

Mapping Disciplinary Values and Rhetorical Concerns through Language: Writing Instruction in the Performing and Visual Arts

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Abstract: Via interview data focused on instructor practices and values, this study sought to describe some of what performing and visual arts instructors do at the university level to effectively teach disciplinary values through writing. The study's research goals explored how relationships to writing process in visual and performing arts support disciplinary participation in ways that are particular to that domain of practice. Using qualitative analysis to highlight recurring language in a series of interviews, the study engaged the following questions: how and why do instructors of performing and visual arts help students access a deeper understanding of art making or disciplinary identity through writing? What language is used to describe disciplinary or rhetorical concerns within the visual and performing arts? What particular purposes do texts usually address? And how do these texts exist as a key part of a disciplinary discourse? Working with a hypothesis that visual and performing arts use writing as a *component* part of disciplinary praxis as opposed to a tendency of much mainstream writing studies pedagogy and teacher training where writing *process* is frequently aimed at the creation of a final *written product*, the study found that writing in the visual and performing arts does in fact use writing in ways that uniquely serve to support relationships between multiple modalities of expression (written, visual, tactile etc). Implications for writing studies generated from the study look at the importance of metacognitive reflective work, individuated instructional techniques, and multimodal or cross-disciplinary approaches to writing.

In his seminal work of visual analysis, *Camera Lucida* (1980), French literary theorist Roland Barthes traces what he sees as an historical difficulty for writers and philosophers when writing about visual media. Musing on photographs in particular he asserts, "Whatever it grants to vision and whatever is its manner, a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see" (p. 6). He explains that because the composition itself remains a "referent," the nature, form, or truth of a photograph is elusive and symbolic; because of this, photography is, for him, uniquely compelling. He continues his line of inquiry by describing overall, how little scholarship has been appropriately written about photography as a medium for exploring "signs" and "referents" given its proposed materiality and potentially obscured truth. By tracing the ways in which writing falls short of the task of appropriately addressing photographs so often, he asserts his own exigence for writing a book on the subject; Barthes writes, "the photographs which interest me... give me pleasure or emotion" (p.7) and in a sense, in this moment, assures the reader that subjectivity, pleasure and emotion are integral parts to understanding the world of experience, even in critical writing practice.

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Like Barthes, I too became interested in photographs as an undergraduate art student—in the way they are both innately emblematic and elusive, the way they generate meaning by accessing subjective response in the viewer, the way they manipulate time and make form of light. Pushing back against the ever-popular notion that "art speaks for itself" and is distinct from linguistic expression, this study sought to investigate further how the modality of language and writing speaks within and for the visual and performing arts. And much like how Barthes wonders about the realm of the "spectrum and punctum" of images, as a writing instructor, I wonder where my own understanding of writing studies in its most general sense best engages the sometimes competing concerns of subjective vs. critical analytical practice via composition. Barthes's work, in the way it concerns itself with understanding the visual, served here as a basis for my inquiry into how effective disciplinary writing occurs in the visual and performing arts.

Rather than just considering writing *about* art making, this study focused on understanding how university level instructors of the visual and performing arts use writing specifically and language generally to access alternative disciplinary exigencies. In the spirit of Barthes, I engage with several looming questions: How do these instructors facilitate a process of "artistic" identity formation for students *via* writing? How does such instruction take place? What unique disciplinary values in the visual and performing arts directly impact the writing process?

The secondary aim of this study was to address what the visual and performing arts, in their disciplinary relationship to writing, might have to offer to writing studies. In particular, in considering differences in the disciplines of writing studies vs. visual and performing arts, it is clear that while art-making domains frequently see writing as a component part of a larger process connected to the making of art objects, conceptual concerns, or perceived identity, writing studies frequently utilizes the writing process to arrive at a written or "textual" "product," making writing itself the "object." This is by no means a suggestion that writing studies merely values production or that writing classrooms do not access a variety of modalities to foster learning with increased regularity, nor an attempt to position writing studies as a discipline of singular, monolithic structure with a uniform set of concerns. Rather, I merely suggest that the most common, assessed, "product" of the discipline continues to be a written/textual one. These differing relationships to writing exigencies, made clear in the results of this study, may be worthy of further inquiry as we more closely align writing studies to multimodal or cross-disciplinary modes of composition.

Common Ground

Aware, from my own experience, that the disciplines of the visual and performing arts often rely heavily on writing to inform, supplement, support or engender art-making abilities, this study focused on identifying instructor practices and values, to articulate some of what performing and visual art instructors do at the university level with written communication in particular ways to effectively teach disciplinary values. Moreover, the study sought to discover how they assist their students in crafting their own practices, values or identities within the community.

As a researcher, I arrived with some inherent assumptions about what values underlie the work done in art-making communities. Those assumptions are indicative of larger shared cultural assumptions about art making in general. Constructs about art being a part of the realm of intuition, emotion, the physical, or the ephemeral solely or in general, were reflected in the ways participants uniformly spoke in interviews about misconceptions of art and artists as being non-analytical or non-critical and having no real use for written language.

Not only did the study reveal the developed ways in which visual and performing arts use writing but also it revealed that the two domains (writing studies and visual and performing arts) in fact share many commonalities in terms of the ways we approach writing instruction. A clear focus on analytical, inquiry-guided, reflective composing structures became evident throughout. Additionally, the way we see the privileging or under-privileging of our own disciplines as well as the locations of those disciplines within

the academy itself shared marked similarities (Kostelnick, 1989; Purdy, 2014). However, the domains are clearly not the same. Though both seem to value process, invention, imitation, inquiry and a number of other elements of the writing process, in visual and performing arts, a key difference, just mentioned, is that instead of a written document being the end result or "product" of the writing process, in visual and performing arts, it is often the art object itself that is the destination arrived at. Writing becomes a part of an integrative process, allowing the artist to develop into a reflective practitioner in a chosen medium. For example, though written documents like an "artist statement" do exist as written "products" on some level, the document itself comes directly out of relationship to art making process, as a reflection and analysis of that progression with the aim of making the work more accessible to a "viewer." Therefore, the ways writing must work differently and specifically within visual and performing arts act as a point of access for further reflection into the larger implications of what writing can embody within an area of practice. Further, the study examines questions in three key areas: what makes good writing in visual and the performing arts? What practices from instructors instill those values of the domain of practice itself? And finally, what connections can be drawn between values, practice and identity formation via analysis of writing practices within the visual and performing arts?

