested so far:  
Marcy, James, Geoff, me, missing anyone?

Nick:  
this is where I am interested also--need to find group along these lines

Ron:  
I am interested

Casey:  
Don't forget me

P.D.:  
I am also interested in something along this line too

Marcy:  
Geoff, there is in situ bioremediation where you actually build a platform on the site to do the clean-up. there are other types where you just add the m.o. directly to the pollutant...others where you ship the pollutant, treat it, and return it to the site

Ron:  
I think this group is going to have to many people

Marcy:  
ok, we're getting a lot of people

Penny:  
OK, that looks like seven people so far. What was the group limit again?

P.D.:  
Casey do you have a group

Nick:  
how many people can we have?

Marcy:  
Ron, where are you?

Marcy:  
3-6, ideally

Ron:  
Are people more interested in oil or food

Marcy:  
either is fine with me

P.D.:  
I think we should have group II on bioremediation. That way we won't be so overpopulated.

Ron:  
This is Ron. Daedalus calls me Thomas.

Marcy:  
oops, sorry

Casey:  
I am also currently working on the same project as Marcy in Environmental Science

Penny:  
I'd go for either one, whichever more background and existing information within those in the group is available for.

Geoff:  
Either one really. I'm actually more interested in the start up costs and cost proposals

## Internet Service

Rod:

I would like to make an online service that would provide e-mail, webpage, and unlimited online time.

Jerry:

hey, man

Rod:

You would have a separate account for e-mail, so you would never get a busy signal

Jerry:

I kind of like this idea, but I don't know much about it.

Rod:

I don't either, but I think it would be easy to research

Berzsenyi:

I agree with the research comment, especially if you are internet literate.

Rod:

There are a few local companies we interview

Jerry:

Is there an echo in here?

Rod:

ECN is getting ready to eliminate personal home pages, so maybe we could take to them about the problems they have had.

Jerry:

Yeah, how much more would it cost to include personal pages on a provider?

Rod:

All we need is a mainframe, phone lines, and a programmer

Jerry:

Could we have differing levels of access?

Jerry:

What if we set it up like this:

We already have a computer store and are looking to put some of our excess hardware to use. So we want to set up a provider, but only need a little bit of funding.

Jerry:  
So start up cost are high, but maintenance is low.

Heroes Inc.

Jerry:  
Okay, here is my proposal for a ...er...proposal.  
What this world needs is a super hero organization, something along the lines of the \*Justice League of America.\*<sup>2</sup>

Berzsenyi:  
Jerry, have you worked out any details about making this project more technical?

Jerry:  
Yes, I have!

Berzsenyi:  
ok, what are they?

Jerry:  
You could come up with ways for the members of Heroes Inc. to help with more practical research, and you could study them.

Jerry:  
Of course, you couldn't treat them like lab-rats, these are special people.

Jerry:  
Some body would have to come up with a communication network for Heroes inc. There would have to be some way to call the heroes from the \*real lives\*--perhaps a kind of \*Bat Signal.\*

Rod:  
What about problems with the law enforcement people, will they be out of a job?

Jerry:  
The biggest thing that is necessary for group members in this project is a sense of humor--although creativity is important too.

Berzsenyi:  
Yes a form of communication would be essential. Research for such a device would work. Are they supposed to be "all human" creatures? I don't know how or why they would tolerate being test subjects. Rats or any other creatures don't deserve it, as far as I'm concerned. Keep working at it.

---

<sup>2</sup> This league of super people is a purely hypothetical topic which was not made into a project.

## Registration Software

Kristy:

Description: Course registration software: proposal would be for an online course registration system that would allow students to enroll in classes remotely from a web browser or enrollment program.

Berzsenyi:

Who else in this class is involved with this capstone project? If any?

Kristy:

Dawn and I have expertise in developing software from design to implementation. We should be able to explain the process and the technical information. We need people to help with the design (i.e. give ideas of how the interface should look/work). We'll also need people to help with organization of the proposal.

Berzsenyi:

It seems it might even be a benefit if laypeople could work with you on the interface (basic users, nonexperts) to make it the most user-friendly.

Kristy:

I took the capstone course last year. My topic was different but I understand the principles.

## Bridge

Yip:

Hi! What do you think we need to write about?

Jack:

Yip--have you thought of any ideas?

Yip:

I think we can refer to our macromeritics class lab 3 and 4

Jack:

I don't know...maybe something about concrete. We could even ask Dr. Wallace about some ideas.

Yip:

Yup. That a good idea.

Yip:

Is there anyone else will join us



Jack:

Yip we could just submit your last lab, it meets the 20-30 page qualifications

Yip:

OK. We can write on methods of testing strength of concrete, eg. split tensile test, compression test, bla, bla, bla

Chi:

Why don't we just do the concrete canoe. I got some data about the test result of concrete used

Yip:

Jack. My labv report doesn't follow the format that we had learn in this class

Jack:

we have an unlimited amount of material. we need to think of a certain idea just as you said yip. tensile strength or the effectss of plasticizers and or super plasticizers in concrete use today.

Yip:

Chi, I don't think we can make a good proposal on concrete canoe just based on the data we got. We need to understand and explain it too

Yip:

Jack, you are right.

Todd:

Hack, how many people do you have going on in this group

Jack:

enough now get out

Lori:

Can you see me!

Lori:

Yip, what have you decided? Tell me more.

Lori:

Keng, Kong, how about u guys?

Thomas:

Restoration of groundwater is for the cleanup of groundwater acqifers by using aerobic (require oxygen) bacteria.

John:

Hey, Thomas, are you going to be in the lightning project?

Lori:

can u be a little more specific?

Thomas:

Lori have you heard of this before

Lori:

not really!!

Lori:

tell me more

Keng:

Kong, Yip: you guys have any idea how we're going to do this

### Fishery

Jay:

We get to go fishing.

Jay:

Yeah, we can and tehn take pictures of our catch to include in the proposal about how we can enlarge the fish and create more trophy bass in the Oklahoma lakes.

Jay:

The project will consist of the fisheries lab people, here on OU's campus, and the Outdoor Oklahoma Magazine. They have already completed most of the research. All we need to do is completee the cost section, to provide food, better genetics, slot limits, and cooperation with the Corps of Engineers in helping us out by not letting as much water flow through the dams in the Spring.

Thursday, I am visiting the guy here at OU and we are going out and doing some field work on the subject.

Berzsenyi:

I think this project would work well for the assignment. There seems to be plenty of data with which to work. Don't forget about the ethical component of the assignment, which will affect your discussion of genetic engineering and living beings.

Tad:

Are there methods of breeding included in your proposal, or is there a supply from which your company intends to take the fish?

Eric:

Sounds like an important topic that there's probably tons of information about.

Eric:

Project--when it rains the water washes oil and debris into our creeks that causes pollution. The EPA is trying to develop a device that could put into our street drainage ditches that would pick up this debris before it made its way to the creeks.

Jay:

What areas in the U.S. does this concern? Are we just going to give an estimated cost for cleanup of the non point pollution?

Terry:

Is this through the school of meteorology?

### Jupiter Lightning Research

Matthew:

I am looking for a group to join. I am good with microsoft office and I've got a home set-up with windows 95. I have a talent for organizing information, graphically or textually. I am willing to put in the effort to make a good contribution to the project. Because I am an arts and sciences student, I am seeking to join an established project rather than offer my own to a number of science students. Need another member?

Kristy:

What kind of major/experience would be helpful to this project?

Ed:

Description of the project is coming in a moment. . .

John:

Kristy, anything dealing with lightning, computer programming, economics, management, and of course weather.

Kristy:

I'm a computer science major. I could definitely help with the programming. I've also had a management course and am currently in another.

Freddie:

I would imagine there is a lot of data already existing

Ed:

We are designing the next package of lightning equipment that will go to Jupiter via a space probe. What exists so far is research pulling in around 35 journal articles concerning the research that has been conducted. more....

Mike:

Dear Ed--

As discussed about last week, I would be more than happy to join your company. While on the subject of NASA, did anyone see the documentary of past, present, and future rockets on the Learning Channel.

Freddie:

Ed is this topic going to be way over my head or is it understandable to a certain degree.

Ed:

I have a detailed description of the current instrument package in use, and the initial findings of the research is now being conducted. I also have a finished 20 minute talk on the history of lightning research in the literature. I will bring this report in for the group members to get caught up on the basics of this field.

## **Conference Session Four**

### **Bridges**

Berzsenyi: What are the ethical considerations of a project involving the building and reinforcing of bridges for a community that would greatly affected by such as construction? How might to incorporate this discussion into the proposal and oral presentation?

Yip:

Hi! Good morning.

Yip:

:-) What is our ethical concern?

Jack:

Nice emoticons, Yip. ;-)

Yip:

Is it about the economical issue and safety issue which are the main concern of our proposals.

Chi:

What up? Guys

Matt:

it took me awhile to find my emoticon sheet :-)

Yip:

OK! Lets begin the discussion.

Jack:

I think our ethical concern is to provide a safer highway system for the public, as well as saving tax dollars.

Matt:

I have types up a report on the six phases of installing our system, but I do not have a print out today!

### Wetlands

Berzsenyi: What are the ethical considerations of a project which involves the bioremediation of water through the use of wetlands? How can you incorporate that discussion of ethics into your proposal and oral presentation?

Marcy:

Are we going to deal with the ethics of genetic engineering?

Ron:

I think we probably should

Marcy:

where would we include it?

James:

I think that we are an inherently ethical company because we are cleaning the environment

Marcy:

that's right, James, we're not interested in profit

Ron:

We would probably have to include it in the technical proposal

James:  
We just want to make the world a better place for our children. ROTF-LLA-GD-SOB

Ron:  
We could talk about meeting guidelines set by the EPA for contamination levels. We could say our products are cheaper and reduce the incentive to cut corners.

Casey:  
should we get specific on ethical issues or should we be more general on our approach?

Ron:  
I think we should just mention it in passing, unless we find we need more material to make our report long enough.

James:  
Exactly Ron, so many companies are concerned with getting the EPA off their backs. \*<:) ROTF-LLA-GD-SOB

Berzsenyi:  
Excellent use of emoticons, James. That's quite a mixture of emotions.

James:  
This is Todd's favorite emoticon. He injects one in his butt once a week:  
|----{=====}-----

Berzsenyi:  
Wow. That's one I haven't seen before.

Berzsenyi:  
So, what's your case about the ethical issues? :-|

James:  
It is strictly a Todd emoticon: |----{=====}-----

Marcy:  
So are there any other ethical issues besides the genetic engineering?

Casey:  
what about the ethical issue of cleaning up a site in the first place?

James:  
We could mention some of the following ethical issues: Genetic Engineering, Cheap Labor, Profiteering from the Environment

James:  
Is bioremediation less harmful to ecosystems than the natural process.

Casey:  
bioremediation uses natural processes

James:  
I agree Casey

Casey:  
This is less harmful than other methods of clean-up.

James:  
How much genetic engineering are w performing on the bacteria  
:<)))) <-----new emoticon

James:  
That emoticon was for a double chin.

Casey:  
lovely

James:  
(:<) <-----This emoticon is for a bald man :)

Casey:  
is this-----> < a mustache?

James:  
~~(:o) <-----This emoticon is for a man with a mohawk.

Casey:  
cool

Berzsenyi:  
Do you feel weird about typing a dialogue when the person is next to you?  
Are there any communication advantages to doing this interchange over  
just conversation in face-to-face?

James:  
I think that we should require every group to split up during around the  
room during an interchange.

Marcy:  
I think interchange really inhibits the conversation--obviously, Ron and I  
have given up and are talking

James:  
Delete one of those durings

Marcy:  
it's just easier to toss around ideas vocally rather than typing

James:  
I have made several notable new emoticons just scroll up for a little while.

Marcy:  
seriously, we need to make some decisions about exactly who is doing what for the oral presentation and how we are going to finish this up.

Ron:  
I think the interchange is too cumbersome

Marcy:  
James, you said you would put it together on your computer. So who is going to get the draft together for James to polish?

Marcy:  
what pieces need to be completed:

Todd:  
James is a loser!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

James:  
Sounds great Marcy \*~~~~~<~~~~~new variety of rose

James:  
I should have the abstract done soon.

Casey:  
oral presentation:  
intro  
technology  
new research  
management  
cost

Casey:  
we need our draft back from Christyne before we make our final draft

James:  
Goeff had a little too much fun last night I heard X X

0

-----



**Berzsenyi:**

**Marcy, tha't an interesting comment you made. Part of the deal of interchange is that it doesn't have the same function as conversation, and it doesn't do that same thing as writing. It's a hybrid, and new, from of communicatin that will serve particular needs, but we're still finding what they are.**

**Berzsenyi:**

**BRB**

**James:**

**This was apparently Goeff's problem**

```
      -----  
      |       |  
      |       |  
  |  BUDW  |  
  |       |  
  -----
```

**Casey:**

**has everyone completed their parts of the paper?**

**James:**

**I believe that we have completed most of the sections now.**

**Todd:**

**Casey: I think that Marcy and Ron are chateing at this interchange thing....**

**Marcy:**

**I think that Marcy and Ron are the only ones doing shit today !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**James:**

**\*cause he's the Toddy-Todd-y-Todd-Todd**

**Casey:**

**I think we should decide who will do the different sections of the oral presentation so we can begin to work on our individual section**

**Berzsenyi:**

**what do you think is the difference between writing on interchange and writing in a chat room on the net?**

**James:**

**With a chat room on the net, you can perform actions, send private messages, announce things, etc. There are many more functions available.**

Casey:

If we decide on the different parts of the oral presentation, we can be working on that before the final draft is done

Ron:

I've nver written on a chat room.

James:

What are your rambling about Rob????

Ron:

With a chat room you can't just turn and talk to the person so you have to use the computer.

Berzsenyi:

Yes, the classroom application software is much more limited, probably because researchers of communication and teaching in general are just now starting to see the benefits and uses of interchange type of software.

### Bioremediation

Berzsenyi: What ethical concerns are involved in bioremediation? How might you incorporate a discussion of such concerns into the proposal and oral presentation?

Thomas:

Some of the ethical concerns in bioremediaton are what happens to the environmentafter the bioremediation is performed.

Kong:

Tom, or nor done

Kong:

...Err...I mean "or not performed"

K.D.:

I'm here

Keng:

I am back.

Phyl:

We should consider the "ethical considerations" that we could use in our proposal.

K.D.:  
Where are we?

Phyl:  
What?

Phyl:  
It sounds like somebody is still in the porn chatroom.

Thomas:  
Phyl, an ethical consideration is whether we are being misled on the cost of the project.

Lori:  
I would like to clear things up, are we talking ab the proposal or are we actually talking ab as if we were really doing the project?

K.D.:  
Phyl, I don't quite understand your question? ;)

Keng:  
Everyone finishes their job. i mean the proposal.

### Biofiltration

Berzsenyi: What are the ethical issues associated with your project involving biofiltration? How and where would you incorporate that info into the proposal and oral presentation?

Matthew:  
I think that we need to make sure we don't duplicate anyone's work

Tad:  
Making sure we aren't lying?

Matthew:  
Present the material like we are presenting it to the government of the US

Berzsenyi:  
This data, truth or accuracy is an ethical concern as well as how your product/service will improve or harm any environments.

Jay:  
As far as being ethical, I feel that anything works if you don't get caught!!!

Eric:  
I think the biggest ethical section would be the costs

Berzsenyi:  
BRB

Tad:  
Jay: true, but you almost ALWAYS get caught on environmental issues

Matthew:  
Eric, tell us how the costs come into play

Tad:  
we are you so far behind on this project

Eric:  
we need sometime on the internet

Matthew:  
IBIJAM

Jay:  
The cost section will require reasonable assumptions, I feel Eric will do a fine job.

Tad:  
GALKEMASH ROX THE CASBAH

Eric:  
Tad, hows your research coming along?

Matthew:  
Tad, I think everything will come together this weekend and next week

Tad:  
Eric: what research? :)

Jay:  
Our project will be ethically correct and should be the best proposal in the class.

Tad:  
yeah, but I think we really should meet outside class sometime soon

Matthew:  
what project? :) :)

Tad:  
Where did Nancy go?

Jay:  
We need to meet or we may get a little behind....

Eric:  
Maybe Thursday after class

Matthew:  
Look up cybersex

Tad:  
I have a math test at 1:30 on thurs

Tad:  
no doubt!

Matthew:  
I can meet anytime Friday, I don't have class at all

Jay:  
I saw tht Tad has a slight yeast infection or I mean torn ligaments, it could slow the management section down

Tad:  
Jay: i can type just as fact.

Eric:  
we can meet Friday afternoon

Tad:  
I think that might be the best idea

Matthew:  
I hink Nancy has talked to her professor and therefore may have some more info now

Tad:  
2:00 or so?

Jay:  
Sweat, I was just kidding about the infection Tad

Matthew:  
ok

Eric:  
I have class until 2:30

Jay:  
When can we get together Tad  
Matthew:  
stop it

Eric:  
I thinks bud

Tad:  
Jay: that's ok. I promise i'll keep it quite about you and the animals on the farm

Tad:  
:O?

Matthew:  
:O

Eric:  
:O

Tad:  
I'm supposed to pour this weekend....i would hate it if spring party weekend was a washout

Tad:  
:O

Matthew:  
I doubt it Tad, but I don't have much time to party

Jay:  
Tad, Are you serious, oncle my mother caught me with the dads milk cow. She thought that I finally lost my virginity.

Tad:  
I don't either, but it dampens everyone else's spirits

Eric:  
Lets meet at Joe's

Matthew:  
I think Mike over there is the class clown

Tad:  
Jay: nasty

Jay:  
do you live in the dorms Tad?

Tad:  
...beta house

Tad:  
Eric: Joe's it is

Jay:  
Yeah Mke seems like a true stud!

Matthew:  
Eric if we meet at any bar we won't get shit done. We will study for about 30 minutes and then just get shitfaced

Eric:  
I'll buy the first pitcher

Tad:  
Matthew: you figured it out :)

Jay:  
I don't know where Beta house is

Tad:  
Let's invite ms b to come along

Matthew:  
That is just the whole attitude of our group

Tad:  
it's west of campus j

Matthew:  
yeah bring ms. b along see what she thinks about porn

Tad:  
i'll buy the 2nd one

Jay:  
It seems all we want to do is get drunk and screw. We have to get our shit together.

Eric:  
Wach out Ms. b is coming back to tap in

Matthew:  
I will buy the 9th and 10th one

Tad:  
Matthew: a true friend

Matthew:  
They are talking about independence day over there

Jay:  
I hope not, I do not mind doing anything youall are planning. I love to drink.  
I will take notes while you guys answer our problems.

Tad:  
Jay: good idea, m division of labor

Jay:  
When will you be 100% Tad?

Tad:  
Jay: I can type just fine. it doesn't bother my shoulder

Matthew:  
You are one tough cookie

Tad:  
I saw ms. b making eyes at you :)

Matthew:  
She always seems to do that, I think she likes me!

Tad:  
Jay: I try

Jay:  
I heard that!!! I hink she likes him.

Matthew:  
When you guys meet on Saturday anytime?

