

CHAPTER 5.

ANNOTATION AND RHETORICAL ANALYSIS WITH DISCUSSIONS HOSTED IN FLIP

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In this chapter, the authors describe an annotation practice used online, any time learning. Specifically, the authors share annotation activities that create deliberate scaffolding as students move from their initial annotations of a text to ongoing class discussion and, finally, to the draft of an essay using the learning technology Flip. In describing their “better practice,” this chapter addresses the themes of accessibility and inclusivity and practices in motion across teaching and learning modalities.

FRAMEWORKS AND PRINCIPLES IN THIS CHAPTER

- **GSOLE Principle 1.4:** The student-user experience should be prioritized when designing online courses, which includes mobile-friendly content, interaction affordances, and economic needs.
- **GSOLE Principle 4.2:** Educators and researchers should insist that various OLI delivery models (including alternative, self-paced, and experimental) comply with the principles of sound pedagogy, quality instructor/designer preparation, and appropriate oversight detailed in this document.
- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Persistence:** Consistently take advantage of in-class (peer and instructor responses) and out-of-class (writing or learning center support) opportunities to improve and refine their work.
- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Engagement:** A sense of investment and involvement in learning.

- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Flexibility:** The ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands.
- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Metacognition:** The ability to reflect on one's own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge.

GUIDING QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU BEGIN READING

- How do we encourage and support writers through intentional response to one another's work?
- How do we guide students in using textual evidence to support their ideas?
- How can we utilize technology to enhance and support students in online learning environments, especially in asynchronous interactions?

INTRODUCTION

Two weeks into the fall semester of our online, asynchronous composition I course, my student, Julieta, and I were in our second WebEx meeting. Like many students, she had enrolled in this online course after a semester of emergency remote learning due to COVID shutdowns yet had never experienced an asynchronous course.

As we talked, she hesitated through pauses and glanced away from the camera. I tried to listen even more intently. The assignment for the week was to view the TED Talk by Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story," and to add "substantive annotations" on the transcript (Adichie, 2009). The Ted Talk's written transcript was copied into a Google Doc, so it was then easy to highlight and comment upon. Students could explore the content in multiple ways (watching and reading).

Julieta was catching up on assignments, and this activity was the first we discussed in our meeting. I shared the assignment with her again, restating the goal that students were supposed to be creating annotations that made connections, asked questions, or summarized main ideas.

Then, I tried to move into a discussion about the assignment, and the text itself. "So, I understand that you are still a bit confused by the assignment, so let's start from the text first. Can you summarize some of the ideas you heard in Adichie's TED Talk?"

"Well," Julieta began, "I remember her talking about Nigeria and some aspects of their culture. And, stereotyping. She talked a lot about stereotypes."

Nodding, I encouraged her. "Tell me a bit more. What kinds of stereotypes?"

“So, she said how her roommate kind of thought of Nigeria as being one thing, yet she didn’t really think of Nigeria that way. It was like Adichie didn’t, you know, fit the image.”

“That’s interesting,” I said. “So, what did Adichie say about that? Where can you point to a moment in the transcript where she said or hinted at that idea?”

Julieta paused, and I could tell, even through the webcam, that she was looking at the transcript as her eyes moved back and forth. The pause turned to silence.

My mind flooded with questions that, suddenly, I couldn’t answer. For Julieta herself, I wondered if she had watched the TED Talk yet was unable to understand the main idea. Then, there was the scolding teacher part of me, wondering if she had, indeed, even watched the TED Talk at all.

I started to question my instructions for students, moving from my own hurt ego toward empathy. Was the assignment unclear? Did I need to rephrase things? Was I unintentionally placing pressure on her to “perform” and “deliver” at that moment? Was she embarrassed and struggling to find the “right answer”? How could I help her navigate this new space of online—and almost completely asynchronous—learning?