Rather than make naïve prescriptive or critical claims about what writing studies should learn from the visual and performing arts, this study examined places of overlap and divergence that might provide reflective sites both for instruction in composition classrooms and for our own discipline's continued efforts to understand how writing appears and functions across the curriculum.

Discourse Communities, Visual Rhetoric, Visual Analysis

The disciplinary discourses of both writing studies and visual and performing arts have long considered the relationship of language to other modes of expression in a variety of ways. Examples include the materiality of text, language as complement to artistic practices, multimodal composing, and expansion of notions of "textuality" itself (Childers, Hobson & Mullin, 1998; Fleckenstein, 2004; George, 2002; Wysocki, 2001, 2005; Yancey, 2004, 2014). How these considerations of language/meaning relationships are shaped and articulated by the practices and values of each of these disciplines, or "discourse communities," is salient to our understanding of how writing appears, and gets used within them in integral relationships of process or production (Gee, 1989; Johns, 1997; Harris, 1989; Hyland, 2004; Porter, 1986; Swales, 1990; [Wardle, 2004](#)).

Here, I consider three central types of composition and visual theory (discourse community theory, visual rhetoric, and semiotic and aesthetic visual analysis) that address how language and other modalities might work within scholarly communities. The following discussion provides a theoretical framework for later explorations of particular aspects of disciplinary writing practice and value sets within the visual and performing arts and the possible implications that might hold for writing studies.

First, any discussion of how and why writing gets used in discipline-specific ways, to achieve disciplinary aims—whether they be scholarly or professional—is well-grounded in the now popularized work of discourse community theory which enumerates how communities articulate shared goals and the ways in which they utilize "texts" to achieve those goals ^{[1][2]} (Porter, 1986; Swales, 1990). For example, in the visual and performing arts an "artist statement" acts as a central text in relationship to art-making practices.

However, the relationship between how written language informs a given practice, in this case art-making, extends back further within discourse community theory ^[3]. The widely accepted concept of "intertextuality" which pushes back against the notion that writing is an isolated/isolating act, that writers (or disciplinary community participants) are solitary creators of knowledge is useful here (Porter, 1986) ^[4]. Though tensions are inherent in this process (Gee, 1989; Johns, 1997; Harris, 1989), considerations of how educational settings, specifically university-level instruction, might be (re)organized to foster learning and "enculturation" remain salient (Wardle, 2004) ^[5].

Further, the focus on "texts" as being objects around which communities are organized is defined in John Swale's *The Concept of Discourse Community* (1990)^[6]. The work, that of examining critical issues related to discourse communities, was taken up by scholars in part to assess how participants enter communities but also to examine how participants function as membership continues^[7]. These explorations serve as a reminder that community membership, disciplinary identity and shared values within communities that foster successful participation for members or practitioners tends not to be a simple or always comfortable process (Wardle, 2004; Gee, 1989)^[8]. In order to accomplish tasks like writing or engaging with texts or create an identity as a participant, these inherent tensions must be navigated through agreed-upon value systems, praxis and time. Visual and performing arts, with its focus on individual expression engendered through community membership, navigates some of these concerns via writing as a medium in which ideas are tested, refined and communicated within the community before being presented to larger audiences.

Second, this study extends the question of what the nature of "texts" actually is, further connecting the work of composition theory to concerns of multimodality, via studies in visual rhetoric in the way that its scholarship has pushed back against what defines "texts" as well as looking at how writing is used for multivalent purposes within communities (Kress, 2000; Wysocki, 2005; Yancey, 2004)^[9]. Their work here has examined the value we place on communication between text and multimodal or visual media and questioned the limited binary of image versus text within writing studies, opening up a new space to consider textuality as fluid and multipurpose (Wysocki, 2001; Yancey, 2014; Fleckenstein, 2004; George, 2002)^[10]. Theoretical writings in this area consistently have arrived at the conclusion that an interrelationship or exploration of the connections between what is considered "textual" and what is considered visual, sonic, and so forth, might be vital to our understanding of communication in new educational paradigms (The New London Group, 1996).

And yet, the discipline of writing studies has often been uncomfortable with how these connections play out in our classrooms, asking "is it really a part of writing" and "how might we assess it?" (Yancey, 2014). Visual rhetoric scholars have asked how we might actually get students to think about making visual (or multimodal) arguments (Wysocki, 2005; Yancey, 2004), or how we might understand power dynamics in the dance of textual hierarchies (Fleckenstein, 2004). Despite the rise of our explorations in multimodality in composition classrooms through such media as blogs, poster presentations, wikis, video, mp3 recordings, even game theory, among others, and despite the deep investment of a number of compositionists who work with multimodal theory, we have arguably as a discipline perhaps only informally or broadly turned to visual or performing arts in particular for input on their relationships to written discourse or multimodal approaches to knowledge construction—hence the impetus for this very journal issue.

Thirdly, as compositionists, we must acknowledge the ways that the disciplines of visual and performing arts have also examined language as art, and image as language both in theory and practice. Well-known artists working along those lines include Ed Ruscha, Andy Warhol and Barbara Kruger, to name just a few. These artists have frequently used texts in visual ways that speak to intervening, re-directing or subverting language, all principles visual rhetoric suggests as being useful within new communicative technologies. Furthermore, scholars like Kostelnick (1989) and Purdy (2014) as well as others have employed the term "design" and investigated intersections and articulations of "design" pedagogy with composition pedagogy and have in particular explored writing process modalities in design disciplines. But, as discourse community theory suggests, communities of practice rarely are identical in their ways of knowing or communicating. And so the question that emerges is, what bridges might materialize, giving insight into how both domains (visual and performing arts and composition) use writing as a way of "knowing" whether that knowing be epistemological, phenomenological or otherwise?