Eric:  
at least you'll get a good grade Jeff

Tad:  
Matthew: I know she does. no wonder you get the best grades in class :)

Jay:  
Maybe she will have a drink with us.

Tad:  
Let's invite her.



Matthew:  
I don't think so :(

Jay:  
Matthew spends most of her office hours under her desk

Tad:  
he might

Tad:  
Jay: too much information!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Matthew:  
I already know her answer to pornography.

Tad:  
ms. b, you with us?

Eric:  
we may have to meet on Sat. also

Matthew:  
Let's change the topic before she gets back on!

Jay:  
she will

Tad:  
Saturday at like noon?

Jay:  
The management section is coming alright Todd?

Eric:  
That's cool or even like 2:00 (hangover)

Matthew:  
we will definately need to meet on Saturday and Sunday

Jay:  
I feel like I have not done much lately

Tad:  
Jay its fine. Jay: do you want to meet tonight?

Tad:  
10:00 is better

Tad:  
What's so funny?

Matthew:  
I don't see us meeting on Thursday, ya know

Matthew:  
Yeah me either, I have to go tornado chasing.

Eric:  
Tad, you and Jay hooking up?

Jay:  
thanks dad, I want you to put me under your wing and guide me through this...

Tad:  
Eric: tha's none of your business

Matthew:  
you guys look cute together

Tad:  
Matthew: quit hitting on my man

Jay:  
I'm trying to get a date with tadd because the opposite sex is dissing me lately.

Eric:  
I have just been reading yall flirt for the last thirty minutes over the interchange.

Berzsenyi:  
Can I help or are you done?

Tad:  
Jay: have you tried Nancy? single, smart, cute...:)

Tad:  
ms. b, you want to go drink with us on Friday?

Matthew:  
Are we dobe? I need to run home to get something for my test next hour.

Tad:  
Eric: you're just jealous!

Eric:

we are going to meet Friday at 3:00 and sat at 2:00

Matthew:

Ms. B that was done not dobe

Tad:

...Friday at 3, sat 2. sounds good toome. where?

Tad:

Eric, in all seriousness, how is Nancy?

Eric:

I something about the library were we had our last discussion and then we can come to the computer lab if we have to

Tad:

Matthew: who are you dating these days?

Jay:

Tad, let's hook it up. Next week and maybe we can get some of this shit done...

Tad:

that sounds good. meet at \*out table\* at 3 on Friday

Matthew:

Kappa named Katherine

Tad:

Matthew: Katherine Smith?

Jay:

the AGD house a good girl house.

### Jupiter

Berzsenyi: What ethical concerns are related to this project involving the observation of weather patterns on another planet and making thoeretical generalizations that will affect our understanding of weather on Earth? How might you incorporate that discussion into the proposal and oral presentation?

John:

How can observing weather patterns on another planet be unethical? If so, how?

Ed:

Wel, I think the first reaction people have is--what does this matter to me? Jupiter is far away.

Freddie:

Maybe you would disturb the planet environment

John:

What about the other planets' environments? We are doing something to better our environment here on earth.

Freddie:

I think people are fascinated by the universe and want to learn about it in every way.

Ed:

How could it be unethical? Some people think pure (no easily visible application) research is a waste of time and money. But much of what we know today--was found out this way (like silly putty)

Tracy:

There is also the concern of what happens to the instruments once there is no more use for them. I saw an article the other day reporting on \*space garbage. \* I don't understand completely why this would concern environmentalists, but possible disturbance to other functioning equipment is a possibility, right Ed.

Freddie:

I agree completely with Ed

Freddie:

This whole space junk thing is junk I think

### Internet Registration

What ethical concerns might be associated with your project involving the internet and changing the registration process? How might you incorporate that discussion into the proposal and oral presentation?

Dawn:

I would think that computer security would be our main concern

Dawn:

who me? chat on irc w. ppl down the hall, in the same room, or even working on the same computer....nah ;\_)

Kristy:

Yes, but why would someone want to break into the registration?

Kristy:

Dawn: hahaha

**APPENDIX C:**  
**Questionnaire One:**  
**Synchronous Computer Conferencing**  
**On Daedalus<sup>1</sup>**

**1. TASKS: What tasks were you performing when participating in the InterChange? What were the purposes of your participation? In what ways and to what extent do you think that these tasks limited or affected your participation in the InterChange?**

**Terry:** In my InterChange, I was talking to classmates trying to come up with, or to join an already existing, proposal topic for an assignment. It was a neat and organized way to handle the task, but I don't see a need to interchange beyond this scope. It [the purpose] affected the way I interchanged because I'm a rather dull and uncreative person, so I found it very easy (and necessary) to hitch myself to someone else's proposal topic. So, I guess I was surfing the different conferences quite vigorously.

**Phyl:** I was sending information, asking questions; viewing and evaluating the messages of the class. I informed others of the ways in which I would work with a group on a project. I asked people for clarification and specification of their statements. Primarily the interaction is shaped by the task. The interaction pursues the goals of the assigned task which is to share and discuss project proposals, and also to share and discuss the qualifications and preferences of individual students. Its limited participation to the extent that it defined a goal for myself and thus I chose to participate in particular ways. In my particular case, I was not submitting a proposal, so my participation was primarily one of evaluation, and my interaction was practically limited to asking others to elaborate upon their own statements. For myself the purpose of participation in the InterChange was to discover the nature of my fellow student's proposals and to evaluate them in terms of appropriateness to my individual preferences. That purpose affected my participation by making it a rather passive one, only becoming active in as much as it encouraged or provoked others to expand their ideas in answering my questions.

**Todd:** Our tasks were to get to know each other and choose a report group. It didn't influence participation. Our purpose was to get to know one another's background.

**Eric:** In the InterChange, I had the task of explaining my ideas for a class project. I think this influenced my InterChange by causing me to participate more because people were asking me questions that I had to answer. I think the task does affect the computer conversation because depending on if I am

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<sup>1</sup> Students' responses were compiled into this transcript without editing. I thought it was important to maintain the integrity of their responses in order to reflect their individual levels of literacy and forms of expression and understanding of the material.

interested in the topic will depend on how much I will talk. Also, depending on how much I know about the topic could affect my conversation participation. My purpose in participating in the InterChange was to explain my ideas for a group project and pick group members that I thought would work best in a group. This affected my participation because I took a boss role and had to be outspoken on what I thought.

**John:** My task on the InterChange was to correspond with classmates on proposal ideas. Since I was unfamiliar with many of the project ideas, this task greatly influenced my participation in the InterChange. Tasks including sending and checking messages in the different conference rooms. The purpose of participating in the InterChange was to get an idea of the different project ideas and then deciding which project best fit my interests. Because I had already decided to be a part of a project idea in advance of the InterChange, this purpose did not greatly affect my participation in the InterChange.

**Chi:** I give away and request for information in the InterChange. The only limitations on my participation are my ability to give information and my satisfaction about the information I received. My participation in the InterChange is to share information with other students. This of course does affect my participation very much.

**Casey:** The task I was performing was forming groups for the final project. I feel that this limited my participation because the topic was not open ended to just blurt out whatever came to mind. The purpose for the InterChange was to form groups for the final project which limited saying just anything, but allowed me to input information I knew about the topic.

**Mike:** My main task in the InterChange was to offer opinions and information to a conference, also to read and respond to other's input, to certain subject matters of technology. My purpose is basically the same as the task, to offer my knowledge and opinion by participating in the conferences of the class.

**K.D.:** My task was to look for the topic I was most interested and to find out more information about it. Then, I would comments or contribute ideas of my own. The time, however, allocated for the session was too short to make the conversations more effective. Too many participants had also created confusion during the conversations. They asked too many questions at one time and did not address the question accordingly. Therefore, answers to the questions were all jumbled up. The purpose for my participation was to find a suitable topic for my proposal and the group I that I am to work with. This motivated me to participate even more actively in the conversations.

**Matthew:** Really the only thing I was doing during the interchange was thinking. I guess I was typing also. This limited me somewhat in that I am not a fast typer. If everyone in the chat room is a fast typer, then the interchange can be a success. My purpose in the interchange is to generate thoughts within my mind as well as others in the interchange.

**Nancy:** I had the task of discussing a project I have been working on as a possible topic for a group assignment. I felt limited in my interchange because I had to wait for others to join my topic in order to have interchanging. I wanted to participate more but I couldn't leave my topic in fear that someone join and I wouldn't be there to reply. The purpose of the interchange was to decide on a topic for a group assignment. I didn't push my topic because it was just an idea. This hindered my interchange because like I said before, I had to wait for someone to join in the first place before I could have conversation.

**Yip:** In the Interchange my tasks were to give ideas, information or critiques to my group members and listen to their ideas, information, and critiques. As a whole, the tasks had not limited or influenced my participation in the Interchange. but, it had limited our conversation into a scope or range. We were expected to talk only on the topic we discussed on, but at some point of time we did talk something else. The purpose I participated in the Interchange was to get someone with same interest as me to be my group members. With the purpose set in mind, my participation in the Interchange was limited with these of same interest with me. I had barely talk to those who were not in the same interest field as mine.

**Nick:** Mostly my interchange experience has been limited to idea critiques and collective information gathering/brainstorming. The interchange eliminated the nervousness of an initial face to face encounter and allowed ideas to flow more freely, I think. The purpose was as I have stated above, but a hidden purpose would be to prepare for the future interchange in an office environment.

**Lori:** I was performing the tasks as a member of the conference room since my group-mates and I have earlier discussed that we wanted to work as a team. We were actually discussing what we needed for the project and how to get our jobs done. Being a member of a group during the conference chat made me feel that I had limited myself to the open opportunities of working under different projects. However, I am very satisfied with what my group had come up with. As a matter of fact, I feel that this project I am working is a real challenge and adventure for me because I am trying to treat this proposal as if it was real. The main purpose of participating in the interchange was to start discussing our project since we have not done so. Therefore, all of our group members have actively participated in the discussion on what type of environmental clean-up we wanted to perform and thought about how we wanted CB Investments to contribute to our project.

**Jerry:** We (the class) were discussing different group projects and allying ourselves with certain projects we liked. This influenced my participation in that this was a formal discussion to be taken seriously. Had we been discussing the latest episode of "Friends," I would not have been so careful with my word usage.

**Matt:** The task that I was performing when I was participating in the Interchange was to choose a topic for my final project and a join a group. This



I a requirement for the English technical writing course. I would normally have been content to just read what the other students were saying, but I had to get into a group to fulfill the class requirements. The purpose of my participating in the Interchange was to get into a group that would have a reasonably good chance of getting a good grade on the final report. This purpose made me participate more than I normally would be comfortable in doing.

**Penny:** The only task I was performing while participating in the Interchange was reading the other comments sent through Daedalus by the other participants. By giving my full attention to the Interchange, I could keep track of what everyone was saying and choose to respond to different comments. the purpose of the Interchange on March 25, was to explore different topics for final projects. My personal purpose was to identify which proposed topics sounded like a topic I could spend a few weeks exploring and writing about. Because of this goal, I spend all my time in the conversation room that was closest to my major, chemical engineering.

**Geoff:** There were two main goals of the interchange: The first was to form groups for the upcoming proposal project in class. Secondly, we were attempting to develop topics for the proposal project. The method in which this was accomplished was very well thought out. Different chat rooms were created for different subjects, and the students formed their own groups. I think this is the best way to go about forming groups because it allows for group formation without really hurting any individual student's feelings. The purpose of the interchange was to make students familiar with this type of conference. I do not think this had a very large overall effect on the participation, because all students finally participated in the project. However, during the early stages of Daedalus discussion, it was very evident which students were most familiar with this type of program.

**James:** The interchange was very topic oriented. Each chat room was dedicated to a different proposal topic. Our proposal topic was Bioremediation. The purpose of the interchange was to form a group that would write a proposal. This purpose was the main goal of the discussion in the chat room. Most of the conversation stayed focused on this goal.

**Kristy:** I was trying to establish a group and topic for the final project. This had the greatest affect on my participation. I wanted a group I would be comfortable in expressing my ideas. The topic didn't really matter although I would prefer working on something I could understand. I was willing to contribute to any assignment but I did not want to be the primary worker. In other words, I wanted a group where everyone would be contributing equally whether it be technical information or general information on the format of proposals. This translated to looking for a team of about 5 people. The purpose was to establish a group and topic for the final project. As noted above I think this had the greatest impact on my participation. I wanted to express a sort of professional feeling. I felt this would show that I was a hard worker.

**Jack:** I'm not sure I understand the question, but I feel I was brainstorming most of the time. I feel this limited the interchange to a certain subject and or idea. I didn't get a chance to actually write a personal feeling in my messages. The purpose of the interchange was to find group members for the proposal project and to get an idea of the topic of the proposal. The purpose limited me to some very vague ideas.

**Marcy:** I wasn't doing anything besides participating in the Interchange, although I did stop to orally comment on particular items to the person beside me. It is easier to be distracted from the Interchange because it doesn't require full attention or participation 100% of the time, so I probably could've been doing other things while participating. I wanted to assemble a strong group for our project. I was interested in any intelligent input or creative ideas from other participants that showed we had common interests and goals for this project. I had an idea of who I wanted in my group, so I was also trying to encourage those people. This affected my participation by the focus of my input. I would address people specifically, trying to set up communication that would lead to forming a group.

**Ed:** The task I was performing was the formation of a class project group. I was limited by this method (Interchange) because then a name came up on the screen, I didn't know who that was (I'm poor with names). I wanted to use my previous impressions of people in the selection process, and I could only go by what they typed on the computer. The purpose of the interchange was to pick teammates. This purpose had me alternately answering questions or reading responses for questions. I couldn't think long on Who said What and who I wanted in the group. The selection had to be done at the end of class after the dust settled.

**Kim:** My purpose was to exchange ideas on our paper topic through the computer. The task encouraged me to participate more actively since I think that the more idea the group members provide, the more alternatives we have. Thus, we can choose the best alternative out of the many alternatives. My task was to exchange ideas and, at the same time, make sure that the group members are on the same track. That is why during the interchange, I would spend some time explaining to the members if they do not understand certain concepts.

**Rod:** I am exchanging ideas about class work when using the interchange. Since I am slower at communicating with the interchange than some of the people, I am sometimes two or three comments behind. Before I can input my opinion the group is gone on to another topic. The purpose affected my participation, I think the interchange affected my participation.

**Freddie:** The task that I was performing during the interchange was to find a project that would interest me. This limited me to whom I spoke with. After choosing a chat room, I was influenced by the topic I chose. The type of discussion that was held in the chosen room had to be followed to communicate effectively. The purpose of my interchange participation was simply to find a

group. I did not want to get in a group that was friend oriented. This is a result because I am currently involved with this and it is a lot of fun but take longer to produce the same output as a classmate group. So I did steer away from certain topics that might lead to this type of group.

**Dawn:** The main tasks I took on were listening, answering questions, and summarizing the project. Rather than having to walk up to people and jump in a conversation, I could take things at my own pace and listen in to see what the project was about. Being shy, this gave me a chance to talk with people I normally would not have walked up to and struck up a conversation with. I played two roles in the interchange. First, I acted as a silent observer. I joined all of the channels and just listened to what people were saying. Since none of the groups were of great interest to me, I started discussing with Vicki the possibility of doing a computer science related project. I then took on the roles of a marketer, trying to interest other people in the class in our group. In silently observing, the interchange worked quite well. Since I am used to multitasking when working with computers, I could easily listen to the discussions on all of the channels at once. There was a limitation when first starting up a new group. I could not get a channel talk with people on until I figured out what type of software project to do and if I waited too long figuring out what to do everybody would already have chosen a group.

**Phan:** The task that I was performing when I was participating in the Interchange was coming up with suggestion for our Technical Writing midterm. This task open a door to a whole new world for me. I never knew that I have the capability to use the Interchange so easily and readily. The purpose of my participating in the Interchange is to have a group interaction where everyone has a say on the topic. People do not have to wait turn. By participating in the Interchanger, I become much more aware of the students around me. I feel like I have a familiarity with their thinking process. I enjoy participating in the Interchange because I feel I can pinpoint my areas of strength and weakness quickly.

**Ron:** I was discussing a potential group project. This limited the scope of the conversation. I also required that the conversation be a formal one so that important information could be exchanged. There was also a time limit, which necessitated that the conversation be brisk. The purpose was to find a group I would be comfortable working in. Therefore, I tried to bring up issues I thought would be important to this goal. I also carefully read what others had to say in order to evaluate how I would fit in.

**Tad:** The only task I was performing was thinking about the midterm that was upcoming. Because this was part of the discussion in the first place, I was not limiting myself in any ways from the possibilities of ideas during the interchange. the purpose of the interchange was not just to familiarize ourselves with the midterm topics; it was to familiarize ourselves with the new technology available to us. Daedelus is an excellent way to talk about ideas in a group setting, while perhaps letting more shy people get involved because they can be a different personality when behind the computer screen.

**Jay:** During the interchange, I was trying to find a group to join for a proposal. which is the task. I had a topic that no one was familiar with. I joined another group. I think everything will work out great. The purpose of the interchange was to familiarize the class with the different topics. The purpose did not affect my performance during the interchange. It worked out great.

**Tracy:** My task in this interchange is to inform other students about my proposal and to learn about the other topics being proposed the class. This task did not totally limit the participation, because I was told in advance about the subject of the interchange. The purpose of the interchange is strictly informative. The purpose set the tone for the interchange, and in doing so affected everyone's participation.

**Thomas:** The tasks of the interchange were to converse with other students about RFP's and decide what groups we wanted to be in. I felt these tasks limited the Interchange. One reason is I had to try to make my topic appealing to the other students. I spent more time on evaluating how I was coming across to the other students. The major purpose of the interchange was to get ideas about RFP's. This purpose influenced the Interchange because it limited the topic. I personally had to think about the topic more. This slowed down the relay of ideas during the interchange. The responses had to get across a certain idea and therefore had to be specific.

**2. PHYSICAL CONTEXT: Describe the physical context and the conditions in which you are participating in the Daedalus InterChange (location, work space, course, computer terminal, time, etc.). In what ways and to what extent do you think the physical context and conditions affect your computer-mediated exchange? Why?**

**Terry:** I was in the classroom located inside the PSC computer lab in a Technical Writing class. I don't think I would have acted any differently had I been in my own bedroom. My physical surroundings had absolutely no affect on the InterChange other than the fact that since there was someone directly next to me such that I looked over his monitor just to be nosy.

**Phyl:** Computer lab classroom, at computer lab terminal, technical writing course during the span of a class period. The character of both the environment and of the technology being used contribute to the character of the experience. The character of the environment of the room itself refers to such things as are created by the furniture, lighting, sounds-insulating, air conditioning, and the computer system itself: the quality of the equipment, the monitor, the software, the speediness of the processing time, and the 'interactivity' of the program itself. As with environments and tools in general, the suitability of the environment (the classroom) and the usefulness of the tool (the computer) affect performance by making working easier and more comfortable.

**Todd:** The physical context and conditions which I participated in Daedalus InterChange was in my Technical Writing class in the Physical Building on computer terminal #56 @ 10:45 A.M. I feel my surroundings affected my conversation because of people around me I know. Also, I could see how people reacted towards my comments.