My mind spun further. I began to wonder about my institution and about online learning in higher education more broadly. How do we create online learning environments that take the best of in-person real-time instruction and integrate technology in a meaningful way? How do we as educators ensure that our teaching, both to the entire class and through individual coaching, is effective? Moreover, how do we insert ourselves into students’ homes, working assertively to connect with them without being overly intrusive? I, as the guide, felt helpless and searching for my own answers.

Maybe the way that we reach students through a screen instead of face-to-face is through connection—if we can suspend our beliefs about what “should be” and be more mindful of the moments we have with students. I needed to listen and support the needs of the student in front of me so that we could work together. This meeting was an opportunity for me to make this student feel welcome. It gave me an opportunity to listen to what she needed. I took a breath and brought myself back to the WebEx room.

I must have been silent for a long time. Julieta, leaning toward her webcam, looked quizzically at me. With that, I decided to ask a different question.

“So, Julieta, did Adichie talk about *someone* specific? Is there a spot in the text that you can point to?” I was again trying to encourage Julieta to refer to the text, to confirm her answer and support her claim. However, she remained silent.

I paused, hoping to find just the right question to ask in order to move her forward.

From there, I began thinking about a number of other ideas, especially about equity and access in online learning. Had I prepared Julieta enough for this task? What kinds of assumptions did I make in the design of this assignment? Would she be able to use the smartphone and laptop that she had to effectively engage in these annotations and, soon, our video-based discussion using the Flip website and app?

Here I was, in a moment that brought many values as an instructor into sharp focus, as well as my need to be more explicit about those values in my teaching. Three professional texts, in particular, had been formative in my approach for designing the course: *Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing* (2015), especially its focus on invested learning, adaptability, and reflection, composed by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC); the *Online Literacy Instruction Principles and Tenets* (2019), especially the need to develop mobile-friendly, sound instructional design, composed by Global Society of Online Literacy Educators (GSOLE); and the “habits of mind” from the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the National Writing Project’s (NWP) *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011), hereafter cited as CWPA.

In my design of the course and assignment, I wanted to show that writing is social and that we must engage students in a scaffolded process to make connections between their ideas and their peers. I had included a structured activity with guides to help students with creating annotations. I had built on that activity asking them to use those annotations to support their ideas in a Flip video discussion post. I had asked them to reflect on the posts of their classmates to reply and engage in a conversation about Adichie’s TED talk. In many ways, I thought I’d provided layers where students utilized specific skills that they continued to build upon to improve their understanding of the text and improve their ability to craft their thoughts. All of these elements, I had thought, were incorporated in the design of my assignment. Yet, were they?

The tension remained. Here I was, in dialogue with Julieta, who was likely sharing concerns that other classmates would have as well. Something wasn’t working. As a result of that interaction with Julieta—and in later dialogues with my coauthor and other contributors in this collection—the revised, articulated lesson shared below is my attempt to take what I learned and rethink the assignment through an equity-oriented lens of transparent assignment design. I realized that I could create a slow and steady progression for students, and this lesson prompts more productive and engaging conversations about the text amongst my students. Like many of our colleagues, I’m rethinking, learning, and continually improving so that I can be a better teacher and writer.

Before getting to that lesson, I provide a bit more background on some of those foundational documents noted above and then consider how my experience with Julieta helped me reimagine that lesson for future sections of my class.

SCHOLARSHIP, THEORIES, AND PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE OUR APPROACH

These conferences with Julieta emphasized the importance of guiding students through the process of academic reading and writing, with their many associated (and often invisible) skills. As an undergraduate, I would usually be given a sheet of paper with the parameters of an essay and then be asked to submit my work a few weeks later. These assignments assumed that I understood how to closely read, annotate, and engage in discursive conversations using academic language, let alone employ conventions like proper grammar and citations. Sadly, I realized that I was making some of those same assumptions with my students, and the asynchronous demands of our course had only exacerbated the problem. As I spoke with Julieta, I articulated each of those steps and scaffolded a process of learning so that she could practice and build the skills included in the writing process.