Visual theorist and semiotics scholar Roland Barthes' (1980) book *Camera lucida* took up some of these questions where he related how he encountered photography and used language and writing to decipher it. He asserts that image has a unique place in our consciousness and further that he sees a problematic divide in the way we approach visual language, or appreciate art objects in general. That divide for him is our

impetus to use "two languages," one expressive, the other critical, arguing that they are sometimes at odds with one another (p. 8). Working to somehow make a bridge between the two "languages" and find a point of commonality of experience, he used semiotic analysis to understand his own response to the medium of photography.

Barthes' (1980) articulation of the dichotomy between expressive and critical language is mirrored, to some extent, in the work of John Dewey in *Art as Experience* (1934) when he writes about the dichotomous relationship between making art (experience) and understanding it ("esthetics"). But in fact, he argues, art-making practitioners compose in ways that involve both criticality as well as expressive tendencies, making use of all available tools whether they be "doing" strategies or reflective ones. Whether those two things are divided for the art maker or not, or for the audience or not, continues to be subjective and at the whim of intentionality, particular schools of art-making and more. Dewey supposes, like Barthes in some ways, that concerns of experience and esthetics—the making of something as opposed to the appreciating act, though separate processes, should not be separated. He argues instead that they are rightly interrelated in the larger meaning-making process.

For the purposes of this study, it is Barthes (1980) in particular who is of interest because of the way he embraces the subjective experience and uses a critical lens of language through his "studium"—or a general response to an object and "punctum"—or a sharp, "prick" of response to an object (pp. 26-7) to ascertain both the "thing" itself, and his own self as viewer. These terms, "studium and punctum" create contrast between the experience of an initial general interest in a "thing" with the piercing, subjective, emotional response (which is often surprising), in this case, to photographs. Arguably, for Barthes, it comes down to his sense of how he could understand a thing which might be ephemeral, mysterious or surprising through the use of language in a way that wouldn't diminish it but rather would contribute in some way to its meaning. His ideas of looking directly at art in a semiotic way, do, in part, connect back to the work of visual rhetoric in the sense that though composition studies hasn't *necessarily* always examined the way image makes meaning for its own sake alone, the work of Yancey, Wysocki, et al. does ask us to think about the place, quality and nature of images or multimodal concerns within texts and further, how text might act as design, or image within written discourse materials.

Therefore, the work of this study engages with the very questions that Barthes and Dewey ask and also the questions raised by compositionists about writing within communities. Central to my line of inquiry is how is writing within visual and performing arts viewed, engaged and performed in ways that inform art-making, construct meaning and/or disciplinary identity and express value systems in particular ways? What does it mean to use writing to create or inform the process of "doing" or "making" in visual and performing arts practices (Dewey, 1934)? Finally, what about writing practices within the visual and performing arts might speak to the values of the community itself in ways that writing studies might in turn consider as being useful?

Methods

Participants

The primary objective of the study was to look closely at three categories of descriptive markers in data that indicated the following: 1) value sets—pedagogical/instructional philosophies, 2) practices—particular pedagogical techniques that articulated instructional values and 3) disciplinary exigencies—support or articulation of values and practices in service of professional or disciplinary identity emergent in discussions of writing across participant interviews. Interview participants came from the visual and performing arts. As a secondary objective the study sought to uncover points of interest relevant to writing studies. The study collected data by working with a relatively small sample of seven university instructors (hereinafter

identified as "participants"). Where needed, to maintain anonymity, each participant will also be referred to by a first person pseudonym (see Table 1).

Working from varying disciplinary backgrounds within the visual and performing arts, the participants were instructors in history and practice, art history/visual studies, and "ecology and art"/field studies across the following areas: sculpture, ceramics, drawing, installation art, performance art, painting, and jazz.

Participant demographics varied in terms of age (late 30s-70s), race (mostly Caucasian^[11]), and gender (4 men/3 women). Geographical/cultural/site locations were also varied. Participants taught within the U.S. in locations in the Southwest, Northeast and the West Coast. Participant demographics also represented institutional diversity, from community colleges (1 instructor), to four-year public and private institutions (6 instructors), a women's college (1 instructor) and a low-residency graduate MFA program (1 instructor).

Table 1: Participants, Institutions, and Instructional Areas

Instructor Alias	Institutional Affiliation Type	Areas of Instruction
"C. Hesse"	4 year private women's college, undergraduate	Installation art, drawing, painting, multimedia art.
"F. Stella"	Low residency private institution, MFA program	Installation art, performance art, art theory, drawing, painting, feminist studies
"Y. Wilson"	Two year undergraduate-community college	Sculpture, ceramics, field studies
"T. Moore"	Four-year, public university, graduate and undergraduate	Art History, History of Photography, Visual Studies
"B. Smiley"	Four-year public university	Field studies, ceramics, art and ecology.
"T. Miller"	Four-year public university graduate and undergraduate	Jazz studies, theory and practice
"S. Martin"	Four-year, private institution, undergraduate	Installation art, ceramics, sculpture, multi-media.

Procedures

After institutional review board approval was obtained (September 2014), the data was collected via one-on-one interviews with seven participants over the course of the Fall semester (October 2014). Participation was voluntary and at the request of the interviewer; no special considerations or screenings were administered during the selection process. Questions ranged from how these instructors use writing, primarily in their courses, to how they give evaluative feedback on writing, to what texts they offer as readings in their courses. Other questions were aimed at understanding the deeper values they hold about art and art-making in their courses and how they try to impart those values to students through writing.

Each participant interview lasted 1-2 hours and was recorded and then transcribed. (See Appendix for interview questions used.)