**Eric:** For my technical writing class, we did a Daedalus InterChange in the University computer lab. My space was very small because there were many terminals lined up next to each other and they were all being used. The time I was using it was from 12:00 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

**John:** I participated in the Daedalus InterChange located in a computer classroom where my Technical Writing class meets at noon on Tuesdays. The environment is one that did not affect my computer conversation with other students. Ms. Berzsenyi created the conference rooms that were designed from project ideas for a proposal. The only condition that seemed odd is that it is easy just to ask the person a question rather than send a message if the person sits directly by you.

**Chi:** I only use the Daedalus InterChange at the Physical Science center because as far as I know, that is the only computer lab providing this kind of software. We only do the InterChange during the Technical Writing class to do in-class discussion. Work space is comfortable as each student can sit properly to handle a computer. The Daedalus InterChange provides instantaneous conferencing as the time required to send a dialogue is less than 10 seconds. The message printed on the screen is revisable before sending it to the other participants. For instance, if there are three conferences going on. I can jump from one conference to another and still be able to follow the discussion because I can review the earlier part of discussion.

**Casey:** The physical context and conditions in which I participate in the Daedalus InterChange are in the computer lab in the Physical Science Center for Technical Writing class at a computer terminal in the back or middle row during class time from 10:30-11:45. I think the physical context and conditions make my writing more proper than if I were talking to friends. This is because we are trying to accomplish a task that must be carried out. In general the conversation is very casual because the computer allows you to speak your mind while on a level playing field with everyone else.

**Mike:** During the interchange I was at the University of Oklahoma in English 3153 at the Physical Science Center computer lab on the 2nd floor at 12:00 noon on the Tuesday the 26th of March, 1997. The physical context in the sense of where I'm sitting in relevance to others in the lab, creates a limitation on how honest or blunt one can be with others because they can see who and where you are. If an alias were to be an option to someone, that person could remain anonymous, thus allowing blunt and honest conversation.

**K.D.:** A Daedalus Interchange session was held on March 25, 1997 at about 12:15 pm in the Arts and Sciences Computer Lab of the Physical Science Center. It was an in-class exercise for the Computer-Aided Technical Writing class. The work space, a computer room, for this session was well lighted but a little cramped. the physical context that affect me most during the interchange was the cramped space. There is little privacy and space for books or reference notes. The Daedalus program that did not allow multiple viewing screens disrupted most of my conversations very well.

**Matthew:** The Daedalus InterChange took place in the classroom computer lab on the second floor of the Physical Science building. This lab contains about 21 personal computers. The interchange took place on Tuesday March 25 at 2:00 pm. I personally worked on the computer PHPC 59. The surroundings definitely affect a person's computer conversation. If the surroundings are loud, then one is unable to concentrate.

**Nancy:** I participated in the Daedalus InterChange at the Physical Science Center at the University of Oklahoma during a Technical Writing class. I was in front of, behind, and beside other classmates who were also participating in the Interchange. I think that being in the same room with the people you are interchanging with hinders the participants. If everyone was at home and you couldn't see the person you were interchanging with I think everyone would be more comfortable in being more open.

**Yip:** In my technical writing (Engl 3153) class, I have participated in the Daedalus InterChange. We had the interchange in Art and Science computer lab at Physical Science Center. It was held at 10:30 a.m. The time has a positive effect on my computer conversation. Since it was morning, I felt fresh and it had made me participate in the computer interchange quite actively. The computer lab was well lighted and tidy. It had provided me a good environment for the computer conversation and even made me have a good mood. Overall the computer terminal that I had used was good except for the mouse. The cursor on the screen had not responded correspondingly to the mouse. It had made my computer conversation slow tremendously.

**Nick:** The interchange takes place in the Physical Sciences Center computer lab at the University of Oklahoma. It is part of the Technical Writing course, a class designed for engineers and other technical disciplines. the class uses the interchange at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays for up to an hour and fifteen minutes. This physical context could affect the interchange in a variety of ways. The fact that engineers are present usually direct the conversations to more technical topics, such as the bioremediation of an oil spill. The small class size enables the entire group to participate in the discourse regularly. Even the time of day affects the interchange. Students such as myself are usually less tired and more receptive to ideas in the late morning as opposed to an early morning class or even the late afternoon.

**Lori:** The Daedalus Interchange was held in the computer room of the Physical Science Center Computer Services room. In his computer-aided

English Technical writing course, it was an opportunity to have participated in the interchange under a cozy, and friendly environment as the room was small enough to make the students feel close to their classmates and yet big enough to fit all of us. At about 12:20 pm, I selected the conference room in which interests me--Biorest. I feel that if the computers do not produce the humming sound, I could have felt more at ease and comfortable, leaving my ears at peace. In addition, I feel that I had the tendency to talk to my classmates who were in fact sitting right next to me, discussing and asking questions regarding the proposal. By typing, I really felt that it was unnecessary since the people whom I was talking to were just next to me. On the other hand, I felt this was indeed useful because it gave me an opportunity to learn to have conversations on the computers-making full use of modern science and technology.

**Jerry:** My experience with Daedalus consists wholly of in class interchange assignments for my Technical Writing class, an upper division college course. Roughly 15 students participated each time. The room in which we use Daedalus has roughly 25 to 30 computers, each with ample space for one student. The interchanges took place over the course of 45 minutes to an hour. The most significant physical factor affecting the students was the fact that verbal communication was possible at the same time the electronic conversation was. This meant that a student who wished to ask a question of the moderator could merely raise his or her voice and the entire class would be aware of the verbal dialogue. Also, the close proximity to the other participants allowed me to talk directly with other students about the electronic conversation.

**Matt:** The Daedalus Interchange session in which we are answering this survey took place in the computer lab classroom in the physical science building. The whole class is sitting in three rows of desks with about 6 computers per row. They are all IBM compatible computers. There is very little room in our work space for anything except for the screen and the keyboard in front of us. I believe that this physical context makes it hard to participate in the Interchange fully. You are tempted to talk to the other students and not just use the computers for the Interchange.

**Penny:** I participated in the Daedalus Interchange in my Technical Writing class in the computer laboratory located in the Physical Science Building. Class began at 10:30 am and was one hour and fifteen minutes long. The class area of the computer lab is isolated from the general use computers to keep other users from disturbing the class time. The class is small, only 16 people, which allows each student to have their own terminal. The isolated area and the one to one student-computer ratio makes using the computer to converse between the students comfortable. This is because no other students can see what you are saying until you send it over Daedalus and no outside sounds or persons can interrupt the class.

**Geoff:** The Daedalus Interchange was performed in the Physical Science computer classroom. The project was performed in accordance with the computer composition aspects of English 3153 (Technical Writing) from 10:30

to 11:45 am. I used computer terminal number 52, however many different computers in the computer lab were used. The classroom setting helped create a relaxed mood for discussion of upcoming projects. This was exemplified by the fact that conversation swayed from the main point, which was to form small groups with similar interests for the group proposal project.

**James:** On Tuesday, March 24, 1997, at 10:45 a.m., I participated in a computer interchange in my Technical Writing Course (English 3153). This conference was held in a computer lab in the Physical Science Center. There were approximately 16-20 students present and participating in the interchange. The context of the discussion was very topic oriented so there was no room for casual conversation. I did not know all the students so I chose to be reserved in my conversation.

**Kristy:** I participated in the Daedalus Interchange during class on 3/25/97. This class is a technical writing course of about 18 students. The time was approximately 12 pm. The class was held in an Arts and Science building. I believe the physical context did affect the conversation because we were all in the same room. Very often in computer conversations the people conversing are not in the same room or even the same city. This gives an anonymity to the conversation which we did not have. We knew everyone in the room. The computer lab itself also plays a role in the conversation. People are more likely to be comfortable and type what they please or they are in the comfort of their home. In a lab it is easy for any stranger to look over another's shoulder.

**Jack:** I am participating in the Daedalus Interchange in technical writing 3153. The work space is a little tight but the computers provided for the class are the top quality. While in Daedalus during class I feel that I am more informal than I would normally be when typing on a word processor. I feel this because the atmosphere is more relaxed due to the number of people in the interchange. The interchange seems to be more of a brainstorming session than anything.

**Marcy:** I used the Daedalus Interchange for my Technical Writing class in the computer center in the Physical Sciences Center at 11 a.m. Since the interchange occurred in a classroom, the normally informal "chat room" environment was a little more structured, but still more casual than a classroom discussion. People felt free to tease each other or make jokes that they probably because they don't have the same fear of ridicule or disapproval that comes from speaking out in a classroom. On the other hand, it is easier to "hide" in the Interchange. In a classroom discussion, the teacher might attempt to draw out response, while someone that chooses not to say anything in the Interchange may go unnoticed.

**Ed:** I was working at a computer terminal in the class room computer lab in the Physical Sciences building on the University of Oklahoma Campus. Using Daedalus was part of the class Engl 3143 that meets from noon to 1:15 on Tuesdays in that room. We were using the software to form groups for our semester project.



**Kim:** The interchange was held in the Art and Science Computer lab in Physical Science Center. The computer lab was cozy and the lightning was comfortable. This allows the students to work in a better environment and thus increase the productivity. However, some people just do not get affected by the environment.

**Rod:** Physical Science building, Computer-Assisted Technical Writing, Network PC, 10:30-11:45 a.m. Tuesday. It seems silly sometimes to type to someone sitting 3 feet away from you. If you are trying to type something that is lengthy or difficult to elaborate on, I have the tendency to just speak to the person instead to using the interchange.

**Freddie:** The Daedalus Interchange was conducted in the Writing lab in the Physical Science building. The course was Technical Writing at approximately twelve o'clock. The work space consisted of a single personal computer on a small work area surrounded by several other exact terminals. These conditions did affect my computer conversation. The two factors that had the most affect were the in-class activity and the visibility of the students whom I was communicating. Since it was class time, I was more studious in my chose of words to maintain my integrity. Secondly, seeing the people I was talking to did not seem natural.

**Dawn:** I participated in the Daedalus Interchange on computer P5PC53 in the Physical Science Center Computer Lab. The purpose of this interchange was to form groups for working on a project proposal in Technical Writing class. The particular location was advantageous since I ended up being only one seat away from Kristy, who I first suggested the idea for a computer related proposal to. Since there was no way to send a direct message to her over the interchange or for us to set up our own conference room, we had to talk in person to work out the preliminary details of the project.

**Phan:** The physical context and conditions in which I am participating in the Daedalus Interchange are in the Physical Sciences Building where I have my Technical Writing course on Tuesday. I use an IBM computer to participate in the Daedalus Interchange. The physical context and conditions have opened a new avenue of communication for me. I feel comfortable discussing my topic with others who are participating in the Daedalus Interchange. I think it is important for people to have a feel for each other when they really do not know anything about you. My computer conversation is in between a formal and informal tone. Computer conversation gives me the leeway to be frank and candid without worrying too much on how the other person reacts.

**Ron:** I was sitting in the computer lab on the second floor of the Physical Sciences building from 10:30 A.M. to 11:45 A.M. I had my own personal computer and was there for my technical writing class. I think that the conversation on the Daedalus was more restricted than a normal verbal conversation. This is because the conversation was written. Once something

is said it can't be taken back or changed in any way. You become much more aware of what you are saying and how it will be interpreted by others. I also was communicating with a group of people I didn't know very well. For this reason the conversation was somewhat formal. There is also the issue different people entering and leaving the conversation. I had to try in communicate so that people who had just entered the conversation could understand.

**Tad:** The Daedalus interchange took place in our computer lab in Physical Sciences center for English 3153 (Technical Writing). It was around noontime, just after lunch. The date was the Tuesday before Spring Break, and the topic pertinent to midterms. The physical setting of this interchange process indeed affected my computer conversation. I had a stressful week prior, and was greatly looking forward to spring break. Although my mind was focused on class and the upcoming midterm, I was thinking a lot about just getting away from it all and then heading to Colorado. I was more apt to discuss these upcoming plans in the Spring Break conference than to discuss academics in the Midterm conference. I don't believe that personal background had much of an effect on my Daedalus conversations. Education was a key, of course; as stated before, I had a good working knowledge of computers which let me communicate more effectively and quickly. Also, I have had precious experiences with Daedalus interchanges from other classes which gave me an extra leg up. Growing up in an open family atmosphere where communication and sharing ideas was important also led me to be able to do the same in my interchange.

**Jay:** I participated in the Daedalus Interchange on Tuesday, March 25, 1997. The interchange occurred at 12:00 p.m. in the Physical Sciences Center computer lab, which is located on the University of Oklahoma campus. The course is Technical Writing, 3153. There are around twenty computers in the lab. The physical elements in the classroom are very pleasant. The air temperature was pleasurable as well as the conversation environment. I believe that the typing and thinking environment was perfect for us students to communicate with one another. There is only one factor that could be improved in the lab. That factor is the lighting. The lights are a little dim in the lab room. My typing is not that great either, but that is a personal problem on my part.

**Tracy:** The physical context for this interchange is a classroom at the University of Oklahoma during a Technical Writing class. These conditions affect my conversation to the extent that my conversational topics were limited to certain areas and my use of language was restricted because of the setting.

**Thomas:** The Daedalus Interchange is occurring within a technical writing class. Some of the conditions that affected the interchange included being in a room full of students, having what we typed being recorded, and the structure of the interchange. Since the interchange occurred while other students were in the room it was hard to resist just talking to the person you were

interchanging with. If I had been at home where there was a need to use a computer to interchange I think my responses would have varied. The fact that our responses were recorded inhibited what I would say. I thought more about grammar and sentence structure than I would have if it was not recorded. The specific topic given for the interchange made the participant more focused on one idea. The responses I gave were slower because I tried to relate to the topic of ideas for RFP's.

### **3. MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION/ COMPUTER LITERACY:**

**Describe significant and unique aspects of the medium of synchronous computer conferencing. What aspects of medium affect your participation in InterChange? How is the language used during InterChange different from other forms of language use?: How familiar and comfortable are you with computers, with computer-mediated communications (email, internet, bulletin boards, etc.), and, specifically, with synchronous computer conferencing (classroom software or online chat rooms)? In what ways and to what extent do you think this past experience affects your participation in the Interchange?**

**Terry:** I have very limited experience, but probably just because I don't own a computer. I check my favorite sports web sites on occasion, but beyond that. I'm a newbie. It has a minimal effect inasmuch as I have been taught to treat people the way I'd like to be treated.

**Phyl:** I feel generally confident (and therefore comfortable) with computer use, and I have had precious experience with such communications including chat rooms and the like. Although I feel generally confident (and therefore comfortable) with computer use, the most relevant factor seemed to me to be simply that, due to the fact that I could operate the particular program, I held high confidence with participation. The fact that I was very familiar with "Windows" operation seems important, I felt capable of arranging the content as I needed it to suit my particular needs and to support my own participation. Because I felt comfortable going in and out of the different topic rooms, I was able to converse in all of them rather than being stuck in one because I didn't know which button to push. The past chat experience taught me the limitations and the advantages of chat-line conversation: the limitation being that often many subjects are being discussed at once and it is difficult to focus another person's attention upon just one subject at a time, the advantage being that messages can be better focused than speech-conversation statements and thus responses (the exchange of information) can be more informative, more exacting and precise.

**Todd:** Having little experience with computers made it hard to communicate. I feel if I was more experienced I would feel more comfortable. I feel with a more computer literate background, such as my past education using computers, helped a little. I don't think this affected my participation at all.

**Eric:** I am fairly comfortable with computers in general but with the internet and the InterChange, I have never really used so I am not comfortable with doing these applications. I do not feel that my past experience affects my participation because once someone showed me how to get into the InterChange I was comfortable with typing and getting involved.

**John:** Generally, I consider myself quite comfortable with computers. I employ the internet frequently and correspond by e-mail almost everyday. I have also been exposed to online chat rooms. Because of my computer experience, my participation in the InterChange is made easier since I can maneuver within the computer.

**Chi:** I only reply to email every month to a friend from the University of Kansas. I only participated in the online chat once and found that it took long to receive a response if you are one on one. My past experience has not affected my participation in the Daedalus InterChange because things are happening real fast there and you get instantaneous responses from others.

**Casey:** I am moderately familiar and comfortable with computers. I am not familiar with the internet and email because I have not used them. I am vaguely familiar, and not very comfortable with synchronous computer conferencing. This limits my participation because I have had very little experience using it.

**Mike:** I am very familiar with computers in general. I am also very familiar with the use of the internet, e-mail, and chat rooms. By having a computer at home, I can and do use the internet often, which gives me many skills that are useful in this particular exercise.

**K.D.:** I have some experience with Windows softwares. I am also quite familiar with the internet and had occasionally written e-mails. I tried IRC, which is an internationally related chat room. These made me more comfortable when starting and conversing with others. Although I could not type fast but I am quite used to the functions of the program. It helped me converse smoothly.

**Matthew:** I am just average with computers. Computer technology is being upgraded and enhanced everyday, it is hard to keep up with. I can use Microsoft, the internet and e-mail all pretty well. This particular class is the first time I have been introduced to "chatting" on the computer. This last experience [on SCC] makes me kind of sketchy about the interchange. I found myself rather bored a lot of the time during the interchange. The interchange is a good way for people who are shy to express their opinions and thoughts. Personally, I am a slow typer, so it takes me a little bit of time to get my message up on the screen. Many times messages come up on the screen so fast, I am not able to read all of them.

**Nancy:** I am moderately comfortable with computers. I use the internet mainly for fun, and I check my e-mail regularly. I think that familiarity with computers might help with part of the interchange, for example by moving the mouse around and clicking where and when needed. However, I think a student could be just as active in the interchange without much familiarity with computers because it is really easy.

**Yip:** Computer was the only medium and mode of communication used. Generally, I am quite familiar and comfortable with computers. However, my typing speed had great effects on my participation in the interchange. Because I am a slow typist, I had been quite slow in the computer conversation. I have been introduced to computer mediated communication for one year and synchronous computer conferencing for less than half a year. But I have used it so frequently up to the point that they had made me feel comfortable to be informal whenever I used them. Therefore, in the Interchange I felt quite comfortable because most of the time the conversation was informal except at some point of time.

**Nick:** I am very familiar with computers in general and consider myself fairly knowledgeable of both hardware and software. I am internet-literate with adequate experience with online chat rooms. This experience affects me because I no longer follow basic grammar and sentence structure rules on the interchange. I tend to speak more in sentence fragments and use emoticons from time to time.

**Lori:** As a matter of fact, I consider myself as computer-illiterate since I have about "close to zero" knowledge on computers and computer softwares. Some of the only activities I know how to get access to are as follows: Microsoft Office, e-mail, AutoCad. Those are the softwares I knew before I had enrolled in this class. However, after enrolling for this class, my computer skills have improved tremendously. I have acquired: Power Point, On-line Chat, email from internet, internet. I have seen many of my friends using the IRC on the internet and I was pretty amazed that some of my friends find their friends on the computers to discuss homework and talk about plans for the weekends. In one very extended usage of interchange, my friend found himself a girlfriend through the interchange. Many have described to be that interchange was indeed useful and this has affected my participation in the interchange that I had in class. It not only made me feel that I need to be an active participant in the conversation but also, my ideas need to be heard. Beside that, it made me feel I was not left out and I had to use modern technology to communicate. This can actually be a training to me as computers as an alternative communication device. Thus, I can proudly say that I have knowledge in it.