First, I share a brief description of the assignment in relation to the theoretical frameworks that underpin the assignment's design. I originally designed a three-part assignment that asked students to use the video discussion platform Flip to engage in a discussion about Adichie's talk, "The Danger of a Single Story." Students used a Google Doc with the transcript to make annotations and read aloud a passage as they recorded a video reflection in Flip. Then, they replied to a classmate who had posted a question, using an excerpt from Adichie to support their ideas. In this post, students would continue the conversation by also including a question of their own. The asynchronous discussion was supposed to last about a week. Finally, at the end of the week, I offered the students an opportunity to gather as a class in an optional WebEx meeting to reflect on the asynchronous conversations we had in Flip.

Not accounting for the final video conference call in WebEx, this lesson incorporated the use of two primary technologies, Google Docs (with which readers are likely to be familiar) and the web-based, video sharing program Flip. Briefly, Flip (formerly Flipgrid, see Novet, 2018) can be described as a cross between an online discussion forum and a social media site with video upload options. Flip describes itself as a fun, interactive space for all learners, regardless of age, to share their voices. While video-based conversations may not traditionally be considered a space where one builds on skills related to composition, the use of multimedia allows students a way to practice being in conversation with a text, a key element in the design of this particular lesson.

The choice of these technological tools was intentional. The use of Flip can be used across the different kinds of technology that students have available, including phones, computers, laptops, or tablets. Students can access it with a link or a QR code. Flip also includes accessibility options and multiple ways that students can engage with captions, timestamps, and the use of Microsoft's Immersive Reader.

While GSOLE's principle 1.4 does not reference a comprehensive request to address all obstacles involving equity, the intention is clear: instructors must design tasks and choose technology tools that include affordances that will meet the needs of their students. The design of the assignment, with Flip as a key component, both meets standard 1.4 and speaks to specific instructional moves, in addition to the technology, also meant to address the needs of students, many of whom, like Julieta, were new to online learning.

Or, so I had thought . . . until I brought my mind back to the conversation at hand with Julieta, and began to consider how her classmates might be experiencing similar challenges.

COURSE CONTEXT AND LESSON

As noted earlier, this lesson is part of a three-week assignment series that focuses on annotation, close reading, and discussion. This assignment exists within an ENG 101 English composition course provided online with any time and real-time learning components at a community college in a suburb west of Chicago. The student population is diverse with about half identifying as Black and Latinx and includes individuals from varied ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, home languages, abilities, and experiences. Students need varying levels of academic support and the assignments in ENG 101 are, ideally, structured to provide all students that support. Also of note, most of my sections for ENG 101 are completely online and asynchronous. Students are invited and encouraged to set up additional, one-to-one meetings with the professor via Webex.

The course content, broadly, is focused on multicultural identity and builds on the scholarship of Iris Ruiz, who encourages the inclusion of culture, identity, and community (Ruiz, 2016). It was developed by a group of ENG 101 professors, primarily adjuncts, in a community of practice. We all customize our courses a bit, yet there are four major assignments in the course: a narrative essay, a synthesis essay, a rhetorical analysis essay, and a digital story. The better practices featured in this chapter relates to the second assignment, the synthesis essay.

This lesson involving Flip, then, serves a few purposes at this moment in the overall arc of ENG 101 course. It helps students to engage in:

- Close reading, annotation, and finding evidence to begin crafting an argument,
- Multimodal discussion that allows for multiple ways of expression, and
- Thinking about how they, as writers, will soon make similar rhetorical moves in an essay.