Using grounded-theory analysis from sociological and qualitative research methods (Saldaña, 2013), first-cycle coding was performed according to "descriptive/holistic" procedures and using, though to a lesser extent, "In Vivo" codes^[12] as they appeared in the data. "Pattern" coding methods were performed for both second- and third-cycle coding. Working to pull key themes and subcategories out of each interview based on first-cycle data, the data analysis used broad themes for the top tier to create categories. The categories were labeled according to the primary aims of the study as "values," "praxis," and "disciplinary exigencies." In third-cycle coding, data was culled for more nuanced sub-themes or categories from the major areas (see examples in Table 2).

Table 2: Data Coding Themes

Sample of Sub-category Themes from Third Cycle Data Coding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "professional identity/professional practices," • "best practices for instruction" • "clarity" • "reflective writing" • "analytical writing" • "novice verse expert concerns" • "differentiated/individuated instructional techniques" • "inquiry guided practices" • "physicality/materiality" • "imitation/lineage/tradition" • "disciplinary changes/disciplinary identity" et. al.

It should be noted that categories and themes created layering of data in places of overlap and divergence. As an example of this layering, under "praxis," data across interviews consistently revealed descriptions of individual assignments used to work out pedagogical aims (standard pedagogical practice). But, when combined with what was termed "instructional techniques" the codes revealed the specifics of pedagogical approaches. Examples included dialogic inquiry and individuated instruction based in student-led inquiry. Though the initial coding came from the category of instructor practices, the implications of the individual codes also spoke to value sets within instructor practice and how those get articulated in classroom instruction.

Findings

The results of this study showed, as hypothesized, several points of similarity in the ways instructors of visual and performing arts use writing in their courses. However, a number of differences worth highlighting also emerged from the data in the way visual and performing arts instructors rely on writing as an interrelated, concurrent or supportive "process" as opposed to an "end product," resulting from a process. Instructors from the interview sample used writing specifically to help students inform art making practice and to help shape their identities as practitioners of visual and performing arts. Further, they used

writing to facilitate student analyses of art works, to instruct students on how to accompany art works with written texts, and to teach students how to relate or articulate their work/ideas to a wider audience through language.

From assignment prompts to value^[13] sets, which inform writing practices related to disciplinary perspectives, the interviews and data analysis bore out, broadly, the following areas of interest: 1) aspects of "good" writing in visual and performing arts with identifiable values; 2) disciplinary exigencies clearly expressed through various relationships to writing; and 3) everyday instructional praxis as vehicle for both articulations. It is also noteworthy that although this project aimed to evaluate the benefits and character of writing instruction in the domain of the visual and performing arts and secondarily to evaluate how that might in turn inform writing studies, it became nearly impossible to extract some of the values instructors prioritized regarding writing instruction (clarity, sincerity, reflexivity) from those they held about the practice of art-making, a concept familiar to WAC/WID pedagogy. For example, a self-reflective awareness of the "experience" of viewing or making art translated directly into values associated with writing practice. These connections will be discussed later in some detail via interview data. Ultimately, writing, in the visual and performing arts frequently appeared in the data as working in tandem with art-making. It is important to note that this process is not necessarily an illustrative one—writing translating art or vice versa—but rather, writing and practice working in relationship to one another in specific ways.

What Makes Good Writing and Why? Values and Instructional Practice

Though the interview sample was small, each of the seven participants consistently articulated what they thought of as "good" writing within their disciplines thus providing a series of conclusions/values that can be regarded as reasonably representative. Descriptions of "good writing" ranged from what one instructor referred to as "old fashioned and primitive good grammar" (F. Stella, 2014), to written work that demonstrates analytical structure, to an articulation of central claims. These outcomes identified by art instructors clearly echo/parallel some of the same values inherent within the disciplinary practices of writing studies. Other components, though ostensibly familiar to the composition classroom, appeared to be tailored in distinctive ways to the art-making community.

"Clarity, Criticality, Connection."

As a first grouping of value sets pulled from coding data, elements of "clarity" in writing, or the ability to articulate intent, "criticality" or the ability to think beyond initial impressions and to look more deeply at a thing over time and respond with language, and "connection," an ability to connect personal experiences in art making to a larger disciplinary context, emerged.

Many instructors in the sample identified these values with specific language, evincing the key terms of "clarity," "criticality" and "connection." Though seemingly a bit nebulous at first, the interview participants saw the aforementioned values—clarity, criticality, and connection—as a central thread around which they are able to measure not only their students' writing and their grasp of classroom content but also to connect to larger, professional exigencies within the visual and performing arts.

Naturally, some divergences did appear in the articulation of those concerns based on variations in individual pedagogical demands. For example, T. Miller, a professor of jazz studies, acknowledged that writing was valuable for his students to successfully navigate the contemporary world of jazz studies, but he did not necessarily believe writing makes "better players" as he views the act of playing itself as an intuitive, reflexive, physical set of skills or a "doing" practice instead of a "thinking" one (2014). Miller's comment underscores an important aspect of writing that I have not yet discussed—writing in a writing class as something other than second-nature, or intuitive. In his mind, writing is a deliberate performance, a composition, as we call it, distinct from one of the intrinsic components of jazz performance as art—namely that it is a result of intensive training in order to purposefully enter into unrehearsed, free-form, and ad-

libbed production. Another art instructor, F. Stella, a seminal 1970s feminist artist who teaches performance art, drawing and painting, asserted, "the reading and the writing and the research and thinking, changes their (visual/performance) work more than anything" (2014). And yet, regardless of divergences in data, all participants in some way clearly marked a connection between a student's potential to be successful within an art discipline and their ability to write successfully in service of that art-making practice.