**Jerry:** My experience with computer-mediated communication made it easy to begin to participate in this Interchange. I was at ease with both the form of, and conventions of computer discussions.

**Matt:** I am some what familiar with computers. I have completed all but 18 hours of a computer science degree. But I have never used Internet before and

I have used email only once before. In the past I have viewed the Internet as a form of entertainment that if I had used it, I would get addicted to it, and waste a lot of critical time playing around with the Internet. I have therefore stayed away from using the Internet. I had never used any form of synchronous computer conferencing before this class. Since I have not had very much experience with any type of computer Interchange I was reluctant to participate in the exchange. I was more inclined to just watch the other students interact on the computer. By the time I had read the topic of conversation and had formed an opinion about it the group was talking about something else, and my comments were not longer relevant.

**Penny:** I am a frequent user of computer mediated communications, but I am familiar with computers. Most of my computer use is with spreadsheets and word processors. I do know some basic programming in one language, and can usually figure out a new program through trial and error. I am not afraid that I will destroy the computer by "playing" with a program. I do not use Internet, e-mail, and chat rooms frequently. This isn't because I don't like the forum, but because I do not feel I have time to spend a few hours a week "surfing the net" or "chatting online." I still find it easier to stick a stamp on a letter than to figure out if the recipient has a e-mail address or some other electronic connection. I have talked in the chat rooms of American Online before. This format is very similar to the Daedalus Interchange, the difference being I don't think I will ever meet the people I am conversing with. This past experience enables me to feel comfortable "talking" with the typed word, but Daedalus has a difference. When speaking on America Online you can "be" someone else. No one there knows who you are, they can't tell everyone what you said or what you implied. This makes you stay more aware of what you say.

**Geoff:** I am very familiar with computers. I have had my own for several years now and have been operating them since elementary school. I am also very familiar with e-mail, the internet, chat rooms, and Microsoft Office. All of these items helped contribute to my adaptation to the Daedalus Interchange. Students similar to myself in this aspect were also quick to respond to the Daedalus format because they were very comfortable with this format and computers.

**James:** I am very familiar with computers in general. I worked at the Bursar's Office for two years as a student programmer. I also have a strong interest in the Internet, so I often visit online chat rooms. My roommate is studying abroad in France, and sometimes he and I get on the same chat line. I am more comfortable with chatting online because it does not seem foreign to me.

**Kristy:** I would consider myself an expert in the area of computers in general and in computer mediated communications. I have been a Computer Science major since I began my college education in the Fall of 1992. During this time I have been actively using email and the Internet. I have used synchronous computer conferencing in the form of online chats on and off for 4 years. I

think the familiarity allowed me to be comfortable when I wanted to say something. I had the ability to respond quickly and interface with several conferences.

**Jack:** In general I feel very comfortable with computers I interact with others students and friends via e-mail. This is another reason that I feel comfortable with interchange in class. It has given me a good idea of the format and lack of formality in interchange with my peers.

**Marcy:** I have a personal computer at home, and a membership to an on-line service. I feel comfortable with computers in general, enjoy the benefits of e-mail, and find chat rooms entertaining. I find Interchange a little awkward. For example, I think about what I want to say, type it out, then have the chance to change it before I send it to the screen. Sometimes I can't collect my thoughts fast enough and the issue has already been addressed by other participants; other times I doubt myself and don't send it for fear of my ignorant statements being plastered on the screen for everyone to see. Also, it's easy to get caught up in the conversation of others and neglect to contribute. Sometimes everyone says something at once, so it's difficult to follow every line of discourse and some issues are ignored. Overall, though, experience with chat rooms does make me more comfortable with the idea of communicating with several people at once.

**Ed:** I am very familiar with IBM compatible computers and the major word processing software on the market. I use the Internet and email routinely. I am new, though, to interchange and online chat rooms. The closest thing to them that I've used was the phone utility on VAX/VMS systems. The Phone utility I used allowed communication with only one other person at a time. This past experience has given me the habit of typing quickly and shortening thoughts so I can get them out as fast as possible. It also allows me to follow multiple threads of conversation at once (rather than carry on a linear dialogue about a single topic).

**Kim:** I am quite familiar with various types of computer softwares and internet service. But, I have no experience in synchronous computer conferencing. I think my past experience increased my confidence and made me more comfortable during the interchange.

**Rod:** I am very familiar and comfortable with computers, internet, and email. But, I am not as familiar with online chat rooms or computer conferencing. I am willing to participate and learn how to use the interchange efficiently. I think this is because I am not intimidated by the computer or learning new software.

**Freddie:** I consider myself to be comfortable with computers in the sense that everything that I have needed to successfully finish a project I can accomplish. I know the software that is required by my course of study. The internet and email are two very new things for me. I do very little with both avenues. The online chat rooms are completely new. a.) I do not think that my

inexperience with the email and chat rooms has affected my ability to communicate with an individual or group. However, I do feel that I lack some of the slang that occurs in email and chat rooms. This may make me appear to be more rigid and not as relaxed as others may appear. This trait would diminish as I increased my online activities.

**Dawn:** I am very comfortable working with computers. I use e-mail, the world wide web, chat rooms, newsgroups, and other aspects of the internet everyday. Unlike many people who play on the internet, I also understand most of the technology behind such things as the world wide web. Since I have a great deal of experience working with computers, the only thing new to learn with Daedalus was how the particular setup worked. I use IRC (a common chat room system) to talk with my friends almost everyday. Thus I am quite familiar with the chat style of communication. In most chatrooms people talk in short sentences and abbreviations with little regard to spelling or grammar. This has developed due to the fact that if you take the time to type out a long, detailed paragraph, by the time you are done the conversation will have moved onto something else. On the IRC, there is also the option to do actions, for example, typing "/me jumps around the room." This ability to perform actions and show emotions makes interacting easier and is missing in Daedalus. One disadvantage to being familiar with IRC is that in IRC each sentence is sent when you hit the return key. Thus after hitting return, I often sat there waiting for Daedalus to send the line until I remembered to hit the "send" button.

**Phan:** I am very comfortable with computers in general. I have been using Words and Excel as daily part of my report preparations. I use Excel to organize several of my daily functions like lab report's data and statistics. I have used computer mediated communications like the internet and email. These are valuable resources for instance information. I have learned a lot from using these resources. My only regret is that I do not have the extra free time to learn more. I think the synchronous computer conferencing like the Interchange is a great means of communicating. My past experience influences my participation in the Interchange has enhanced my appreciation for this technology. If I did not have any experience with computer, I honestly believe I would have been in deep trouble. I enjoy learning new things about the computer technology. By knowing that there is a system like the Interchange available, I have another option to use in my repertoire of communication skills. I believe the more communication skills I have the better off I am.

**Ron:** I work with computers almost every day. I am comfortable with computers although I do not consider myself an expert on computers. I use the internet frequently, but I do not usually use email or chat rooms. I think that I am able to feel relaxed during the interchange because of my familiarity with computers. I do not have any anxiety about computers. This helps me to be more relaxed and natural when conversing on the computer.

**Tad:** I am very familiar with computers. My parents have always been in the personal computer business, so I learned computer and typing skills at an



early age (typing skills here are important; to have the interchange conversations progress quickly, responses must be also generate quickly). I am very familiar with the internet and email, as I use these tools extensively to communicate with friends near and far. In my job, I use the internet as a search tool to find research data for weather. I have used chat rooms such as IRC and AOL before, although they are not as fun for me as I would rather enjoy a face to face conversation. These past experiences influenced my conversation in the interchange, because I didn't have to mess around with figuring out what to do. I was able to type in my responses quickly but clearly. I was also able to connect with other experienced users through symbols, such as :) to represent happiness as the end of a sentence.

**Jay:** In highschool I took one computer oriented course. The course was keyboarding. Keyboarding did not seem to help me alot with my typing, because I am struggling right now to put my thoughts onto the computer screen. I send e-mail everyday to my girlfriend that attends Oklahoma State University. I am familiar with the OU e-mail system. I use netscape. I have used the AOL and visited with folks online. My previous experience with the AOL helped me in this interchange. I was confident and I understood which processes to follow.

**Tracy:** I am not very familiar with computers at all outside of their use for word processing. This past experience limits my participation in the beginning because I was still catching on and exploring, but once I got the hang of it. things slowly became normal.

**Thomas:** I am very familiar with computers, internet, and online chat rooms. From an early age I used a computer at home. Within the past year, I have used the internet and email. During this time I have realized the vast amount of information available to each person on the Web. This past experience has allowed me to not be intimidated by technology. I am able to express myself freely on this medium of communication. My experience with computers allows me to not be concerned with learning a program. Instead I can focus in on the actual conversing with others.

**4. LITERACY: Describe your writing behaviors (types of writing, contexts of writing, goals accomplished through writing) and rate your writing abilities in the various types of writing you list. What correlation, if any, do you see between your InterChange behaviors and abilities and your writing behaviors and abilities?**

**Terry:** Not particularly. Since I compare InterChange more with conversing freely, I employ a less formal mode of speech. I think I possess adequate writing abilities, and hopefully I reflect that in my speaking, but the two are not necessarily connected.

**Phyl:** I think a good relevant statement to make about my writing behaviors and abilities is that I tend towards a richer and stronger performance of writing ability according to how well defined the writing situation is, how well I understand what I am writing about and what I intend to achieve by that writing. The correlation that exists between the general and this specific case is that the strengthening factors strengthen, while the weakening factors weaken.

**Todd:** Hypertext was used so I felt informal and poor writing abilities showed.

**Eric:** My writing content is probably average for a college student. My problem is that I have difficulty with spelling. In an InterChange this slows me down because I worry about my words being missed spelled so it takes me slower to communicate with people. I try and make up for this with my typing speed. I can type fast but I have to recheck my sentences for miss spelling and sometimes change my sentences because I will not know how to spell a certain word.

**John:** My writing experience includes basic reports, documents, analyses, technical reports, and a newsletter associated with my job. I rate my writing abilities as being very good since I strive for perfection with tasks that I undertake. If an InterChange discourse was to be of a certain style or tone, I am confident that AI could write in a specific manner, therefore, a good correlation exists between my writing abilities and InterChange behaviors.

**Chi:** I like to write essays and describing experience to friends in letter. I think I am a weak writer due to my language problem. I have to read before sending the typed message but this does not discourage me from participating actively in the InterChange if I am interested in the topic of discussion.

**Casey:** The only type of writing I do is for school which is usually technical. When I do this I am accomplishing assignments which are geared toward graduating. I would rate my writing in this manner as good. I do not write for fun so I guess I can see some similarities with my InterChange abilities being very limited.

**Mike:** My writing style tends to lean toward a favoritism of strong vocabulary and traditional use of languages. I do consider myself to be a good writer, and on occasion, a great writer. If I had to point out my greatest weakness, it would certainly be spelling. I mainly consider myself to be a great communicator, this is the one ability that makes my interchanges successful. and then by being a good writer, I can get my thoughts and ideas on to the computer screen.

**K.D.:** I am very used to write formal letters, reports and argumentative essays but seldom on descriptions. These writings usually deal with facts and in the Malay language. But there is always English essays once in a while. For my writing now, I would rate it as good. As the conversations were very

formal, I felt a bit difficult to adjust my language. But my experience in writing helped me to converse appropriately.

**Matthew:** I am just an average writer. Really the only writing I do is for class. I don't really set any goals in my writing. I always try to satisfy the goals of the audience. I feel the interchange is a reflection of one's conversational abilities rather than their writing abilities, considering they are called "chat rooms."

**Nancy:** On-the-spot writing is more difficult for me because I like to put time and thought into my writing. During the interchange you don't have the time to put a great deal of thought into your writing. This makes me a little uncomfortable, but it is just something I need to get used to. I feel that I am a good writer. However, with the interchange I kind of throw out conventional writing techniques like capitalization because it takes up time and slows the conversing.

**Yip:** Since high school I used to write essays, lab reports, letters and some short instructions. In most of the writings my goal was to tell the audience what I did, and what my ideas were. In general, I think my writing ability is in the average category. Basically, up to now, I can't see the correlation between my Interchange behaviors and abilities and your writing behaviors and abilities. The only thing that I had noticed was that in the Interchange, I am more towards the casual style rather than using a fixed format like what I used in most of my writings.

**Nick:** I am what I would consider an essay writer making the transition to technical reporting. I tend to get prosy at times in documents where a more technical approach is called for. However, I rate myself a very good writer when I put in the time to actually concentrate on a work. There is a correlation between my writing abilities and the interchange, because I tend to correct spelling in my fragments of conversation and overthink my responses when a knee-jerk reaction is called for.

**Lori:** My writing is becoming short, precise and straight to the point. In the context, I want to cover all the questions or main points that were required. My goals accomplished through writing are getting the facts short and understandable. However, I am still learning to be even more technical and critical. I consider my writing abilities in between weak and good here that everyone writes and speaks English as their first language. However, when I am back home, I would consider my writing skills as very good when comparing myself with other fellow-Malaysians. This is recent interchange that I participated, I felt that my ideas were heard and taken into consideration. The conversation went on smooth because I felt that all participants including myself were straight to the point and we did not want to waste anytime being too flowery with the language.

**Jerry:** I have essentially two voices that I use when writing--informal and formal. I use the informal voice for personal communications; letters and e-

mail with friends and family. The informal voice is very relaxed and free form. I use conjunctions more often and worry less about the odd typo. My writing follows very little form--I frequently interrupt myself in the middle of sentences to make a completely unrelated point, then continue on. I make jokes and include a good deal of "Oh, by the way" information. Also, the reason I write the other is to inform them of my current situation(s), so I frequently use the word "I." The formal voice is the voice I use most often. I use this voice when writing in any situation where somebody who does not know me might read what I have written. I rarely use conjunctions and avoid referring to myself--unless it is absolutely necessary I do not use the word "I." I do this so that I will seem to be intelligent and well-spoken, that way what I have written will be taken more seriously.

**Matt:** I would describe my writing abilities as good. The only types of writing that I normally do is very technical, lab type of reports. All of the reports that I write are targeted to an audience that is at the same level that I am coming from. Outside of the types of reports that I normally write I would have to say that my writing ability would be considered to be weak. This fact might explain my reluctance to participate in the Interchange.

**Penny:** In the past few years, my writing has been for laboratory reports and short papers. I usually begin writing by composing a rough draft on the computer. The laboratory reports are usually structured with specific requirements in specific sections. The goals to this writing is to explain an experiment and give analysis of the data obtained while performing the experiment. The laboratory reports follow a format designated by the instructor. I would rate my laboratory report writing abilities as very good, after three years of college I've had lots of opportunity to practice. My short paper, essay, writing has been used less since entering college. The goals of the essays I've written lately have been to explore a topic like a comparison between mythological figures or an exploratory paper on a government assigned topic. My writing abilities for this genre are good, but I've not used this format extensively since high school.

**Geoff:** In chemical engineering, I write many different kinds of reports. While the goal of many of these reports and papers is informative, the style varies from letters and memos to year-long research projects with update and projection reports. I would rate my technical writing and speaking ability as good for someone at my educational level. Naturally, students like myself are highly concerned with their grades, and seek out others students similar to themselves for group partners. After all, word travels fast if someone is not overall concerned with the quality of their work, and these students are often avoided by higher quality students.

**James:** I think I am a fairly good writer. My mother is an English professor, and I have always had her help with writing. I cannot write in sentence fragments even though many people do this during online conversations. I feel required to speak in full sentences even online.

**Kristy:** I've always gotten A's and B's on my writing assignments but usually I feel they could use more revising. I generally have good content, I just have some problems with grammar. On the interchange misspellings are common and grammatical mistakes are not viewed as harshly as they would be in a formal document. Therefore I was able to gain a comfort in my writing abilities. Other times on the Internet I have regressed to phrases, lack of capitalization, and other forms of bad grammar. In this case I tried to stay coherent and professional.

**Jack:** I would have to describe my writing abilities as good. I have a hard time being clear when writing a formal paper but when writing informally I don't have the same problem. The reason I have such a hard time writing a formal paper is that I am too critical. I can't just write like I am now, I am constantly thinking of some other way to make a sentence sound better. I don't know if I can find a correlation in my formal and informal writing. I do wish that I could find the same confidence in my formal writing procedure.

**Marcy:** I enjoy writing for any reason--as a hobby, for school, and maybe even as a career. I consider myself a fair writer in my personal writings of poetry and stories, but unfortunately, I think I am more talented at writing for "practical" purposes such as reports, essay questions, and other school-related pieces. I also think I am a good writer of opinion pieces. I think the relationship between these abilities and my Interchange behaviors lies in the basic principles of communication. I feel comfortable expressing my ideas, and I enjoy communicating with other people in any arena, because I have learned to express my thoughts in an intelligent and rational manner.

**Ed:** The types of writing I do most often would be: report writing, email writing, memo writing, and instructional material writing. I feel my writing skills are as follows: report writing (Good), email writing (very good), memo writing (very good), instructional material writing (very good--since people pay me to do this a lot). I believe that this background allows me to get to the point on a thought that I desire to type-and not spend too much time on extra verbiage.

**Kim:** Since my primary education, I have been writing various types of writing like narration, short letter (formal and informal), instructions, and resume. But in school, teachers focus mainly on narrative writing. However, my interest is in argumentative writing and I am a good argumentative writer. I am good in argumentative writing because I can organize the points very well and capable of linking from one point to the other. In contrast, I am only a fair writer in other types of writing. My ability to organize my points allows me to voice my opinion accurately in a well organized manner during the interchange.

**Rod:** I answered this question in section about personal history. My goal in writing is to communicate with the written word what I am thinking and for it to be as clear as if I had said it out-loud. My interchange abilities is weak compared with my writing ability. My interchange behavior is different from my writing behavior, because I choose words I can spell. I am also much

faster at writing with a word processor since the words and sentence structure are identical and even sometimes more elegant than my spoken words.

**Freddie:** The type of writing that I have accomplished over that last few years has consisted primarily of lab reports with one or two informative essays. When writing these papers I try to set a design or path in my head as to what the report or essay must follow. Often times the goals that are set are the completion of topics listed in the table of contents. I consider myself to be a writer that is better than good but not very good. Naturally my writing characteristics are the same in the two forms, but the interchange's atmosphere is relaxed and does not cause the stress of the report which requires more strict guidelines.

**Dawn:** I hate writing and avoid it whenever possible. I am a slightly better than average writer, though since at most other school subjects I am well above average, I have always viewed myself as a terrible writer. I am better at technical writing than creative writing. Though I have a vivid imagination, I have trouble expressing my personal thoughts and feelings in writing. In an interchange environment I can adjust for some of my problems with writing. For example, when faced with a computer question, I can swiftly look up the answer and then show the person where they can find the information they need.

**Phan:** My writing behaviors is average for right now. I now I have plenty of room for improvement. Sometimes when I do not feel like writing and I have too, my writing lacks originality and creativity. Other times when I feel inspired, I can come up with extraordinary ideas. Since I am a chemistry major, I find myself writing more technically as I progress through my college years. My writing has pretty much been straight forward and to the point. I would rate my writing abilities to be very good in the overall ability to write. I do believe that I am becoming more of a better technical writing because of the Technical Writing Course I chose to take. I see a correlation between more familiar with the Interchange, I become more confidence with my ability to write quicker. It seems like everytime I use the Interchange, I am forced to be a good writer quickly or I will lag behind. I believe the Interchange makes me think on my feet. I have to be aware of my ideas and yet at the same time get pace with my communication.