Flip, as a tool for expression, is important as it gives students an opportunity to share their ideas in the way that they prefer: via video, audio-only, or with written text. As long as students are meeting the objectives of the assignment, they can fulfill those requirements in multiple ways without adding to their own labor or the labor of their instructor. Flip serves my students well, yet it is not the only technology tool that could be used in this lesson. Other platforms that facilitate video discussion can work equally as well if an educator does not have access to—or choose not to use—Flip. In considering other tools like GoReact, VoiceThread, or similar platforms, educators should ask:

- Will the tool allow students to engage in an online discussion using multimedia (video, audio, and text) recording?
- Can students connect to that platform easily with a weblink or another accessible link?
- Will students be able to work with the tool across multiple devices (smartphones, tablets, laptops)?
- Does the tool have a space where the instructor can provide students with clear, transparent directions and support materials like tutorials?
- Does the tool allow for full accessibility for all students, regardless of ability?

While the tools we use are important as a component of developing lessons and activities, they should not be restrictive. Often, we can explore other tools or reimagine a lesson to be specific to our context in our communities. Here, based on my rethinking of the task with Julieta and other students in mind, is my more transparent version of the assignment, one that I would share with them directly.

ASSIGNMENT SHEET: FLIP DISCUSSION OF ADICHE’S TED TALK, “THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY”

By the end of Week 3, you will:

- Make an initial post to Flip, due on Wednesday by midnight,
- Be prepared to discuss your initial ideas during our real-time class meeting on Thursday, and
- Reply to two classmates’ posts due on Sunday by midnight.

Purpose

As we move more deeply into our work together this semester, let's begin with a conversation that moves us from simply sharing our opinions and, instead, encourages us to focus on a specific text. To support this conversation, we will use a video-based discussion board, Flip, to look at Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 2009 TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story." In her talk, Adichie makes the case that our perceptions regarding the identity of other folks are often incomplete, allowing each of us an opportunity to learn more about other identities, communities, and cultures.

Skills

The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course and as a way to develop ideas for writing in future college courses and professional contexts. Specifically, you will . . .

- Identify main ideas in a mentor text, using substantive annotations and note taking,
- Enhance your comprehension of a text and draw connections to other texts and real-world experiences through the practice of close reading,
- Support your interpretations of a text using quotations from the author as evidence, and
- Summarize and synthesize your ideas about a text to open the dialogue with others who have also viewed/read the text.

Knowledge

For this particular lesson, let's think about the disciplinary thinking that good writers use to form arguments. You don't need to master specific content. There is no quiz, no right or wrong answers. Yet, there are some ways that we need you to think about what Adichie is discussing in her TED Talk.

Key Vocabulary Terms:

- **Intersectionality:** Developed by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) as a way to consider how various forms of identity (e.g., race, class, gender) sometimes overlap and create unique challenges and opportunities (in particular, from Crenshaw's earliest writing, African American women). According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2021), intersectionality is "[t]he interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise."

- **Discourse:** As defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, discourse is “the body of statements, analysis, opinions, etc., relating to a particular domain of intellectual or social activity, esp. as characterized by recurring themes, concepts, or values; (also) the set of shared beliefs, values, etc., implied or expressed by this” (2021). To speak more plainly, discourse is the term we use to describe ongoing conversations that occur in academic fields where experts exchange ideas about their field of expertise. When we read academic journals and use these as evidence in our writing, we are engaging in that conversation.
- **Mentor Text:** When writing teachers want to provide students with a high-quality example of writing, they will find a model or example text that students can use as a guide. These mentor texts can also describe course content texts that students are to read or review in their course.

Key Questions to think about as academic writers:

- How do you contribute your own ideas, questions, and opinions to an ongoing conversation?
- How do you write about and analyze a text, focusing on how the author was making key choices about content, language, and evidence used?
- How do you read and analyze multimodal texts composed in different tones, styles, and levels of formality?
- How do you use technology strategically and with a clear purpose in order to enhance your writing for an audience?
- For more information, you could look at the “habits of mind” from the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011), especially the ideas of persistence, engagement, flexibility, and metacognition.