"Clarity": An artist statement. Y. Wilson, an instructor of sculpture and ceramics at a mid-sized community college, referred to writing as a "process that allows someone to really *clarify* what they're seeing and to think about it, to ponder it" (2014). For him, this ability is central when it comes to the practice of writing documents, like an artist statement, which acts for students as "a reflection of how their own work and writing about their own work" come together to assist an audience, be that a curator or a viewer, to better understand with what they are engaging. Within the artist statement, he explained, he values "simplicity," "sincerity" and a connection to "emotional experience," stating that writing about the self is an "inherently narcissistic" process and he must work with his students to clarify their ideas and arrive at a more sincere, readable expression of their own practice. Guiding students to such sincerity/clarity, for him, is a key component of the work he does with students, resulting from what he sees as a need for them to avoid large generalizations about "the world," "life," "the universe," and instead focus on expressing sincere experiences via visual modes and via their writing. This, he argues, enables an audience to feel a more substantial connection to the visual and written work and enables the students to better understand their own motives (2014).

"Criticality": A visual culture paper. F. Stella, who currently teaches at the graduate level, said about "criticality" in writing instruction, "we have them [students] think, try to teach them 'how do you analyze something critically?'" However, for her there is a need to distinguish between the act of judging and critiquing: "*Criticality* is not about judgment. It's about figuring out what it is that's happening there. And what is the meaning." In written work, like her "visual culture paper" assignment, she asks students to select a subfield within their area of practice (such examples include TV programs, film, other artists, theory, philosophy, and so forth) and to formulate an analysis of the content, form and structure in a way that goes beyond the generic, surface-level observations of a "book report." She explained that this is important for her students because as artists, she believes they will constantly be asked to understand their own practice more consciously in order to better connect to an audience, make sense to granting agencies or galleries, or communicate within a given art genre (2014). Therefore, the students' cognition of these factors, expressed via written analysis, nurtures an individual's art practice within the discipline.

"Connection": A research and reflection document. Addressing the concept of "connection," B. Smiley, director of an Arts and Ecology program, who works with students through a field studies approach, explained that for him, writing is particularly useful for students to grow an awareness of how to successfully make art which connects to the larger world outside of the academy. B. Smiley acknowledges that he wants "artists to have a place at the table" in wider discourse communities—sciences, engineering et al. He explained that he asks his students, in a final culminating written research and reflection project, to be able to argue "how [and why] they're pushing theory forward, or they're very issue oriented and they're trying to leverage discourse around a particular issue around the work." Similar to F. Stella, he surmises that writing for students can "really flesh out" that process of understanding, so that their own intentions and connections to the larger framework of an art making community materialize in a more recognizable way (2014).

Articulation of values sets in relationship to some form of these three key terms—"clarity," "criticality," and "connection"—from the interview data, were echoed by all 7 participants^[14].

For these instructors, it was clear that "good" writing within their discipline allows students to communicate within classrooms, but also enables those students to build toward eventual professional exigencies where

communicating to an audience of viewers, curators, or funding sources is an outcome that cannot be disentwined from the artwork.

Writing Relationships: Enculturation and Identity Formation

In general, participants saw writing work for their students as particularly integral to the disciplinary enculturation process (F. Stella, C. Hesse, Y. Wilson, T. Moore, S. Martin, 2014). Simultaneously, interviews revealed that these instructors clearly privilege and value the ways in which art-making goes beyond the analytical or reflective elements of writing practice into subjective, physical and emotionally-based expression modalities. As F. Miller and other instructors suggested, reflexivity through and engagement in an art-making process may support practitioners well beyond the analytical components accessed via writing work. Therefore writing becomes a complement, informant, or tool for an art making process and vice versa. As one instructor related, students need to "understand it in their bodies not just intellectually" (S. Martin, 2014). Interviews showed that instructors navigate the distinctiveness of these potentially dichotomous ways of knowing (Wysocki, 2001) and work to foster integrated, balanced relationships between a "doing" practice like art-making and critical thinking practices like writing.

"Process, Professionalizing, Community/lineage"

Participants in this study had much to say about professional identities and exigencies both for themselves and their students—asserting that writing builds students' work as practitioners—particularly as practitioners aware of the needs of audiences. As a small but rich data set, interviews revealed shared practices related to instruction that concentrated on the following: 1) inquiry guided, "process" approaches via individuated instructional techniques; 2) writing of documents aimed at "professionalizing" participants in the domain of study; and finally, 3) writing of documents that foster awareness of individual "artist" identities within a "community" or "lineage" of practice. Each instructor articulated some iteration of these core principles, both in philosophy and pedagogical practice, utilizing outside texts, written documents and dialectic, inquiry-based approaches to engage with their core teaching principles.

General consensus in interview data notwithstanding, some instructors saw more connections and overlap than others: one related, "I'm trying to help them hone their technical skills and their compositional skills at the same time because critical thinking and creativity go hand in hand, and to make them aware that one feeds off the other" (C. Hesse, 2014). Another instructor remarked "Our *intention* is that the two (writing and art-making) would seamlessly come together and be two expressions of the same, but in fact I see that there's often a major disjunction between the two (for students)" (B. Smiley, 2014).

Despite such differences in opinion regarding how an interrelationship of artistic modality and criticality is best navigated in the classroom, all participants acknowledged their own efforts to put students through some of those challenges for the purpose of helping them grow, expand and deepen within the disciplinary and classroom community. T. Moore, a professor of art and art history explained, "there's a different level of engagement that happens through the medium of writing." He continued by explaining that he sees this level of engagement as critical to understanding "art objects" (2014). Further, several participants expressed a valuing of engaging ideas, art objects and art-making from multiple viewpoints and pointed to writing work as instrumental in that process.