**Ron:** I enjoy writing. I get a sense of accomplishment from putting together a well written document. I think I tend to be a formal writer, but write in other styles of when necessary. I am a good writer, but I could be better with more practice. I believe my interchange abilities are aided by my experience as a writer. I don't think my writing style is similar, but I do think it is helpful to have had success in the past at writing. The strongest correlation that I see is that I enjoy both situations.

**Tad:** I like to consider myself a good writer in all forms, be it technical or conversational. Daedalus lends itself to a more conversational type writer, and being a journalism minor enrolled in several writing classes aided my abilities

here. My writing behaviors played a role here as well; I write for all types of instances as mentioned before, and I was able to adapt easily to the type of writing that others were partaking in during the interchange.

**Jay:** My writing is good. At Morrison I was always the best writer in my class. I did not have to work very hard to be the best writer in my class. Now that I have come to OU, I am competing with the best all over the state. I have improved a lot after coming to OU. My writing goals are set. I write well enough to get through. I am ready to graduate and raise a family. I guess I am in Love.

**Tracy:** Most of the writing is expository and informative, mainly assignments for some class. My writing skills are adequate I think, but I have a tendency to write long sentences. I do not see any correlation between my writing and the interchange, in which I mainly ask questions and give short, pointed answers.

**Thomas:** My writing behaviors are that I am very concerned with sentence structure and grammar. I try to relate information when I am writing. If I cannot get across some idea then I have wasted my time. I would rate my writing ability as very good. The reason for this is I am very direct. I saw a correlation between my writing abilities and the Interchange. Then one aspect is the editing of what was written. I was slow in relaying responses because I reviewed what I had written to other students.

**5. ORALITY: Describe your interpersonal and public speaking behaviors (conversation, large and small group discussion and presentations, instruction, entertainment, commercial transactions, etc.) and rate your speaking abilities. What correlation, if any, do you identify between your InterChange behaviors and abilities and your speaking abilities and behaviors?**

**Terry:** I suppose I am rather verbose in my orations, and so it comes out in my interchanging as well.

**Phyl:** Again, I feel that the framing of the situation is key to performance. As I wrote before, the Interchange allowed for the formality and focus of the writing process within the setting of conversational speech, thus combining the contemplative clarity of written speech with the interaction of social conversation.

**Todd:** My speaking behavior didn't show when participating because of the small and impersonal audience. In general my public speaking skills are good.

**Eric:** My speaking ability has had a great improvement in the past year after becoming President of my fraternity. I say my speaking ability in front of large groups is probably a little average but not great. I think this affects my

InterChange because the more comfortable you feel talking in large groups the more you will talk in an InterChange.

**John:** I believe my speaking behaviors on a common basis could be improved since in everyday conversation I tend to speak in an informal tone while not really being perceptive of my speech. However, I have had a great deal of experience with speaking to small and large audiences and giving presentations. When performing these tasks, I am well prepared and have my speaking abilities as being very good. A direct correlation exists between my speaking ability and InterChange behaviors but often depending on the situation.

**Chi:** I would rate myself as weak in daily conversation. I am unable to speak proper English and left my friends clueless with the words I mispronounced some of the time. However, speaking is different from typing or writing and therefore does not affect my participation.

**Casey:** My speaking behavior is that I often do not talk a lot. I can participate all right in short conversations. My public speaking skills are shaky and I would rate them as weak. The only correlation I can make is that my InterChange abilities are limited like my speaking abilities.

**Mike:** In large groups, I consider myself to be a leader, and mostly a great contributor to thought and conversation. In an interchange there are not necessarily any leaders, only contributors, in my opinion. As I stated before my ability to communicate is great, and my speaking skills are equivalent. These skills are very useful in an interchange.

**K.D.:** Firstly, my 'mother tongue' is not English and I do not speak in public often. Therefore, I have very few English conversations in the past. Although I have no problem speaking English with friends, I do not do well in speaking publically. By saying so, I would rate myself as an average speaker. There were not much difference between my interchange behaviors and abilities and my speaking abilities except that all participants were not seen. Personally, I think conversing this way could bring out bolder ideas and opinions.

**Matthew:** Public speaking and interpersonal skills are more along the lines of what I excel in. I don't have any problems holding a conversation, giving instructions or explanations. Chat rooms can be a reflection of one's speaking abilities. However, somebody may take awhile to think about something and then take their time to type it out. When holding a conversation, thoughts are back forth.

**Nancy:** I am a good conversationalist. I get nervous speaking in front of a large audience and even a small unfamiliar audience. Interchange requires good conversation techniques in order to reply, but I don't think it requires good speaking techniques because it is more relaxed on computer. At least, don't get nervous even though there could be a large audience. People aren't staring you down, just the computer screen.



**Yip:** I have not much experience in giving a speech or a large group presentation. In daily conversation, I was acculturated to listen more than to speak. However, I have learned to speak and participated more in conversation ever since I came to the United States and especially when I have enrolled in the Technical Writing class where students are expected to participate actively in the group discussion. To me, I think there isn't any correlation between them. In Interchange, I only faced the computer screen and this had lessened my nervousness of speaking to the others.

**Nick:** My speaking abilities are adequate, but they could definitely be improved upon. I tend to fidget a little bit, and I can have lots of "uhs" when I haven't prepared my speech enough. In small groups, though, I don't get as nervous and I am usually able to speak well. My interchanges often mirror my speaking abilities.

**Lori:** I feel that my interpersonal and public speaking skills are poor and probably my writing skills are more expressive. Sometimes when I participate in a conversation, the person whom I am talking did not understand what I wanted. This made me feel repressive and introverted and I did not dare to share my ideas verbally. Speaking up in class is a big problem that I need to overcome. The rate of my speaking abilities is good—not too slow and not too fast. Just being at the right pace. When I participated in the interchange, I felt I had expressed myself just the way I wanted to. It was a little difficult typing out as fast as I thought but somehow everything was just fine. The interchange behaviors really reflected myself. For example, I want to type "you" but instead I went ahead in setting for "u". By this method, it showed that I needed to be fast and straight to the point. The sentences that I used were my thoughts that would be typed the way I was to represent it verbally.

**Jerry:** I have no reservations about public speaking. I enjoy giving presentations to large groups of people. With adequate preparation, a strong speaking voice, and a passable ability to "wing it" when necessary, I have never been uncomfortable in front of an audience. Participating in Daedalus is similar to public speaking in that what you say is read by, and critiqued by, everyone else in the discussion. So somebody uncomfortable with that kind of scrutiny may have trouble participating—I do not. It does not bother me one bit to have other people see my thoughts and ideas. Perhaps because I am comfortable being judged in the more blatant arena of spoken presentations.

**Matt:** I am a very shy person, and do not like to do any public speaking. If I have participated in a project and am forced to speak or give a presentation I am at first very scared, but once I get started I do very well. In the Interchange I never get the chance to "get started" so I just sit back and read what others are saying and not say much.

**Penny:** I view myself as a more introverted than extroverted person. I am most comfortable speaking and expressing myself with people that I am familiar with. I usually express my stronger opinions to people that I've known

for a long time. I will express my views in a group of “new” people or to people I only know in the passing, but it seems to take more of effort. I have given group presentations and most of the time I feel like I’m “bluffing” through them. This is not to say that when I give a presentation I don’t know my subject, just that I feel like I’m playing a part and not actually sharing myself. This feeling carries over to some extent to the interchange. The other participants are people that I do not know well, so most of what I say is “screened” to only show part of me. I would say that I have good speaking skills. I know what is required of myself to make the subject I am speaking about clear, and I know how to prepare myself for the speaking situations I feel uncomfortable in.

**Geoff:** I would rate myself as a group leader and organizer with good conversational, presentation and instructional skills. I think that students with the highest abilities and greatest interests form themselves together and the students with lesser abilities are left to form their own groups.

**James:** I took debate several years in high school and was forced to overcome my fears about public speaking. I think my speaking experience causes me to be a little more assertive online. I am not shy to voice my opinions.

**Kristy:** Once I’m comfortable in a situation I can explain things adequately. If I am uncomfortable, which tends to be the norm, I speak too quickly. This can be confusing because the information is received too quickly and the listener does not have time to process it. I think I am more comfortable in the written form for a large group presentation. In the interchange I can edit the information if I don’t like what I have written. I can also type as fast as I wish because people can scroll through what I have written and take all the time they need to process the information.

**Jack:** My public speaking behaviors are a little more formal than normal conversation. For instance, I gave several speeches, actually pep talks to prospective rushees for my fraternity. For each of these I wrote an outline for what I was going to talk about so I would not lose my train of thought while speaking. I did not do this the first time and I found it difficult when looking out at 80 staring eyes. The correlation between my interchange and speaking behaviors is that when someone is typing I am thinking what I am going to say, just as when someone is asking a question or talking to me.

**Marcy:** I speak well in conversations with a few other people. I usually take the initiative to express my thoughts and draw out other people’s thought. As far as public speaking, I do get nervous and tend to speak fast. If I can control my fear, I consider myself a good speaker. I see the relationship between orality and the Interchange as I did with writing: communication is all about getting ideas across. The Interchange does provide a safer environment to communicate, so I do feel more comfortable than in front of an audience. I do prefer interpersonal communication to the Interchange, however, because I feel I can express myself more clearly and more efficiently. I tend not to say as much in the Interchange simply because typing is more tedious than speaking.

**Ed:** My interpersonal and public speaking skills are strong. I like speaking to people (even strangers in prison as part of my ministry ) and to groups (I lecture publically at the Oklahoma city science center planetarium one or two times a week). I don't see anything in my oral skills that particularly impacted my type written conversation. I felt that I was typing not orally speaking. Inflection and timing did not come into play.

**Kim:** I am a shy and inconfident person. Everytime I have a presentation, I will feel uncomfortable. However, I am gaining more and more confident from this class. I don not feel as bad as I used to be during group presentation. But I still feel uncomfortable talking to unfamiliar acquaintance though I can communicate well with long term friends. My shyness and inconfidence talking to strangers do not affect me at all during the interchange. this might due to my attitude of treating it as a writing rather than speaking.

**Rod:** I am somewhat comfortable at public speaking, it is however something I think I could improve on. I don't find any correlations between the interchange and my speaking abilities and behaviors.

**Freddie:** I have spoken in several different avenues and have different abilities for each. In teaching a topic to others that I am comfortable with the discussion goes very well. In conversation with others or groups I must admit I can be assertive. In presentations, I get nervous and this is because I do not practice a much beforehand as I should. In the interchange, I write very close to the way I take in class or in conversation.

**Dawn:** I avoid speaking before of large groups like the plague. In small groups with people I know, I am relatively comfortable speaking. I am not very eloquent or at ease when taking among people I do not know. The one exception to this, however, is when I am talking about computers. I am quite comfortable talking to complete strangers about computers and even moderately large groups of strangers about computers. I am much more likely to voice my opinion among strangers in a chat style environment than in person.

**Phan:** My interpersonal and public speaking behaviors have been gradually improving. I am currently taking a Public Speaking course. I feel that I am slowly gaining confidence in myself as a public speaker. I feel that I am an excellent interpersonal speaker. I can relate to people very easily on an individual basis. My ability to speak publicly needs some more work. I need to control my nervous or convert the nervous energy into something positive.

**Ron:** I am an average public speaker. I can get nervous in front of crowds but am usually animated enough to be interesting to listen to. I don't think my speaking abilities have a strong correlation to the Interchange, because the Interchange is not the same type of situation. I don't get nervous on the interchange, and the type of communication is completely different.

**Tad:** Again, I also consider myself as someone who can do well in a speaking environment. This is because I relate well to others in a variety of situations, from group discussions to more interpersonal, one-on-one type conversations. Adaptability is key in interchanges in order to communicate effectively, and I was able to use my conversational skills and transfer them to the writing environment necessary for interchange.

**Jay:** I have very good speaking abilities. I enjoy speaking to other people. I learn a lot from other people. During the interchange, I speak as if I were in an oral conversation. To me an interchange is conversation, but not as personal.

**Tracy:** While speaking, I usually do not use long sentences or the passive voice. I think my speaking abilities are very good, and there is a correlation between my speech and the interchange. I treat the interchange as a conversation.

**Thomas:** My public speaking skills are very good. Some of my behaviors include gesturing, sense stress, and modulation. In public speaking I try to tell the audience the main points of my speech. Then I build on each of these points in the body of the speech. These behaviors were evident in the interchange I emphasized the topic of discussion. In the later parts of the discourse, I related specifics about the topic.

**6. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL CONTEXT: Describe aspects of your social status and role (age, race, socio-economic class, gender, geography, role as student, etc.). To what extent do you think these aspects of social context and personal background (education, family upbringing, etc.) affect your participation in the electronic exchange? Why?**

**Terry:** I am 22.7 years old. I'm from Wilmington, Delaware, and I was born into a middle-class blue-collar family. I don't think any of this had any affect at all on my InterChange. As far as my race is concerned, I'd rather not say because I would argue that it's irrelevant to even discuss it. To me, that's like asking if my height of 5'10" had any affect on my InterChange. Suffice to say I don't spend a lot of time thinking about what color my skin is, I just try to be the best I can.

**Phyl:** Twenty-seven years of age, race uncertain. . . , socio-economic class: I think "student" defines this reasonably well. . . , gender male, geography: central plains of Oklahoma, role as student: peer-conference participant. I believe that these aspects influence or affect the exchange in as much as a person's degree of previously acquired experience of technology is probably (although not necessarily) affected (or even effected) by what could be called one's social circumstance. I also believe, however, that these factors form an even more relevant characteristic of the participant: that of the participants own level of

education, social attitude, temperament, and value of peers, ability to discourse: the student facilitates the process of InterChange.

**Todd:** I am 23 years old, white male from Tulsa, OK. Knowing my audience I could related with the same social context and didn't worry about affecting another. Knowing the other participants, my interaction wasn't as free flowing. I worried about how others might react to my comments.

**Eric:** I am a 21 year old male who is in the upper middle class economically. As a student I have a major in Environmental Engineering which is a technical field. I think this may affect my exchange of discourse during the InterChange because I have a background of education. Also, my parents are educated which affects the way I think and respond in a conversation. Additionally, the confidence from having a college education may affect my attitude in the conversation. I think someone's background does affect their participation. Like I stated before, I feel your background in life is what gives you confidence which in turn affects your attitude and participation. My parents are very confident people and that has affected me through the years.

**John:** I am a 25 year old Caucasian male from a middle class family that grew up in a very small Texas community. The community is 99% caucasion so I really have not been exposed to various races, therefore it sometimes affects exchange of discourse during InterChange since every race/people have a somewhat different social background. However, this effect is subtle because I have always been able to communicate or find some relationship that exists. I classify myself as being an amiable person with a great personality with much credit owed to my family background. My family was one that encouraged activity with church and many social events that proved very helpful in communicating with people which led to positive effects on my participations in the InterChange.

**Chi:** I am a 24 year old Chinese from a middle class family. I came from Malaysia, a country half way around the earth from here. Since I had came so far to study in the US, I always struggle hard to do all the best I can in my study. Since my English is not as good and fluency as the American students, I need to read the message I typed and figure out if other students can understand before sending it. Another problem is that I always send long sentences which actually can be replaced with shorter sentences that can give the same information or understanding to other students. I think my knowledge, experience, and interest are three most contributing factors that affect my participation in the InterChange. If there are three conferences going on I would choose the one that I have some knowledge and experience so I would have chances to participate activity. If a group is discussing something that interest me I would join them. The other aspects do not affect much.

**Casey:** I am a 22 year old, middle class, white male that has an apartment in Norman. My goal as a student is to do my best to graduate with a high GPA while having a good time. Except for role as a student, I do not think that these aspects affect the exchange of discourse during InterChange. A person's role

as a student may affect his/her InterChange because a good students may take the InterChange more seriously while a below average student may use the InterChange to goof off. I feel my education, family, spiritual, and social background have nothing to do with my InterChange. This is because this is the only time I have ever used an InterChange, so I really can't apply these things to my experience yet.

**Mike:** I am a 22-year old white student that is completing an undergraduate degree in Zoology at OU. These aspects of social context don't relatively influence my exchange, except for the fact that my interchange should seem to be somewhat educated and intelligent. My religion and social values hold very little importance in my interchange, due to the fact that I consider myself to be very open minded. If anything, my background provides me with a well-rounded attitude and outlook toward conversations.

**K.D.:** I am an international student from Malaysia. I am exposed to computers and such technologies in my fast growing and developing country. From a middle class Chinese family, one of the many multiracial families of my country, I was brought up in a very different culture than those of the west. But all these encourage me to voice out and share my opinions with others. The English language used during the interchange is different from that of my country's. Many unfamiliar words, slang and informal dialogue were used. Making sense of these disrupted me a little. My education and social surroundings promotes expression of thought and speech. Therefore, it helped me to participate in the conversations comfortably. On the other hand, I still have not mastered the English language completely for effective conversations.

**Matthew:** I am a twenty year old, white caucasian, middle class, male Environmental Engineering sophomore at the University of Oklahoma. These aspects are important only to a certain extent in the interchange. These may determine which chat room might enter into. One's background influences their comments about the topics of conversation. Personal background might have relevance depending on the topic in the interchange. This past interchange didn't have anything to do with the family, spiritual, or social life. The only background information relevant to the interchange is one's education. Topics of conversation depend on what background information is used.

**Nancy:** I am a single white female, 21 years of age, from a middle-class family in a smaller Oklahoma town. My high school had a wide range of races and ethnic backgrounds. I think background could play a role in interchanging because I grew up playing on a computer where others may not have had the chance to do so. I feel that this is changing though because now schools are using computers more so everyone has the chance to experience it. I've grown up in a social environment. I have always been around many friends and family. Also, the advanced classes that I took in high school required more open discussion about things than regular classes. This aspect of my life has allowed me to discuss my opinions openly during interchange.

**Yip:** Since I am a Chinese and from Malaysia, English is my second language. So, whenever I wished to communicate with other participants of the interchange, I tended to make sure I had used the correct words and spelling so that they could understand me. The process of thinking for the right words or phrases and spelling had slowed my conversation. As a student of the class, it is my role to participate in the class actively. It had given me the motivation and courage to participate in the computer conversation. My age, gender and socio-economic class did not have much effect on my computer conversation. I think my personal background had effects my participation in the interchange greatly. Since I was from a Malay medium school, my vocabulary and capabilities to communicate in English is limited. Moreover, the society I came from speaks mainly Malay and Mandarin. Therefore, my participation in the interchange was quite limited.

**Nick:** I am a twenty year old white male. I am currently a junior at the University of Oklahoma. I come from a middle-upper class family from Tennessee. I am also from a small town, being raised in the "country" for most of my life. My role as a student in the interchange reflects my social status. Being a junior, I know a lot about the engineering field and OU in general. This leads me to form strong opinions in the conversations on the interchange. Since I was from a small town, I was often the leader of group debates or discussions, a trait which has flowed over into college. My personal background does not affect my participation greatly, except maybe in those ways mentioned earlier. Other factors include my upbringing in a fairly strict Catholic school, which might influence my morality (or lack of) in my interchanges. I like to believe that I have a fairly good conscience--which keeps me from being demeaning or unfriendly on the interchange.