The Task for the Week

1. Begin your post to Flip by choosing one of the annotations you highlighted as you were reviewing the TED Talk transcript. As you record your video, read the passage you are annotating aloud. Note the annotation you are using from your Google Doc, and then describe the connection between the text and your annotation. If you are not comfortable having your image on the screen, you can record just audio at this stage. If you are uncomfortable with speaking and/or recording, you can reach out to me for other options.
2. To help you create this post, I've provided a few resources below to review:
 - a. Review the slides from last week's class session (on Blackboard).

- b. Review my example posts in the Blackboard discussion (on Blackboard).
 - c. Review these resources from the University of North Carolina Learning Center for tips on higher-order thinking and reading comprehension:
 - i. <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/higher-order-thinking/>
 - ii. <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/reading-comprehension-tips/>
3. Create your initial post by Wednesday by midnight to allow members of the class an opportunity to review your contributions to the discussion throughout the week. At the end of your post, ask an open-ended question that will invite your classmates to respond to your initial ideas.
- a. For instance, “In what ways do you think Adiche ____” or “To what extent do you agree with Adiche that ____” are both the beginnings of good open-ended questions.
4. As you prepare for our synchronous class on Thursday, please review the initial posts and be prepared to discuss these questions.
- a. Are there common themes that emerge in the discussion?
 - b. Are the passages that our classmates are citing from Adichie’s talk in their initial posts the same, or are there many different selections?
 - c. Is there a particular classmate’s post in the discussion that sticks out to you?
5. Finally, as the week comes to a close, draft a response or a reply to a classmate in the Flip discussion by Sunday at midnight. If the classmate already has a response to their Flip video, please choose someone who has not yet received a response.
- a. Respond by indicating how their thoughts and ideas contributed to your understanding of the text and then ask a question that moves the conversation forward. You can use one of the Conversation Stems (<https://bit.ly/ConversationStems>) we discussed in class. Again, you can review my example response post in the Flip Discussion.

Criteria for Success

While this is a “pass/fail” assignment—and is meant to encourage you to participate—there are some elements that must be completed. The rubric has three criteria for the “labor-based” logistical aspect of participating, as well as three criteria for the quality of your intellectual contributions.

“Labor-Based” Criteria (Credit or No Credit based on meeting deadlines and minimal requirements):

- By Wednesday, create your initial post to the Flip Discussion Board, 0/5 points.
- By Thursday, review the posts in the Flip Discussion and be prepared to review your thoughts in class, 0/5 points.
- Sunday, create your reply to the Flip Discussion, 0/5 points.

“Quality of Intellectual Contribution” Criteria (Credit or No Credit based on quality; may be revised and resubmitted):

- Annotations show the depth of thinking by incorporating evidence from the text through reading aloud and reflection on the connection between the annotation and text, 0/2/3 points.
- Responses show active listening and response empathy that reflect on comments made by our classmates in their initial post. Responses also incorporate a reflective question intended to move the conversation forward, 0/2/3 points.

Table 7.1. Assignment Rubric

Criterion	Y/N (full or no credit)	Points Earned
Labor-based Criteria (Work must be completed on time; no make-ups)		
Initial post by Tuesday	Y/N	0/5
Participate on Thursday	Y/N	0/5
Responses by Sunday	Y/N	0/5
Quality of Contribution Criteria Y/N (with comments)		
Initial annotations on GDoc transcript show depth of thinking by commenting on specific evidence from Adichie’s text	Y/N	0/2/3
Initial Flip response poses at least one substantive question, based on annotations, for others to respond.	Y/N	0/2/3
Response to a peer in Flip shows evidence of active listening by “saying back” what was heard and engaging with ideas presented.	Y/N	0/2/3

FULL LESSON DETAILS OUTLINE

Though no single lesson can capture all the principles we hope to teach, directly or indirectly, this particular lesson has been designed to address the CCCC’s principle that “Writing can also be developed socially if writers are expected to

collaborate with one another in stages, from drafting to revision to publication,” as well as GSOLE’s “OLI 1.4: The student-user experience should be prioritized when designing online courses, which includes mobile-friendly content, interaction affordances, and economic needs.” In doing so, I examine the lesson in more detail in four major phases, each tied to one element of the CWPA framework including . . .