"Process": A written proposal. Speaking about her instructional techniques, C. Hesse, a professor of installation art, drawing and painting explained that from beginning-level to advanced-level classes, her assignments involve student "choice" and "inquiry" as key steps in their process toward composing a finished visual piece (2014). For example, she asks students to first select a visual task, engage in that task and then describe and support their choices with a writing exercise that emphasizes a process-based approach in her classroom. Through this practice of moving recursively between the visual product and a hermeneutical exploration of process, writing offers a framework through which students both

simultaneously explain and come to understand the critical thinking that produced the art object or concept. Using their written proposals to foreground a dialogue, she works with students individually, helping them through multiple revisions of the document to better assist them in understanding the direction a work will take, why, and what larger context they are connecting to via their choices. She encourages students to craft and revise proposals into an artist statement while the work progresses throughout the semester and as they work toward exhibition. Together, she and the student use the written proposal to guide a discussion of the visual work—the writing aims both to articulate the final art work, but also to provide an official canvas of sorts where the artist plays with ideas through the written word. She suggests that the student artist may meet challenges or discover epiphanies in writing before those concerns or delights are manifest in the artistic medium. In order to foster this kind of effective interpretive work, she invites students to write a proposal that not only "describes their materials, it describes their questions as a place for them to clarify their thoughts." C. Hesse also explained that the process should continue to generate inquiry and reflection until the very end. She believes this work fosters the act of "interpretation" and the critique process as well as "changing" the maker of the art object (2014); in other words, the writing process is an act of becoming for both the art work and the artist.

This kind of conversational practice with students, best characterized as individuated, inquiry-guided or dialogue-based instructional techniques, continued to appear across interview data. One instructor explained that she uses a series of questions that students must answer in writing while viewing a work; this critical analysis is aimed at getting students to approach their own "experience with phenomenology with the work" (S. Martin, 2014). Her practices focused on asking students to understand their own subjective experience with art objects, so that they may better understand the nature of visual practice itself. And still another participant described how, in his own individuated instructional techniques, he first engages with the student in a dialogue about their work through writing and conversation and then selects outside readings that will directly connect to that student's work, values or experience. He sees this as a way to help his students inform their own practice, and to ask them to enter into a larger conversation about theory or technique that extends their immediate practices beyond their own work to the larger art realm (Y. Wilson, 2014). Such methods of dialogue and writing are not, as it turns out, unique. Another instructor explained, "I try to figure out early on in this who they are in a particular language-based practice as opposed to the production-based practice and try and design an approach that fits them rather than a 'one size fits all' approach." He clarified that this often manifests as a "fairly extended walk in the park" in which he works to help them find their own unique voice (B. Smiley, 2014). Frequently acknowledging the need for students to get comfortable with or embrace various types of "failure" and "rejection" (F. Stella, S. Martin, 2014), in response, instructors consistently offer specific, inquiry based, one-on-one support through the process of the student practitioner "becoming" an artist. This basic set of individuated approaches was consistent across instructor interviews.

"Professionalizing": The artist statement. I return to the "artist statement" here because it was perhaps the most frequently mentioned written document in the interview sample. Opinions on the value of this written statement, which is typically used in exhibitions, gallery catalogues, press releases, or is used to garner funding for art projects, or is included in CVs and any number of other professional situations for artists, varied from instructor to instructor. One joked "someone should just pass a law that there's no more artist statements" believing they are difficult for students to accomplish successfully without sounding overly self-important (B. Smiley, 2014). Conversely, another explained that this document for her has, over time become a primary tool for both her reflective and professional practice as well as that of her students. She explained, "my artist statement is as much a practice as my visual art, one really feeds off the other" (C. Hesse, 2014). Regardless of the perceived challenges in writing a successful artist statement—"narcissism," "ego," or "stilted" prose, to name a few (Y. Wilson, B. Smiley, persona, 2014)—the majority of interview participants upheld that they remain a central written document within the world of visual and performing arts, corroborating earlier findings within this study suggesting that writing is imperative to visual and

performing arts production and that students who practice writing in their classes will find themselves more deeply connected to their art and more equipped to navigate the professional art world. Students must learn to write this discipline-specific document—one that outlines for a reader their materials, purpose and philosophy—successfully in order to support their professional identities.

Approaches to teaching students how to write a successful artist statement naturally varied. Borrowing from his previous work in clinical psychology and psychotherapy, Y. Wilson works through a "sociogram" with students, essentially mapping, through writing, their values, influences and relationship to the work and audience as scaffolding for a successful artist statement (2014). Alternatively, S. Martin, an instructor of installation art at a small arts college, asks students to write about their experiences entering into the process of making work to bring to light, via writing, their "instinct and inspiration" in a manner that "integrates the brain and the body" (2014). Still another instructor has students sit with their own work, engaging in contemplative visual experience of that work as a means to begin writing about what they are "seeing" and what it means for them and their audience (C. Hesse, October 2014). Engaging in the ongoing, recursive process of viewing, reflecting on and engaging their own art objects as well as those of others supports the earlier conclusion that visual and performing arts is unique in the way it successfully uses writing to integrate concerns of subjectivity and experience into the process of developing analytical abilities.

"Community/Lineage": Reading and reflection work. A final salient feature of interview data was the way instructors spoke about the enculturation process as a part of connecting to a larger community of practice. This happened primarily in two ways. First, evoking the classical rhetorical concept of "imitation," nearly all participants outlined particular ways in which they ask students to consider, via reading, writing and viewing/listening, the process of joining a lineage of art practitioners. Interview data reveals this primarily as a "modeling" approach and often takes place in their classrooms via observing, reading, listening or viewing of the works of important artists from the past. Second, instructors consistently expressed a need for students to connect to current dialogues about their own art making practice in order to enter into the disciplinary community as professionals. Data revealed this to be an "identity formation" approach.

T. Miller described how he works with imitation or "modeling" by having students "learn the traditions of music making" via close notational study of other musicians. He marked this technique as central to how he teaches. He described how the process of "assimilating" the work of others is foundational, informing the way musicians eventually "improvise" and "innovate and develop" their own voice. In order to support this core value, he has students study, emulate or copy the solos of famous musicians going "generations back since the beginning of sound recording." He explained this as the way jazz has been listened to and taught over time. For him, connecting to common practices and making students aware of that lineage is central to how they will eventually become individuals within the discipline by providing a "base for their own playing and learning" (2014).