I am one of the four Malaysian students in this section. I am a 20 years old girl and of Chinese origin, I am also a Civil Engineering junior here at the University of Oklahoma. With my background not very much "American." I sometimes felt that I did not really understand some of the terms which were used by my American classmates. For example, a classmate talked about the EPA and what we could do with the EPA on our proposal. However, I did not understand what EPA was all about. So, before I could understand what was the main issues that were being discussed, I was confused. I had to ask what did EPA mean. In short, the terms and language differences could be a factor in making the discussion more difficult to understand.

**Jerry:** I am a white, male, in his early twenties who originates from the Old Northwestern part of the US (Michigan to be exact). I am currently pursuing a degree in the physical sciences and have a strong background in writing and the performing arts. My lower-middle class background affects my performance in the Daedalus exchange in that I have had prior experience in on-line exchange. This allowed me to develop a style of communication that I am most comfortable with. My personal background plays an important role in my participation in this Interchange. Being from a family where computers were introduced to me early on aids in my technical ease. More important in

the actual discussion is the fact that I was taught at an early age that just because you can get away with something does not mean that you should do it. Many people take advantage of their anonymity to become more crass or rude- they type things that they would ordinarily never say in person. I do not.

**Matt:** Because of my age and my social status (29 year old college student) I believe that I was more inclined to participate in this type of interchange. Someone that was not college educated or a older adult might not participate in an interchange like this. If I was living in another country that was less developed than the U.S. having the opportunity to participate in such an exercise might not be possible. Other than the fact that my family background has allowed me to get into college, and to enroll in this class, I do not believe that my personal history has influenced my participation in the Interchange.

**Penny:** I am a female Hispanic student, twenty-one years old, majoring in Chemical Engineering with a Biotechnology option. From physical appearance, I judge most of the students in my class to be about the same age (early twenties). There is one other female student, with the rest of the class being male. There is a mix of races, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic. The students are all engineering or science majors. I feel comfortable conversing with these persons because there are many that I have had in other classes. The male to female ratio does not bother me because in engineering it is a common circumstance. I do not notice a difference in the way the males of the class deal with me either. I do not think that my personal background had any major influence on my participation in the Interchange. My family had never been extensive computer users. We do have a computer, but it is used for basic items (word processing, keeping track of the budget, using the electronic encyclopedia). I grew up in a small farming community, so there was always much more exciting things happening outside than on the computer. I am not intimidated by the computer, and do enjoy using them, but I have never seen the attraction to spending hours in an online chat room.

**Geoff:** Our technical writing class hails a variety of social backgrounds and roles. I am currently a 22 year old senior in chemical engineering from Plano, TX. I come from an upper-middle class, Anglo-Saxon family in suburban Dallas. I typically act as a mentor or leader to my fellow students when we form groups for projects or lab groups. In settings like this, students with similar backgrounds typically form groups together. One aspect that draws these students with similar histories together is the use of language and word choice when typing. They also have typically had similar interests in research topics that are intellectually stimulating, while other students are more interested in purely cut and paste type research where there is little thought involved. Some background and qualities effected participation in the interchange and some did not. Students with high participation were generally extroverts who were well educated. Also, they usually were people with good social skills and were familiar with computers. I do not think that spiritual benefits had anything to do with participation in the project.



**James:** The social status and roles of the students present was very diverse. The students were usually junior level, but had ages ranging up to the late 20's. The racial makeup was also fairly diverse including both Asians and Caucasians. As in any formal class discussion or other situation, it was necessary to take on a neutral role about social status. I think my personality was apparent during the interchange. I enjoy open and lively conversation. This has been influenced by my family, education, etc.

**Kristy:** I am a 22 year old married white female. In May I will be graduating with a BS in Computer Science. I would consider my parents and myself in the middle class. I lived/grew up in Maryland near Baltimore. I'm currently living in Norman, OK to attend school. In previous computer conversations I would say the above attributes played a big part in how I responded during the conversation. This could be attributed to the fact that we were discussing academic matters and generally computer conversations discuss social matters. I think in this example my personal background did not play a part in my participation except my education. Obviously my background affects my interests and my education affects my expertise. In this sense my background influenced my actions during the interchange.

**Jack:** I am a 22 year old, white upper-middle-class male. I feel at ease and comfortable when interchanging in class. I probably feel more comfortable than most because I am from Oklahoma and I find it easy to talk to people. I feel my background has made it easy for me to communicate well in Interchange. I come from a family who is socially active, I suppose this is where I get some of my social skills. I also have been involved in a fraternity where I interacted constantly with others. I have held several positions in high school and in my fraternal organization. These experiences have also helped me to understand people and how to delegate authority.

**Marcy:** I am a 23-year old, white, middle class, female environmental science student from the Midwest. I don't think my social status had any influence on the Interchange discourse. We were all discussing potential group projects, and if anything influenced other students, it was my idea to do the proposal on bioremediation. That considered, my role as an environmental science student gave my opinion credibility. One of the benefits of the Interchange is the fact that we all enter the screen as equals, just names on a screen. Granted, someone might interpret the nationality of a name to form prejudices against someone, but I think conference members are regarded more according to their contribution, not their social context. What people perceive as differences in social status between themselves isn't obvious on a computer screen, so they tend to disregard it altogether. I think my upbringing has made me an outspoken and motivated person, and this affects my interchange participation. I always like to make suggestions, ask others questions, and bring up new aspects of the topic in an attempt to make the Interchange productive. As a woman in a more male-dominated field, I want to appear assertive and knowledgeable, and this also encourages my participation, since it really isn't relevant unless those were the topics of the Interchange.

**Ed:** I am a thirty one year while male graduate student working to earn my Ph.D. in meteorology. I'm earning only the pay of a graduate student (which is technically poverty level). These factors contributed to my interchange in that I used existing research of mine to take the leadership position, that I could advertise my group and see if others would ask to join. I don't believe that my race or income had anything to do with this though. This is a hard question. My education dictated how I answered questions directed t me, and my background as an educator gives me the ability to boil down concepts to a lay public. I don't see how my family or spiritual or social background directly influenced this communication medium.

**Kim:** I was doing interchange as a 22 year-old male student who transferred from Malaysia. I think being an Asian has been a factor for being not active during the interchange. Asians are usually more shy and incapable of expressing themselves. However, this should not been used as an excuse for not being active. Some of the participants have been my friends for long time whereas some are just short term acquaintance. However, the relationship among the participants was not a problem during the interchange. In my previous education, English was not the main language in school. Thus, I am not used to communicate in English. Moreover, my limited vocabularies had restricted me in expressing my ideas--I cannot express my ideas accurately.

**Rod:** 33, Caucasian, lower middle class, male, rural, avid participator. The only way the social status might affect the exchange is if the user is typing in his/her second language. If a person is typing in broken English some people might think that person is uneducated, when in most cases the opposite is true. The only part of my personal background that affects my participation I the interchange, is a defective spelling gene. I was born with a defective spelling gene which causes me to misspell commonly used words. therefore, I am forced to change the way AI write to account for this handicap. I feel the exchange was equipped with a spell checker I would be able to communicate to my full potential.

**Freddie:** My social context is that of a 22 year old male who is graduating with a Mechanical Engineering degree. I am white and consider myself to be a young professional. I do not feel that this background influenced or affected the exchange of discourse during the interchange. The computer is a tool that everyone is expected to use. Therefore, I do not feel that my upbringing or social class has any effects. In this situation, my education had the most influence on my participation. Since I am graduating this spring, I did not want to pursue any leadership roles. I feel that this is beneficial to the project because I will be very busy towards the end of the semester. I am sure that my other traits would have an affect if the interchange dealt with issues that would stimulate my spiritual, family, or social background and they would definitely set my tone.

**Dawn:** My social status and role did not have a direct effect on the interchange, except in how my social status and role relates to computer skills. I am from an upper middle class family. I was first introduced to computers in

second grade at a private school (at the time only the private schools in the area had computer labs). Ever since then I have been working with computers whenever they were available. Having grown up with computers has made me more comfortable working with them as an adult. My gender played a large role in my familiarity with computers. I missed out on learning computer skills from my peer group as a child and teenager. Since most computer social groups were male dominated at that time, I was either not welcome or too shy to introduce myself into such groups. A benefit of this however, is that I did not develop the "hacker" mentality that many of these social groups encouraged. My general personality is that of a shy computer nerd. I am neither talkative nor eloquent. However, since I am familiar with computers, I am perfectly at home working in the interchange. Interchanges and other such conferencing tools put everybody on a more level playing field. Though the internet is not the utopian paradise that some believe it to be, it does weaken some of the barriers between people of different backgrounds.

**Phan:** My social status and role are of a middle-class Asian-American. I am a male college student who is planning to graduate this May. Since Asian-Americans are sometimes stereotyped as being shy and quiet, the exchange of discourse during Interchange helps ease any tension between me and the other person. Sometimes, I feel uncomfortable putting forth my ideas. I believe these social context has a tremendous influence on how I approach other. By having a medium like the Interchange, my communication is more fluid because I do not have to see the actual person's face that I am communicating to. I believe my personal background has everything to do with how I feel towards participating in the Interchange. Since I am graduating this May, I am technically an educated person. I used to work at a restaurant where communication skills were critical for survival. I realized then that any form of communication is valuable. the tricky part is knowing when to use the appropriate one for certain situations. I do not think my family and spiritual backgrounds play important roles in how I feel towards the Interchange. For my social background, I am an officer for two Asian organizations. This value of the Interchange is essential for the two organizations to run smoothly.

**Ron:** I think I was less influenced by social context than I would be in a face to face conversation. When you converse on the computer, it almost seems that you are talking to the computer. I was not as aware of the social status of my classmates in this forum. I think my background plays a large role in how assertive I am during the conversation. I do not feel a need to dominate the conversation, but I do actively participate. I think this is a product of the way I act in any social setting. My education background has given me the confidence to state my opinions while my social background has taught me the value of letting others have their say. I do not feel that my spiritual background was significant because it didn't have any direct connections to the conversation.

**Tad:** I don't think social status and role had much to do with what was going on in the interchange. Our class is diverse, and contains students some of which are social and outgoing, and others which tend to be more reserved and

studious. My role here as someone who was on the more social side contributed to my interchange on Spring Break topics. I had saved up some money, and others who had done so were more apt to discuss this topic, so that contributed in a sense to socio-economic issues.

**Jay:** I am 22 years old and I am a poor, white male. I grew up on a farm in Morison, OK, and me and my family are not very wealthy, but we are financially stable. My major is geography and most of my classmates are engineering majors. Most of the topics during the interchange were to intense for my brain. I did like two of the topics. I am not familiar with most of the engineering courseware. So I could not understand the topics completely. My personal history does not influence my participation in the interchange. I explained earlier that my background concerning computers was nill. As far as family influence, there is none. My parents are farmers and are not familiar with computers. My knowledge of computers has been increased 400% since I have been at OU. I give the credit to OU for developing my computer and interchange knowledge.

**Tracy:** I think that the only aspect of my status and role that affected the conversation is the fact that I am female and even that only made the other students aware of using general terms such as He, His, etc. My socio-economic status had no impact whatsoever on this interchange. The only aspect of my personal background that affected my participation is that I am poorly educated in the subject of computers hindered my participation.

**Thomas:** Some of the aspects of my social status include that I am 19 years old, Caucasian, middle class, male, and I was raised in Oklahoma. These aspects effected the interchange a significant amount. The geography of each student in the interchange effected the interchange because of what each student knew about a subject. An example is that some foreign students did not know about the EPA our what they did. Another aspect of each person that came across in the interchange is the background each student has in the English language. Some foreign students' sentence structures made it more obvious that they had not been trained in grammar their entire lives. I believe my education in computers and education in civil engineering effected my participation in the interchange. The reason the education in computers effected the interchange is the freedom it allowed me conversing with others. The education in civil engineering effected me in the interchange because I could discuss technical topics. I was not limited to generalities of a subject, but I could right to technical specifics of the service that our company is going to supply. My spiritual and family background did not effect me in this interchange. The reason for this is the topic was not controversial. The effects of personal background relate more to the topic instead of the act of chatting on the computer.

**7. WRITER-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIPS: What is your relationship to the other participants in the InterChange? What types of interactions with the other participants do you construct/display in your messages?**

**Terry:** My relationship with other participants is on a friendly, yet somewhat professional level. Friendly since I have met several of my classmates, professional since we are in a classroom and I try to treat everyone respectfully. The function of audience and participants is almost the same as a conventional conversation. However, as an audience member, it's easier to duck out of a conversation you don't find particularly stimulating by simply logging on to another conference. If you suddenly dismiss yourself from a conventional conversation, people will look at you funny and insult you after you leave.

**Phyl:** In writing messages to my peers ( or in reading instructor's comments ), I rely on shared information, concepts, experience, and context (this has been gained via collaborative in-class projects, primarily oral presentation preparations, involving small group discussions of reading material) within which I can discuss topics of technical writing and projects. This affects my comments in as much as I can speak directly to some point without having to include explanatory material; that allows for fact-paced discussions and also provides a means to efficiently focus my thoughts and comments. More specifically, I have prior knowledge regarding the knowledge, personality, and behaviors of classmates, and this influences my InterChange strategy: I prioritize my sending and reading of messages, recognize credibility, and make decisions regarding whom I address. The role is that of peer/collaborator, evaluator, and informer. Specifically, one must monitor the traffic (the messages sent and posted), to evaluate those messages, to question them as necessary, and to respond with new information and/or feedback. The expectation about audience comes from previous in-class experience, including both in-person interaction as well as previous in-class computer conferencing session. To some lesser extent, previous experience with chat-rooms also contributed to expectations.

**Todd:** the function of the audience/participant was what the InterChange was based on. Without the audience you wouldn't expect anything because no InterChange would take place.

**Eric:** My relationship to the other participants is just classmates for the majority of them. Two of them are personal friends. Having two personal friends gives me confidence that there will be someone listening and knowing who I am. I think the role of the audience participating is to respond to my questions and answers because it is part of the class and people want to and are expected to participate in an assignment.

**John:** I would describe my relationship to other participants in the InterChange as being varied. For example, there are a few participants that I have known for quite some time which made interaction with them simple.

Due to group interaction within the class, I have acquainted myself with several participants and feel comfortable which again made interaction fairly easy. However, there are a few participants who are unfamiliar which makes interaction difficult. The role of the audience in InterChange is to familiarize themselves with other participants through interaction so that participants can decide which project best fulfills their desires. The expectation comes from the need to know the skills of the participants to see where they best can contribute to the project, including oneself. The project requires putting together a team with a definite goal. To meet this goal requires coordinating different backgrounds, skills, and learning styles into a cooperative work group that can communicate well with one another.

**Chi:** I think I can communicate with other participants in the InterChange even though I hardly speak to them after class. I am only familiar with a few students. The type of interaction is communication based. We can choose to or not to answer a particular question. In the InterChange we are both the audiences and the speakers. We act as audience receiving information when other speaks. They read and obtain information when we send the message. From the conversations during the InterChange we can estimate an audience's understanding level on a specific topic by the way he/she communicate. We can get to know what kind of information he/she needs.

**Casey:** I am not familiar with most of the participants in the InterChange, so the type of interaction I have with them is limited. I don't talk much, especially to people I don't know well which explains why my interchange is limited. The role of the audience in the InterChange is to converse in order to accomplish an assigned task. This expectation came from years of school where when an assignment is given you must do what you can to get it done.

**Mike:** Today's InterChange involved various categories and subjects for English 3153's proposal. Other students in this class participated by jumping from conference to conference. We exchanged ideas, opinions, and even strategies of how to involve certain information in our proposals. The role or function of the class' InterChange is seen as mostly exchanging of ideas and opinions of different subject matters (ex. lightening on Jupiter, microorganism filters, etc.). The professor of this course, Christyne Berzsenyi, used this class period for this exact reason.

**K.D.:** I have a few classmates in other courses who are also in this class. Three of them are my casual friends but I barely know the rest of the class. I conversed with these three friends quite well in the interchange but I also managed to chat with other new participants. They showed enthusiasm and helplessness. Sometimes, I was really having trouble clicking from one screen to the other because the computer did not allow multiple viewing screens. We talked about the proposal topics and how to approach them. Some were very interesting but one topic was beyond my comprehension. The participants were most friendly and helpful. Participants and audiences were the motivators of the conversation. They brought out questions and solutions for the discussed topics. They were also the source of information that made the

conversations more interesting. They were expected to criticize and comment on the topic they choose to participate in. This way, weak points as well as potentials of the topic can be brought out.

**Matthew:** I am familiar with the other participants in different ways. Some students I am friends with, some students I have in other classes, a few are in the same field of study and others are just classmates that I met in this particular class. I feel I am fairly familiar with all of the students. I have interacted with all of them at some point or another at least once so far. The audience is very important in the interchange. If there wasn't any audience, there wouldn't be any responses to one's comments. Participation from everyone is very important during the interchange. If nobody "chats," there is no interchange.

**Nancy:** I have classes with about 5 or 6 of the other classmates. I think this allows us to interchange more comfortably because we already know each other. I personally feel obligated to respond to everyone who acknowledges me. I think that this expectation comes from conversation tactics. When someone talks to me in conversation, I don't ignore them, so why should I now?

**Yip:** Basically, in the conference room that I had joined, only five persons participated in it. Since the instructor participated in the conference, I tended to be more alert when we had any conversation. I am quite familiar with two of the members, therefore, our interaction was more informal. I was not familiar with Mark, thus I was more formal to him in the conversation. The participants were my information giver and listener of my idea on the proposal of a project that we would be working on. They were expected to give critique or agree on the information I gave and also to provide some idea on the proposals that we would work on.

**Nick:** The only familiarity I have with the other participants is through our small group discussions. I had never met any of them before. Since the start of the class, I am slightly more knowledgeable of a few of them through seeing them on campus or at social events--but none of them are what I would call close friends. The role of the audience in this interchange is for the critique of ideas and documents submitted by the student. This expectation comes from the fact that most of the students are engineers and thus suitable peers to critique classwork.

**Lori:** Those who have participated in this conference room, were course-mates and had not only been this class being classmates for the first time. Therefore, the discussion was more friendly between us and we did not feel shy to ask. Furthermore, the language usage was more informal and made as if we were talking to each other outside class. Thus, I feel doing a proposal with people that one is comfortable which is very important in producing the best work. The role of the audience was like an observer. Some of the students in this class have not found their group members, so by being the observer, one can either find their group members that way. Not only getting into a group, by playing the role of an audience, one can understand what was being

discussed and conclude if the subject matter is of interest to him/her so that he/she can further explore the interest if wanted to.