- **Persistence:** “consistently take advantage of in-class (peer and instructor responses) and out-of-class (writing or learning center support) opportunities to improve and refine their work.”
- **Engagement:** “make connections between their own ideas and those of others.”
- **Flexibility:** “approach writing assignments in multiple ways, depending on the task and the writer’s purpose and audience.”
- **Metacognition:** “use what they learn from reflections on one writing project to improve writing on subsequent projects.”

In what follows are brief sections where we explain the practice in greater detail and explicitly connect them to persistence, engagement, flexibility, and metacognition to illustrate to readers how these ideals can transform into better practice.

Flip, Support, and Persistence

During the first week of class, students complete a self-introduction in Flip. In this initial assignment, I provide students with my own introduction to use as a guide. In the Flip discussion forum, instructions for the assignment are also provided to students in addition to Flip video tutorials. The intention is to build community by having students converse with one another through video posts. This assignment can be a basic introduction that includes a name and a brief statement regarding what students want to learn in the course. Inspired by the work of Kimberly Crenshaw, students could create an introduction that shares aspects of their identity and experiences with their classmates to find commonality and connection. From a technological standpoint, this introductory exercise also includes the benefit of allowing students to become acquainted with Flip and experiment with the features or options in the creation of their posts.

This lesson focuses on the CWPA element of “persistence”—the ability to sustain interest in short and long-term projects—in that it elicits students’ thinking to engage them in conversation that essentially stays with them the entire semester. Students begin their discursive work at the beginning of the semester with an introduction to Flip and a low-stakes task described above. They

continue to engage with Flip in a more complex task posting their ideas about Adichie's TED talk and they become more familiar with the tool.

Close Reading, Scaffolding, and Engagement

As students move into the second week of class, they begin to engage with Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story." Students begin the lesson by reviewing the module in Blackboard. I provide them with a six- to eight-minute video that emphasizes the importance of close reading and annotation when understanding a text. In the video, I demonstrate each annotation connection, questioning, and summary using a transcript from Adichie's TED Talk.

Students use this example as a guide to help them with their assignments for the week as they annotate the transcript of Adichie's TED Talk in a Google Doc. Students highlight passages in the transcript and use the comment feature to add notes to the text. At a minimum, students should use each kind of annotation (connection, question, and summary) three or four times. However, I emphasize with students that they can use each of these annotations as much as they like. A Google Doc allows me to easily add feedback that nudges students to extend their ideas or acknowledges the strengths in their work. Students have a week to complete this assignment. The CWPA element of "engagement" occurs throughout this lesson starting with the text itself. Students perform a close reading and listening to Adichie's TED Talk. Later, students will add ideas to a Flip discussion with the intention of leaving their viewers with a question. Afterward, they will review posts and reply to their classmates, again asking a question. Through Flip, they engage and share with one another.

Flip and Flexibility

The next week, students are reintroduced to Flip. To give students a guide and show the differences in this round of conversation, I provide students with an example video as the first post on the Flip discussion board, in which I review these slides (<https://bit.ly/FlipDiscussSlides>), which walks students through why we are doing this activity, how to prepare and complete the activity by preparing and recording their video, and modeling with embedded examples of Flip videos.

Students are given a week to create their second post in the Flip discussion. The following week, students are asked to craft a reply to their classmates in the Flip in a similar way as they had in the previous round. Students review classmates' posts and choose a post they find compelling and reply. At the end of their reply posts, students again ask a question that encourages continued conversation. I also provide my own reply in the first post to the discussion so that students have a model to work from.