F. Stella, in a "process paper," a culminating written assignment for graduate students, has them reflect extensively on what their progress through their graduate studies has been via research, reading, writing and analytical reflection. In this "identity formation" process, she explains that it is often difficult for students to see themselves clearly but that it is critical so that they may position themselves successfully within a dynamically changing discipline. The work of this identity formation for her involves asking students to engage with a variety of readings about art or related areas of study in order to assist their positioning. Being able to "explore and sometimes find voices they didn't know they had" is a key part of that process. Eventually, she sees this as an integral component of their ability to "fit into some genre," which is important for funding or gallery-entry purposes (2014).

In conclusion, interview data showed that instructors of visual and performing arts offered numerous ways for their students to engage in modeling or identity-formation practices via written language in order to support them both as artists and as professionals. Additionally, the need for students to be able to process meaning via language and articulate intent via writing was consistently marked for these instructors as a

response to changes in their discipline. Many commented on how their discipline has changed dramatically over time from a period where community consensus was that "art speaks for itself" to a model that uses language—written language in particular—to describe, connect, or articulate meaning to audiences. Therefore, for these instructors it became important over time to not only offer students access to techniques *for*, and values and practices *of* art making but also to model ways that they can articulate that process to a larger community.

Discussion

As expected, and as previously mentioned, several of the assumptions held about writing instruction in the visual and performing arts were confirmed through the course of this study. Principles of effective analysis and the emphasis placed on reflective writing are clearly shared between writing studies and the disciplinary domains I examined. And, as shown, several illuminating differences with respect to the purpose and articulation of writing practice within visual and performing arts also emerged, evidencing what discourse community theory as well as WAC/WID studies argues about writing—that it is a situated, community-based or disciplinary-specific practice. On a larger level, this study reestablishes that within a given discipline, visual and performing arts specifically, instructors adopt individuated modes tailored to serve the needs of their community. However, compelling information also appeared where the data showed practices and values shared with writing studies and arguably, such points of connection could offer entryways for collaboration and mutual understanding between the two disciplines.

In answer to the secondary aim of the study—how the work here might speak back to writing studies—two possible sites for examination appeared in the data. First, as hypothesized, writing in the domain of visual and performing arts carries the unique function of serving its "referent"—the art object or the process of making meaning which often primarily exists in a non-linguistic format. As Barthes (1980), proposes about perceived meaning in relationship to photography, "It is as if the photograph always carries its referent with itself, both affected by the same amorous or funereal immobility, at the very heart of the moving world: they are glued together, limb by limb" (p. 6). Barthes means here, that there exists a specific, if subjective, relationship between the contained form of a photograph and the scene, object or place it refers to that while not correlative, is both inseparable and existent as a thing apart, subject to its own constraints and advantages. Arguably, a visual, like a photograph and the object to which it refers, are in a dynamic relationship to one another. Though one is not necessarily *directly illustrative* of the other (a key concept, here) they are instead inextricably linked in a relationship that exposes the potential for a complex layering of meaning—the photograph intrinsically carries its own meaning as a work of art, but through which it also generates a new connotative meaning for the object, which is now viewed in a disparate and specific way according to the artist or for the viewer. In terms of the subject of this study, the artist statement, for example, would add an additional tier to the dense layering of meaning-making since his or her (the artist's) explanation of how and why he or she captured the object through art (his or her process) would inevitably vary from the way(s) in which the viewer anticipates and perceives the relationship between object and image. In the ways that writing and art-making mirror the relationship Barthes describes, it enables the disciplines of the visual and performing arts to use writing effectively to *serve* art-making practices, both in terms of using writing analytically and reflectively to refine the process of making art and to communicate to broader, outside audiences. Simultaneously, it pushes artists to access, develop or value the subjective, and physical experience necessary to create that art itself. In fact, interview subjects in this study sometimes pushed back against polarized dichotomies between meaning-making in their medium and the way in which writing work could serve both the analytical and subjective needs of that process by viewing them as integrated components.

Data revealed how writing and art-making, within the visual and performing arts remain distinctive from one another while simultaneously informing and acting on one another in productive ways like creating a named space for reflexive practice or fostering analytical abilities in the realm of creative practice. Though

some may disagree (proponents of therapeutic writing and in some cases Expressivists), in contrast, writing studies has arguably most broadly worked in a tradition relying on text itself as the primary product of writing. In order to be successful (at least in our current rhetoric), those texts typically must make clear arguments, provide concrete evidence and provide some measure of analytical distance from the object of their investigation. And yet, there continues to be room in writing pedagogy to reconsider how and what we ask students to write that would mime, in much the way Barthes shows us, that writing about process can inform writing as product (art). Through asking students to read their own work, make observations and understand the how-and-why moves that yield the x-number of words on a page before them, they start to recognize a pattern or series of behaviors that *produce...yes, they begin to see themselves as producers or composers*, much like the artist sees herself. In fact, current trends in writing studies evident in the *Writing about Writing* approach, suggest a renewed commitment within our discipline to fostering these very same meta-analysis abilities and identity formation skills for our students.

The results of this study, though extracted from a particular domain that is ostensibly different from our own, might provide space for a further re-investigation of the work we do with students in writing studies and connect back to some of our own Expressivist or process pedagogies (amongst others) which value identity formation and subjectivity as features of the work that arises in learning academic prose styles. This reinforces the potentiality for writing to access emotional or embodied spaces alongside aspects of criticality and analysis. Further, as suggested by the work of visual rhetoric and the work of The New London Group (1996) on "multiliteracies," multimodality may continue to be a site that encourages or investigates these broader notions of textuality and meaning within writing studies. Much as visual and performing arts instructors in the study consider the art object in relationship to an integrated writing process, placing value on subjective, material, or emotionally-based modes of meaning-making alongside critical thinking-writing processes may continue to be an area of re-engagement and development in writing classrooms. As current scholarship in writing studies suggests, with the rise of electronic writing mediums where text, image, and both objective and subjective experience converge, we may do well to observe further, writing values that this study indicates the visual and performing arts are currently navigating to achieve their communicative aims—discipline-specific relationships to process, individuated instructional techniques, and reflexive practices aimed at producing meaning in multiple formats.