**Jerry:** I do not know the other participants very well, so I treat the Interchange just as I would any other in-class discussion. Throwing out ideas where I feel they might be useful, and critiquing those that others put forth. As with any other in-class discussion, I try not to seem to arrogant or like a “know-it-all” so as not to (unintentionally) offend the other students. Of course, sometimes I do a better job at this than others and the added anonymity granted by the computer lessens the need for this. The role of the participant in this Interchange is the same as that of a participant in any other in-class discussion--to observe and comment. You hear what others have to say and respond to that just as you do in a verbal setting. The difference being that you can speak up at any time and not wait for the other participants to acknowledge your right to the “floor.” This grants you the ability to say what you wish and your audience the ability to ignore you if they wish--they can read your name and decide not to read your comment.

**Matt:** Most of the students in this class are engineers, or at least in some technical school here at OU. I believe that I am the only electrical engineer in the class. I am also a little older than most of the other students. I do not personally know any of the other participants in the Interchange. Except for this class, I have never even seen any of these students before. I see the function of the audience/participant in this Interchange as a way to communicate ideas in an informal way. Many ideas can be brought out at the same time. Without worrying about being criticized for our ideas. (Very similar to a brainstorming session.) This expectation about the audience came from the idea that we are all students in a similar situation. (we are all taking a class at OU.)

**Penny:** There are about five other chemical engineering students in the class. I have had classes with those particular persons since I began my college experience. I do not know all of them well, but I am familiar enough with them to feel comfortable working in a group with them or speaking aloud in front of them. I have not met any of the other students in the course before, but the common science interest provides a link for all of us. I would not say I am good friends with anyone in the class, but I don't feel isolated in the class either. I view the audience of this interchange as everyone on equal footing with Christyne as a “overseer” that will contribute to the conversation, but also watches each of the conference rooms. This expectation of equality stems from the fact that we are all students in the class with no one person exceptionally skilled in technical writing. Some of us may be more computer literate (i.e. can program or navigate the web better) but Daedalus is a fairly basic “type and send” format that does not require a lot of experience to understand.

**Geoff:** I am familiar with many of the participants involved in this Interchange. Approximately half of our class is composed of chemical engineers that have also been in many of my other classes. We have been in



study and lab groups since our freshman and sophomore years in college, so many of us are very good friends. However, there are still some students in the class that I am completely unfamiliar with. I believe that the familiarity students have with each other and their study habits is the dominant factor in group choice. There are two main roles played by each student during the interchange; that of speaker (writer) and that of the listener (reader). While some students sway more to one side or the other, at some point we all are familiar with both sides. The speakers in the exchange are typically people who are already familiar with the topic being discussed. For the bioremediation discussion, Marcy was very knowledgeable of the topic and began the discussion of it. Other students were content to read all of the information and then respond to particular students when they saw a topic they were interested in. A parallel can be drawn between leaders and the students who are primarily speakers in the interchange. Students who were familiar with the on-line chatting organization (like AOL) were also quicker to respond to the discussion.

**James:** I was familiar with the majority of the other participants in the Interchange. Several of the people are my close friends, so I was tempted to become informal at times because it often felt I was having a conversation with them only. Sometimes people left the conversation and became the audience. Even though these people were not participating in the conversation, they were still witnessing it. The audience role was therefore dynamic. You could become an audience member at any given time by ceasing to converse.

**Kristy:** After being in the class for half a semester I would say I was familiar with the other students. I did not know any of them before the semester and I haven't socialized with them outside of class. We have had many group projects so I am comfortable with the students in this class more so than in other classes. This gave the conversational familiarity from the start which enabled us to interchange comfortably. This also allowed us to start discussing the matter at hand rather than introducing ourselves and going through those formalities. The audience was a group of peers interested in seeking knowledge about possible topics. the audience was a mixture of laypeople and experts in that there were some people with the same or similar majors (experts) and other of different majors (laypeople). While trying to discuss the topics, the knowledge of the subject matter obviously played a big part. We all assumed everyone was interested in finding an interesting topic and a group they could work with. These expectations came from experience at being a student and our own expectations. The instructor also set the tone of the interchange there by influencing the expectations.

**Jack:** My relationship with the other participants is through my major. I talk to them in class and on campus. I have to admit that is the extent of my relationship but conversation between us comes easy. I see the role of the audience/participant in this interchange to be a brainstorming session. Each person gives his or her idea then others comment or add upon this idea.

**Marcy:** There seems to be a relaxed, friendly “we’re all in this together” type of relationship between participants in the Interchange. Since the setting is less formal people tend to be friendlier. Also, since we aren’t face-to-face, it’s easier to be more open and relaxed. Some participants have more familiarity with each other than with others, but it doesn’t seem to isolate anyone. The role of the audience involves actively participating in the Interchange. The purpose is to contribute ideas to the group ideas to the group, so everyone has a responsibility to offer their input. This expectation stems from the fact that the more contributions there are, the more the group as a whole benefits. It defeats the purpose of the Interchange to be a non-participating member of the audience. Participants can also act as mediators, encouraging other members or keeping the conversation relevant to the task at hand.

**Ed:** My relationship to the other participants is that of fellow student. In the computer aided exchange, though, I took on the role of employer. I knew some of my class mates and quickly allowed the first ‘employed’ to help choose the next group members. The audience for my comments and descriptions of our project was the class at large. I was hoping to interest hard working classmates into joining our group. I also had to keep in mind that most class members do not have a background in lightning research or planetary atmosphere, so everything had to be explained simply and clearly.

**Kim:** The interchange was meant for exchanging ideas and the goal can be achieved regardless of the relationships among the participants. The participants are the information providers in the interchange. They are supposed to give opinion or ideas on the topic. In other words, the participants are the backbone of the interchange. Without participation from the audience, nothing can be discussed through the interchange and the purpose of it is not achieved.

**Rod:** I am fairly unfamiliar with the other participants. In fact, I did not know them before taking this class. The interaction is a purely academic, it is part of the class work. The function of the participants is exchange ideas about class work and at the same time practice communication skills. This expectation is clearly spelled out in the course description.

**Freddie:** The relationship to the other participants in the class are predominantly seen as fellow classmates. However, I do consider one or two of them as friends. I have gotten to know everyone in the class through the Professor’s in-class activities. For the most part, the interaction usually consists of finishing an assignment with some social interaction taking place (a little B.S.) The role or function of the audience in this particular Interchange was participation. The expectation of the audience comes from everyone that is participating. I know I just ran these two answers in a circle but it is valid. I felt the Interchange went very well. Everyone expected that a topic would be presented and followed by a question and answer format. The expectation comes from the students wanting to decide on a topic stimulates interest and a desire to become a part of a group.

**Dawn:** I am not close friends with anyone in the class, however, I have come to know several people in the class. From group work, I know by sight most of the people in the class. However, I did not know many of their names, thus I could not recognize everybody in the interchange. My interaction in the interchange mostly consisted of silently watching and answering questions. In this interchange, the main purpose was to get into groups for the project proposal. Those who were not in a group looked around and asked questions. Those who were already in a group answered questions and discussed the project. Since the conference rooms were arranged by project, the expectation was set that if you wanted to ask a question about a specific project you could do so on the room set aside for that project.

**Phan:** The role or function of the audience/participant in this Interchange is to get to know the people around you in more of a semi-personal way. This Interchange forces us to communicate with each other no matter what. I believe Interchange has made my classmates more aware of each other. Instead of associating names with faces, we can associate personality with faces after the Interchange. Ultimately, the audience is very important in the Interchange. The audience gives feedback to the main communicator. the main communicator can make minor adjustment according to the level of audience that he or she is communicating with.

**Ron:** Several of the participants were friends I have from other classes. About half of the discussion group, consisted of people I either did not know, or had recently met. All of the participant were peers of mine. This interchange serves as a type of surrogate to spoken communication. The audience actively reads what you have to say because they know they will be expected to respond. This parallels a spoken conversation where people become accustomed to the expectation that they need to respond to each other. The audience basically fulfills the same role that people fill in normal conversation. This role is to be an active participant in determining the course of the conversation.

**Tad:** My relationship to most of the participants is strictly on a classmate basis, however I did know some of the students on a more personal level, such as Mary and Eric. Because of this, we had a friendly, conversational aspect of our interchange and discussed our topics and plans more freely. We were also able to make snide remarks about each other's plans without the worry of having hurt someone's feelings. The role of the audience in this participant might be to just gather ideas. Some of the people obviously weren't interchanging, perhaps because the topics weren't of interest to them or maybe just because they would rather sit back and watch other peoples' conversations. The participant role was to generate ideas and thoughts about how to study for the midterm, or in my case, where to go and what to do on spring break!

**Jay:** the other participants are my peers and classmates. I am not very familiar with any of the participants. Although, I have spoken to almost everyone briefly. Each person is looking for a group to join to help create a

required proposal. It seems to be a personal preference for which group to join. There is not a designed expectation about the audience. We are all college students trying to pass another class.

**Tracy:** My relationship to the other participants is that of classmates and project partners. My interaction with these students is restricted to subject matters dealing with Technical Writing. The role of the audience is to evaluate the interchange information and to decide whether or not they would like join any one particular group based on their project description.

**Thomas:** My relationship with the other participants is fairly close. I knew most of the students from having other classes with them. I was drawn in the interchange to student who I knew from past experiences. This also effected my responses because I knew the background of the person I was talking to. I am a civil engineering student and I used more technical jargon with students who were in the same discipline. The role of the participant in the Interchange is to brainstorm for ideas. There needs to be constant flow of ideas in order for the interchange to occur. The participant must take the initiative to express ideas without holding back. This expectation comes from my past experiences with interchanges. In the past, Interchanges have been slow and laborious because people think about what they want to say. If the participant is not quick in responses to the other participants quickly lose interest in conversing.

#### **8. PERSONA: What do you see as the role or function of the participant in classroom InterChange?**

**Terry:** Hopefully I represented myself in a polite, happy, humble way. Or in a way that would make everyone else think I would work hard despite having leached off of their creativity.

**Phyl:** My persona was rather subdued because of my passive purpose, and I suspect that any persona that I conveyed by this was a matter of each student's own interpretation of an inquisitive persona. They may have found it promising, that I showed interest in their proposals, or they may have noted the directness of my questions and judged that I was using an ability to focus upon the subjects at hand.

**Todd:** The persona I took was very light. I didn't know my audience.

**Eric:** I represented myself in the InterChange as a leader because I was in charge of the topic we were talking about and knew the most about the topic.

**John:** As previously stated, I had decided on a project before participating in the InterChange therefore I tried to answer questions regarding messages sent to the conference room that was our project topic. With other conference rooms that I visited I represented myself as a lay person because I was very unfamiliar with the different ideas.

**Chi:** I represent myself most of the time but sometimes I need to refer to some authority to make some concrete statement just to convince the audience.

**Casey:** During the InterChange I constructed a persona that showed that I was knowledgeable which left an impression that I would work for the group.

**Mike:** I represented myself as a simple participant in an educated conversation of technological subjects.

**K.D.:** I represented myself as an eager and hardworking student seeking information and if possible, acceptance to the group. I also tried to be polite. All these give a positive and friendly impression that most participants preferred to chat with.

**Matthew:** I don't know how well I represented myself in the interchange. I basically just said what I thought about each topic of the chat rooms. I discussed what could or couldn't be done with a couple of the topics.

**Nancy:** I took on the persona as an expert. That is, I explained my research topic that others didn't know much about. I think I might have made it sound a little too complex and scientific and scared others off because they didn't know about the topic.

**Yip:** Since I am a Civil Engineering undergraduate and the proposals discussed on was on concrete bridge, I could understand the discussion earlier. It was easier for me to give my idea in technical terms. It was also easier for me to convince the others. It was easy for me to do so because most of us (three out of five) are civil engineering undergraduate and therefore it was adequate for us to use technical terms with little explanation.

**Nick:** I represented myself in a sarcastic tone, to try and get a humorous response from the others in the interchange. This is my usual way to begin conversations with strangers--it takes away some of the uneasiness in the first conversation.

**Lori:** I represented myself as an active group member, wanting to contribute my ideas and clearing up some of the doubts of my group members. I felt it was necessary for me to be as someone who needs to start the conversation going. My fellow Malaysian counterparts felt shy in asking what was going on.

**Jerry:** I constructed myself no differently than I would have if I were sitting in a classroom talking to the other participants. To borrow the words of a great philosopher, "I am what I am." Whether I am sitting at a console or standing before a crowd I conduct myself in the same manner--direct, confident, and questioning.

**Matt:** I represent myself as a electrical engineering student that did not know anything about the subject, but was willing to help if they would accept me into the group. All of the topics in the Interchange were outside of my field of expertise so I tried to contribute to the conversation the best that I could from an novice point of view.

♦ **Penny:** The persona I constructed for myself was a casual tone that tried to convey my interest in a topic and desire to join the group. I don't think I expressed my desire or ability to contribute the best way possible because my first choice in groups did not allow my participation. I think this exclusion changed my persona a bit. I change to a more direct tone to discover a new group that was available to me. I helped form a new group with the other people interested in the initial idea, but also not part of the original group.

**Geoff:** I attempted to construct a persona that was very similar to my personality. I have been told that I am a very serious minded individual who likes to add small amounts of humor to any topic. I attempted to present this persona by discussing the serious aspects of the project like cost analysis, and then adding a few humorous comments to lighten the mood. The remainder of the persona was constructed naturally with my word choice.

**James:** I constructed an assertive personal in my discourse. I knew what group I wanted to be in before I began the conversation, so I was looking to overcoming obstacles that stood in the way.

**Kristy:** I tried to represent myself as a very computer literate student. I wanted to accomplish a couple things by pointing out my expertise. First, I wanted to express my assets and explain why I was a good candidate for a group. Second, I hoped to find a group where computer programming knowledge would be useful thereby adding to my interest in the topic. My attempts with this strategy were unsuccessful in the beginning until I decided with another student to create our own topic about computer programming.

**Jack:** The persona I constructed was one of a passive nature. I felt this was the best way to get something accomplished. The best thing to be during this interchange was a good listener or reader. I did comment and throw in my two cents but it is always good to get everyone's view in a situation such as this.

**Marcy:** I tried to communicate in such a way that others would perceive me as knowledgeable, motivated, and hard-working. I wanted to be seen as an asset to any group, and assemble a group of people with similar goals. Also, by suggesting the topic of bioremediation and my experience with it, I established myself as one of the "leaders," which is a role I am more comfortable with in group situations.

**Ed:** I presented myself as an employer who knew what he wanted to study and who he wanted to work for him. I did this so the group would get a sense of leadership. I also wanted prospective group members to have confidence in my vision for the class project.

**Kim:** My persona was a follower in the group. I am always a follower and never the leader, but most of the times, I am a good assistant of the leader. I always think that I am capable of being a leader but I am not the kind of person who likes to lead. Thus I rather be a follower and helping the leader using my ability.

**Rod:** I represented myself as a team player, not a leader or a follower, just as someone trying to add the success of the project.

**Freddie:** The persona that I projected was that of a tired intelligent graduating engineering student that wants school to end. I did this because I felt it would put me in the group as the role of a team player. I also feel that in choosing a group one must be honest with the others so they know what to expect.

**Dawn:** At first I did not use a persona at all, since I did not say anything, just listened to what the others were saying. The persona I used when starting up my own group was informative and friendly. I needed to disperse information quickly to prospective group members. In addition, a friendly atmosphere was needed to keep people who are not as familiar with computers from being intimidated.

**Phan:** Reflecting on the Interchange, the persona I constructed in my discourse is of an excited persona finding a new toy. I am very interested in knowing more about the Interchange. This type of computer discourse could be a real plus in my communication with other people. I feel I can be direct with another person using the Interchange, especially with the people I do not know as well.

**Ron:** Formally, I did this because the situation was a formal one. The conversation occurred in a class room setting and was concerned with a major homework problem. The conversation also involved people I did not know well.

**Tad:** I represented myself as I normally do in class: open to ideas, free conversationalist, and friendly with a bit of sarcasm sometimes. I don't really like to change my persona when behind the screen because I might tend to misrepresent my ideas, as well as myself.

**Jay:** I represented myself as an educated geographer. I am proud to be a graduate in the geography field. I believe that I will be a great asset to Oklahoma in the field of hydrology. I showed an interest in the rain pollution filter topic.

**Tracy:** I represented myself as a layperson eager to learn about other topics, because I was not very familiar with any of the other issues being discussed.

**Thomas:** The persona I presented during this discourse was of a knowledgeable student in civil engineering. This way they would not feel as if

they had to start an entirely new project. I represented myself this way to appeal to other students. I was trying to show the other students that I had knowledge.

**9. STYLE: Describe your language style in the Interchange? What factors affected your stylistic choices?**

**Terry:** My language style was mostly interrogative as I was trying to familiarize myself with the different proposal topics as well as some of the participants. Once I made a decision, I became a recruiter, surfing other sites for undecided souls who may complement our effort.

**Phyl:** My style was formal; my content was focused, brief, hopefully efficient and effective as a means to acquiring the information that I sought to collect from my fellow classmates, and hopefully it was also a means to provide ideas and draw out more focused thinking from my classmates about their proposals.

**Todd:** Hypertext was used so my style was very informal.

**Eric:** In the InterChange, my language and content were very relaxed because it was like we were all just talking and not trying to write anything we would have to turn in for a grade.

**John:** My language style in the InterChange was informal and casual because it involved corresponding with other classmates while my content focused on being inquisitive and informative depending on my knowledge of the conference room.

**Chi:** I don't care about capitalizing the first letter in the beginning of a sentence. I don't correct spelling errors if sentence is easily understood. I seldom use short form. Language content in the InterChange could be of any thing but I seldom send provocative messages.

**Casey:** At first my language style was more formal with business-like content. Then, InterChange began and after a while my language became more casual. This was due to the fact that I became more familiar with the people who were participating in the InterChange. Also, the groups were forming which made some type of bond for the members.

**Mike:** My language style and content of the InterChange was informal, as though I were talking with my friends or family.

**K.D.:** The language style I used was simple as in my dialogue. This is good for fast scanning and understanding. The context of my conversations were mostly suggestions, information and inquiries of my topic of interest.



**Matthew:** My language style during the interchange was nothing more than conversation level. The content of what I wrote dealt with the topics. Some chat rooms I was able to write others I wrote two sentences and I left the chat room.

**Nancy:** I took on a relaxed conversational style. I commented on my spelling a couple of times because I am a horrible speller and I had the time to examine what I had written because I didn't have much activity on my topic.

**Yip:** The language style that I had used in the Interchange was informal. I referred to my group members by their first name. The content of the Interchange was mainly discussed on what my group member and I would write for our proposals.

**Nick:** My language style is sarcastic and humorous, as I have mentioned before. I use this as an icebreaker to begin conversations of a more technical (as the class demands) nature.

**Lori:** The language that was used was short and informal. The sentences that were constructed were sometimes not grammatically correct and not in full sentences. I feel that this was alright as all of us are friends and being informal creates a not very serious environment to work in. Content of the interchange was not very much as most of the time, the issues were not synchronous--the questions asked were not immediately answered.

**Jerry:** I treated this discussion as a very rapid exchange of e-mail messages. So I used the same style I would have in that particular format--a formal voice and avoided the use of cute, trendy gimmicks such as emoticons and shortened spellings (like "thanx").

**Matt:** Most of the other students were very informal with their language style and content, but I carefully composed each sentence that I typed. Once I had typed the sentence I would reread it and check the spelling and grammar. Before I would submit the statement to the group I would check the most recent statements being submitted and if my statement was still relevant I would then submit it, otherwise I would erase the statement and read until I had formed another opinion and start the process over again.

**Penny:** My language style was informal. I used some slang terms and abbreviations (OK, unit opps, etc.). The content was mostly questions for information, or comments on my likes and dislikes toward the topic. The Interchange was to find out what other people wanted to do for a project and who could contribute to the project.

**Geoff:** The language style used in the interchange was not very complex considering the subject matter being discussed. While some references were made to definition and availability of research, for the most part a layperson would be able to follow the conversation. This was primarily due to the fact

that it was somewhat easy to discern which interests the students had, but rather difficult to access their talents, work habits, and individual abilities.

**James:** My language style was formal in the interchange. I did not use any slang or type in some sort of shorthand. I typed more formally than I would speak because it is easier to catch grammatical errors in writing than in speech. The content of the interchange conversation was focused on the topic of the chat room. In this case, our chat room was devoted to discussing Bioremediation.

**Kristy:** My language and content were basically the same as if I were speaking face to face with the person. I tried to inform the other members of my ideas and positions. I wanted to be clear in what we needed and how the other students could be helpful.

**Jack:** I didn't pay very close attention to my language style or the content of my Interchange. Therefore, I could call it very informal. I did use a few technical terms but nothing the average engineering student wouldn't understand.

**Marcy:** My style was rather informal, even though I can't bring myself to not capitalize or use punctuation like many do with computer communication. The content of my input was brief, simply because it gets tiring to type out something I can say in a few seconds. I wasn't consciously concerned at all with style and content, just saying what I had today in the most efficient way.

**Ed:** My language style still used complete sentences, but they were brief sentences. I tried to form short sentences whenever possible to get the minimal idea out in the minimal time. I resisted sentence fragments or strange abbreviations (which I use in email sometimes) because the content of my subject (lightning research) is already difficult, and I did not know how experienced the class was in communicating in that way. I also wanted to keep an air of professionalism since I was the self appointed group leader and was looking for hard working class mates to work with me.

**Kim:** Because the interchange was an informal occasion, it is more like a conversation. Therefore, the language used was casual. Grammar and structure of the sentence were not emphasized. In addition, during the interchange, abbreviations were used so that we did not have to spend too much time on typing.

**Rod:** My language style is similar to the Lone Ranger's sidekick Tonto. I did not participate nearly as much as I wanted to. If we were speaking instead of using the interchange I could have contributed more to the discourse.

**Freddie:** My language style and content during the interchange was exactly the way I would talk to anyone in the classroom. It was relaxed and semi formal.

**Dawn:** I did not use the style I usually use in chatrooms. When doing on-line chat, I usually talk in short sentences using abbreviation, symbols, and odd spellings to express myself. I was hesitant to talk chat style since it would confuse or alienate most people in the class. The content was mostly brief and informative since the group started much later than the others. Information as to the general nature of the project and what people were needed for it had to be dispersed quickly.

**Phan:** The language style is probably semi-formal in the Interchange. The content is not as structured as a written paper. I believe this style is kind of like a drafting style. The Interchange gives an opportunity to explore ideas that may be good or bad without the feel of looking bad. The Interchange helps me reason out my thoughts and make a conclusion on whether I should progress further on my thoughts or not.

**Ron:** My style was to the point. I did not attempt to use bit words or long eloquent sentences. My writing read very much like a spoken conversation. I asked questions I needed to know the answers to and proposed ideas I thought would be helpful.

**Tad:** As said before, my language style was very conversational and friendly. I switched over to the spring break conference because it was a little more interesting to me, and because of that the tone was very happy and easy to adjust to. My language content had some smart-alecky comments but did my comments but did my best not to offend anyone in the class.

**Jay:** My language style was common. The content was very laid back. I tried to converse on the computer like I would in an oral conversation. I gave descriptions of my topic and then asked questions about the other topics. I guess that is all a person can do in order to interchange knowledge.

**Tracy:** My language style was rather relaxed, but not very colloquial. The content was mainly questions with a few observations where appropriate.

## QUESTIONNAIRE TWO<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Communicate what you think are your responsibilities toward other users during InterChange. What makes you say so? Why?

**Ron:** In order to have an interchange I think everyone involved has a responsibility to participate. This is because the interchange serves as a forum for ideas to be expressed quickly among the many different people. The more ideas that are expressed, the more these ideas stimulate other people to think of new ideas. I think everyone should participate so that everyone involved will get the most out of the experience. There is also a responsibility to respond to questions people ask. This helps to insure that no one feels left out of the interchange, and will make it more likely for everyone to communicate. People will not feel that their ideas will be ignored and consequently they will feel more inclined to participate.

**K.D.:** The most important part of the Inter-Change is to keep the topic of discussion from diverging because many people tends to forget their topic of discussion after a while, especially when they are typing and reading the response from the computer screen. Therefore, every user of any Inter-Change are responsible for keeping the topic in focus whenever someone go too far from the topic. Every member of any Inter-Change should take part actively and contribute their valuable views to the discussion group. As more people take part, more ideas and criticism are brought out. This would create an interesting and thorough discussion. All members of any Inter-Change should present themselves decently. Many loose their temper during the discussion and start using abusive words without considering the other. This would intimidate others and the discussion would not proceed smoothly. On the other hand, members of the Inter-Change are also responsible for discouraging any abusive language and contents in the discussion.

**Keng:** During the interchange, most people do not say the true things. Although they are trying to point out the really thing. I still do not believe in it. This is because I do not know what is the background of that person. He or she can say anything he or she likes. There is no punishment to do that. Last time, I used to play the IRC interchange. I found that most of the people try to cheat others especially the opposite sex. Because of all these reasons, I give all the real story to the users. What he or she asks for I will give them. There is no reason to hide the true. This the responsibility I will give.

**Kong:** I think our main responsibility during the interchange is to be an information provider. Like group discussion, it is important that we provide brief but accurate information to the other participants. It is also important

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<sup>2</sup> This transcript was compiled from unedited student responses to this two-item questionnaire, which was an optional, extra credit assignment completed by ten students.

to exclude irrelevant information as this might cause misunderstanding. In addition, we are suppose to be active during the interchange so that the conference will be overwhelmed by ideas. In short, as a participant, we should take part actively to encourage exchange of ideas (which is the main purpose of the interchange), provide brief, accurate, and relavant information about the discussion topic so that the interchange will be productive.

**Penny:** My responsibility to other involved with the same InterChange is to be as polite as I would be talking face to face. The interchange is just another medium for communication, it shouldn't change the fact that you're talking to another persona that deserves the same respect you would want. Because of this I have the responsibility to answer any questions or make any comments with the same amount of courtesy and same mannerisms that I would if I was facing the individual.

**Chi:** I think my responsibilities are to use the proper language, spelling, and grammar. I say so because from my experience other students on the interchange will get confused and annoyed if we use the wrong language, word or grammar.

**Yip:** I think that the responsibilities toward the other user of interchange is that we must:

- a) Maintain a good environment for everyone to chat. This is because good environment will provide a more persuasive situation for everyone to join. Personally, I myself don't like to chat in an interchange that I don't think suitable for me.
- b) Avoiding using unproper sentences or words during conversation. This is because that if we did so, the other user of the interchange might have bad perception on us and might lost his confidence or belief on us. Using unproper words might lead to a tense situation where the other user might think differently than what we mean and the misunderstanding is the main causes that might lead to a tense situation.
- c) Question that been ask should not be too personalize. This is because some people don't like others that they don't really see know about their personal life and this is one of my behavior too.
- d) Sincere, true and honest. The main reason is to avoid misunderstanding. No one likes to be cheated by other. They might feel that they were betray if someone cheat them. Another thing is that, there is no point to use interchange if everyone is telling lie and everyone knows that all the others were telling lie. Therefore to avoid such situation we must be honest in interchange although no one can see or hear us. (sometimes smart/white lie is hard to be avoid because we sometimes need to keep something to ourself and don't want to hurt others.)
- e) We must reply to the others insteaded of letting them wait for us for hours. If we are busy we need to tell them so that they won't wait for us and waste their time.

**Terry:** I think the responsibilities toward other users can be summed up in two: be civilized. No obscenities/vulgarity, no sexual conversation (with a few exceptions such as a harmless joke if you know the person you're talking to doesn't mind it. Just be respectful. You risk your own reputation during the interchange if you don't follow these rules. Nobody wants to talk a jerk!

**Phan:** I believe one of my responsibilities toward other users during interchange is a mutual respect for each other. Although we are not bound with restriction on what we can say, it is important to keep the perspective of the other user in mind in order to have a productive conversation. Another responsibility is to be free with my writing. My focus should be on the interchange. I should not be too occupied with flowery writings.

**Lori:** In my opinion, responsibility toward other users are very important. Although they will not know our real identity, there is a responsibility that we as users communicate with good intention. The most problem that many users face is privacy. Users often get email they do not desire. Some emails may contain offensive materials. As user, the most important responsibility is to use the information highway with the correct purpose. The information highway is a good source for doing research and get messages across to another person.

**2. Explain what you think is a successful InterChange. What is going on during the InterChange? Who's doing it? To whom? Why? How? Contrast this description to an unsuccessful InterChange. What makes it unsuccessful?**

**Ron:** A successful interchange occurs when a discussion leads to more ideas or takes less time than would happen if the computer were not used. In order for this to happen everyone must participate. The interchange provides an opportunity for more than one person to speak at one time. This allows the conversation to flow more rapidly and also means that everyone can express their ideas if they want to. The biggest problem with the interchange is that people sometimes feel that they could accomplish more by just talking to the group they are conversing with. This happens when people are participating in an interchange with a small group of people. I think the interchange is best suited to large groups where people would have to fight for time to speak, or to groups of people who do not know each other well and might feel more comfortable conversing over the computer.

**K.D.:** I consider an Inter-Change successful if all the members participate effectively and feel satisfied after the discussion. This is because only full and effective participation of all members can bring out the best discussion. By doing so, members should be able to express their emotions as discussion. By doing so, members should be able to express their emotions as well as their feelings during the Inter-Change. This could be achieved by using emotions,

phrases or even slang. They should contribute their own views and critiques. This will stimulate more provocative views from others. The discussion might not be formal but it must be understood by all members. This includes other participants from around the world as Inter-Change itself enables international communications.

**Keng:** For a successful interchange, I have pointed some of the points in question one. Other than giving the true, I think we should do what we have promised in the interchange, most people can say anything but can not do. If I promised to send a card or a email to him or her, I will do that. What is going on in the interchange is everyone try to say whatever to gain the confidence from others. The result was disappointed. People start to lose confidence toward the interchange. Nobody is trying to use the interchange. For example, my friend used to play interchange, he wanted to know more girls in the world. He always asks them to send photo to him so that he know they faces. If he found that the girl he uses to talk was not as beauty as he was imagine. He starts to forget the girl. What is the point? Almost everyone is wearing a mask inside the interchange.

**Kong:** In my opinion, I think a successful interchange must have a group of active participant. The participant must be exchanging ideas, opinions, and information constantly so that the purpose of the discussion is achieved.

**Penny:** A successful Interchange is one in which all comments are responded to and all questions are answered. It is one where no one persona gets left out, by design or accident. It should work the same as a conversation. All members present should be allowed to talk to any of the other members. An interchange to me is an open forum that anyone may join. An unsuccessful Interchange is where people just want to "listen in" so to speak. It is where everyone is waiting for someone else to say something so you end up watching a blank screen. Foul language or offending comments also make for an unsuccessful Interchange.

**Chi:** A successful interchange should get everyone to participate actively in the InterChange. For me the InterChange is a chance for those who can't speak well (like me) to get involve in communication. Besides it is also important to have everyone giving responses simultaneously to different people on the interchange. On the interchange there are a lot of message from many participants. There are questions, comments, responses, and jokes. Those who are more active always send more messages and responded faster to other participants or only to a very specific participant. I think everyone is doing this in the interchange and sometimes those who are not on the right topic would be leave out easily. On the other hand if an interchange has some passive participants it would be unsuccessful. Insufficient responses make the interchange appear slow, tiring, and dry. Questions will not be answered properly or jokes are not responded with laughter. I would rate that as unsuccessful interchange.

**Yip:** To me, I think that a successful interchange should have the following:

- a) Use a lot of emoticons. This is because we can express our feeling to them in much easier way and they can understand it in a much easier way. This can be use by every user of interchange but use less when you are in something that is a more serious type of chat. Remember that we should not over use it or misuse it too. An unsuccessful one is the one which overuse. did not use at all or misuse of emoticons.
- b) it should be interactive, informative and educative. This will make the interchange a more enjoying one rather than just a boring chat. This applied to all interchange users. This can be achieved if every one talk about what they think and feel free to make and accept critics. A unsuccessful one would be very boring and people will end up chatting some think that out the main topic or left the interchange in a short time after they join.
- c) social with others. This lets us to learn and know more about others cultures too. It can be a beneficial pastime if part is included. This is applicable to every user too. If we not social with others the interchange would be unsuccessful one. A unsuccessful interchange is one that one would ask question and the other party will only give a short brief answer or not answer. This means that it is only one way direction of communication.
- d) exchange information and meet people of common interest. This is only successful when people from the same interest chat in type same channel and they won't feel boring but if the other people who are not in the particular interest, they might felt left out. If people don't wanna to exchange information and chat in the wrong interest channel they would feel the interchange is lousy and boring. Another think is that the interchange would be a failure too, if there are too many interest in the same channel. There would lead to a misunderstanding and the interchange would be kind of junk pieces of information which not really related.

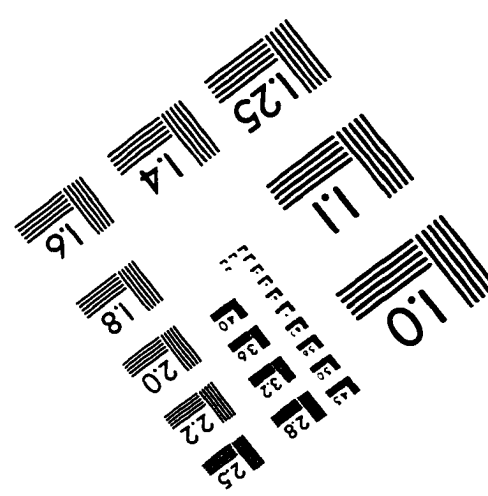
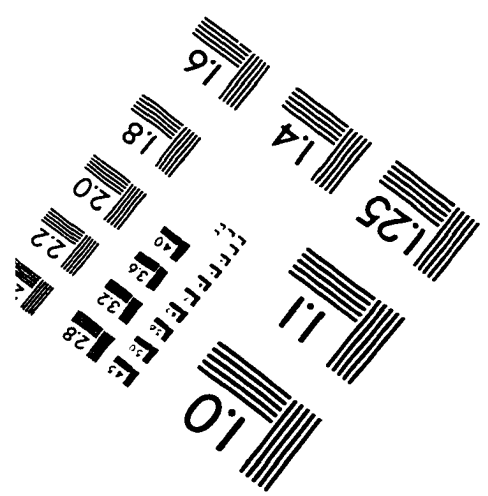
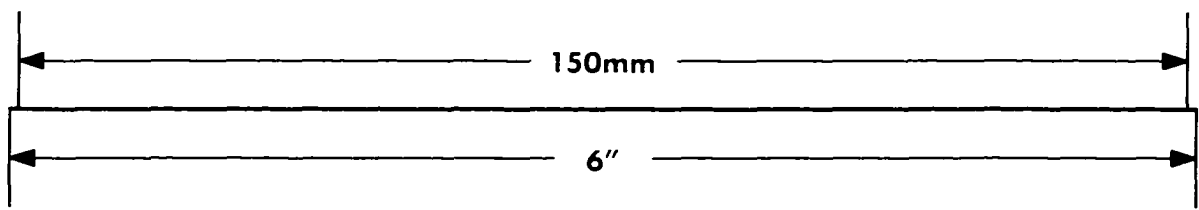
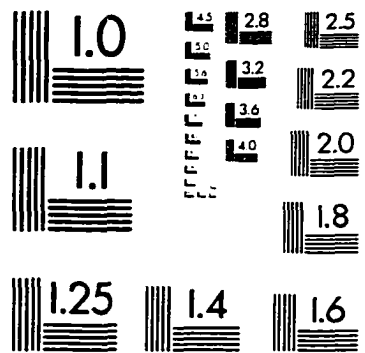
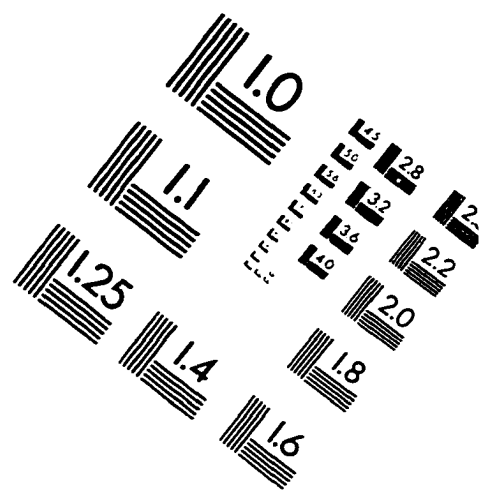
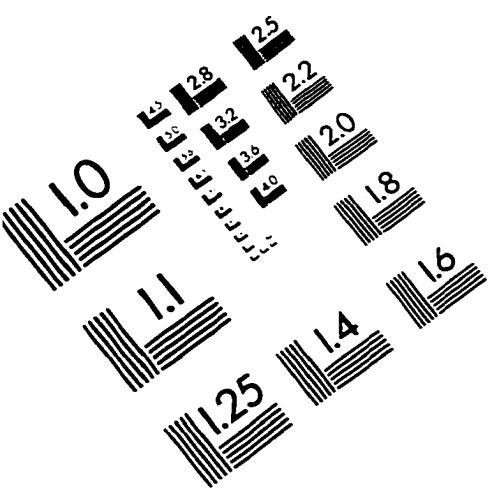
**Terry:** A successful interchange is one in which your predetermined goals are achieved. In our class, the goals were to find a group for our proposal projects, or something else class-oriented. When I'm just playing around in the chatrooms, my goal is just to make friends and talk to people. During the class interchanges, we did accomplish our goals with time to spare and we also joked around a bit during it. It could be unsuccessful , though, if you joke around too much, and waste all your time. In a classroom interchange, we all had a common goal so it was not difficult to get into a conversation relating to our subject. On chatrooms, however, it is more difficult to "get in" the conversation so you sometimes have to just interrupt.

**Phan:** a successful Interchange is when I fill that I a progress toward something. This means that I have an idea of how the other user thinks. I might start out by asking questions that seem irrelevant but crucial in the process of building familiarity. An unsuccessful Interchange is when the user and I do no agree on anything at all.



**Lori:** A successful interchange is one that can achieve the goals of getting information to where it should be and to the correct users. Another goal of the interchange is sending facts and accurate message across to the user at the other end. Today, users of information highway comprise of people of all ages. Problems arise when minorities such as children below certain age exploit web pages that are limited to adults only. The University of Oklahoma has taken action such as limiting the users to certain information on the internet.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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