Finally, much of what the interview data suggests is that the domain of visual and performing arts uses writing to directly respond to its own perceived disciplinary exigencies: communication with audiences and amongst practitioners and the crafting of disciplinary identities for participants. Going one step further, interview participants frequently revealed that they want art to have more of a place at the table with other disciplines and that they regularly encounter their own discipline as a place subject to misconceptions within academia. They continually encounter resistance to realistic notions of who artists are—as they are so often perceived as being incapable of doing more than "being creative" as opposed to also being analytical or critical. According to the interview data, these misconceptions clearly act with silo effects for disciplinary participants, which instructors use writing work to push against. Further, interview participants pointed to deficiencies in the educational system in terms of both the lack of preparation of students entering their classrooms and a lack of resources or understanding necessary for their work to be equally valued alongside other disciplines. Donna Strickland (2011), in her work within the history of composition studies, also points to such issues, of a "feminizing" of composition, rendering writing instruction as a place undervalued, separate or positioned as merely being in service of other more "legitimate" disciplines. Such an undervaluing only adds to silo effects, misconceptions of our colleagues and creates further disciplinary tensions within unnecessary hierarchies.

Given the similarities between the disciplines of writing studies and the visual and performing arts, both in the way we use and value writing and the manner in which our disciplines get positioned within the larger realm of the academy, the data from this study suggests a place for a seemingly natural, mutually beneficial

alliance. Perhaps as Michael Carter (2007) suggests, we could be connected within the academy in a "metagenre," one that would allow for dynamic partnerships and mutual support.

Questions guiding such an alliance might include the following: how could the two domains of practice work more closely with one another, support each other's disciplinary exigencies or engage in even more cross-disciplinary connections? Might we better borrow from, investigate or share with one another? Might we more consistently value each other's expertise in more productive ways? How would an alliance articulate itself in both our professional communities and our classrooms? Certainly there have already been collaborations in classrooms and curriculum between writing studies and visual and performing arts and the conclusion of this study supports the value of continued investigation and collaboration between the two as a means of empowering both the work our students do and the work we do as professionals.

Appendix - Interview Questions

1. What are the central values you try to impart to your students about art making in your classes?
Can you describe a little about how those values get articulated in your courses either via assignments or classwork?
2. Do you see written texts as a key part of your disciplinary discourse? If so, what kinds? Which ones? What kinds of texts do you have students read and respond to? How do these texts help you achieve your instructional goals?
3. Do you use writing in your classroom with students? If so, how/why do you use it primarily?
4. How do you feel the writing work in your classes supports or connects to the values you hold about art making, understanding art, creativity or process?
5. Can you describe in some detail, a few/several of the writing tasks you assign students? What is the purpose of some of those writing tasks for you as the instructor?
6. Do you give explicit writing instruction to your students? If so, what kind?
7. For example, do you ask students to write to a particular audience for specific purposes or to accomplish particular tasks via writing? What kind of evaluative feedback do you give students on their writing?
8. Are there any other things we haven't covered that you'd like to add or discuss in terms of the relationship of writing practice or process to your disciplinary practices?

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Notes

[1] Importantly, the particulars of those goals and purposes are tailored in somewhat idiosyncratic ways, typically with central texts that define them.

[2] Theorists (Gee, 1989; Johns, 1997) here argue that within an academic setting, disciplinary communities, like that of performing and visual arts, are organized around shared goals and purposes that use texts to establish social, economic and/or disciplinary functions (Swales, 1990).

[3] James Porter's "Intertextuality and the discourse community" (1986) argues that the relationship among texts whereby writers speak to one another, building a compendium, creates community by providing a "focus [more] on the sources and social contexts from which the writer's discourse arises" (p. 35).

[4] Discourse community theory acknowledges an intricate weaving of ideas through textuality composed by many creators as central to how we communicate knowledge effectively (Porter, 1986).

[5] The concept of discourse communities (not without its problems or tensions)—illustrates the struggles of novices in successfully entering the community, discord between home discourses and professional ones, and authoritarian hierarchies (Gee, 1989, Johns, 1997; Harris, 1989).

[6] Swales (1990) explains that a variety of kinds of texts create spaces for "participatory mechanisms," as well as help participants within those communities formulate identities.

[7] Scholars assumed the important task of examining the inherent tensions in crafting a disciplinary- or community-based identity (Gee, 1989) conflict and diversity within discourse communities (Johns, 1997) and struggles with and importance of successful enculturation (Wardle, 2004).

[8] It is a process that requires examination of personal exigencies and power dynamics in order for participants to simultaneously maintain individual identities while successfully participating in new discourses (Wardle, 2004; Gee, 1989).

[9] Beginning with the work of scholars like Gunther Kress (2000), multimodality appears as a call to consider various kinds of texts, not just linguistic ones, and to consider how image, design, delivery or materiality might all contribute to the meaning of and access to texts (Kress, 2000; Wysocki 2005; Yancey, 2004).

[10] This focus on the limited binary of image versus text within writing studies, visual rhetoricians argue, is important because though we have long considered what connection there might be between written language and other modes of expression, the work of visual rhetoric has opened up a new space to consider textuality as fluid and multivalent.

[11] According to the U.S. Department of Education [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (2014), institutions of higher education employ full time instructors at the ratio of 84 percent white/Caucasian, 4 percent black, 3 percent Hispanic, 8 percent Pacific Islander and less than 1 percent Native American (nces.ed.gov).

[12] Identification of terminology that appears naturalistically during the interview and becomes a source of categorization.

[13] "Value sets" refers to categories that emerged from data coding of interview samples. The emergent top tier categories were "values," "praxis" and "disciplinary exigencies."

[14] Individual use of terminology in relationship to the key terms varied.

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