The CWPA element of “flexibility” applies not only in the options that students use to encounter the text but in how students reply to the TED Talk itself. Students have access to both the recording and the transcript of Adichie’s TED Talk. Flip also provides students with a number of options in terms of accessibility. The platform allows students to choose the manner in which they will participate in the discussion by creating video, audio, or screenshare recording that includes a text-based document. That being said, Flip also includes editable captions for each video that is shared as well as timestamps and screen reader capability, among other features.

CONCLUDING THE LESSON AND METACOGNITION

At the end of the week, when the discussion is concluded, I ask students to reflect on their experiences. This period of reflection also includes an optional synchronous class meeting where I help students make the connection between our Flip discussion and writing. Prior to the meeting, I request that students review posts in the Flip discussion board one more time and take notes about what they observe. What ideas were shared most frequently? What did you find interesting? What would you have liked to see the class post about more? In giving students a reflective assignment like this one, we will already have a starting point for our discussion as students gather thoughts to share in our class meeting. For those who aren’t able to attend, I provide a recording they can view afterward.

I begin the meeting with a “mixtape” video of our Flip discussion. The mixtape is a feature recently added to the Flip platform and gives the moderator/instructor the ability to combine a series of posts from a Flip discussion into a single video. For this synchronous meeting, I would collect a handful, probably no more than three, of student posts that serve as good examples and add them to the mixtape. The advantage of using the mixtape is that, when the video plays, students see each of the posts sequentially; in this sense, the video seems more like a conversation between the participants as opposed to a disjointed series of comments placed on the discussion board.

After playing the mixtape, I encourage students to freewrite briefly using the “I like, I wish, I wonder” protocol. When I introduce the prompt, I mention that we will all be sharing. As they review the posts, they take notes on what they “like” and why. Students will then move to “wish” as they think beyond the discussion taking notes about what might have been missing from our conversation. Finally, they will end with the “wonder,” taking notes about questions that arose during the conversation. This allows students to write and gives them a moment to collect their thoughts and review what they plan to share in class. As

the freewriting time passes, I participate with students and include my thoughts; I share a thought, word, or idea from my writing and go around the room asking students to share the same. This freedom to share as little or as much as students feel comfortable is a strategy I adopted from a colleague, Andy Schoenborn. Acknowledging Schoenborn's ideas of "invitation" that he shares with students (Hicks & Schoenborn, 2020), we know that sharing writing with classmates can be intimidating. However, asking students to share something as small as a word allows students the freedom to participate when they might not feel comfortable reading lengthy passages.

This discussion might also include ideas from students that include the following.

- Students will say something like "I like what Student A said . . ." or "I can see a connection from Adiche to Text B."
- Or, they might try to validate what another person has said in a more generic way.
- Or, because I knew what I was going to say to my classmate and professor, I tried to . . .
 - Ask them: how does this relate more broadly to what we are trying to do with teaching writing? How are we imagining that other teachers/authors might talk about this?

After students share ideas from their writing, I summarize and then transition into discussing the ideas and skills that they utilized in the Flip. I elaborate on how each of the skills we used in the Flip can be applied to writing an essay.

- Close reading to understand a text more thoroughly,
- Annotating to take notes and point to main ideas in a text,
- Citing text as evidence for an idea,
- Summarizing to convey an understanding of an idea, and
- Synthesizing texts to critically observe, understand and challenge an idea.

This discussion prefaces a larger, reflective essay which integrates ideas resulting from our synchronous meeting. Students submit a reflective journal entry at the end of this assignment, thinking about what they learned from engaging in this Flip conversation and our class discussion. Students might share what they liked about the Flip discussion or Adichie's "Danger of a Single Story." Students might share frequent themes that appeared in Flip. They might make connections to their writing and the skills that we practiced in this lesson including annotation and close reading. Most importantly, they may reveal that they didn't realize writing a paper was like a conversation.

The CWPA element of “metacognition” applies to this portion of the exercise in that students spend time reflecting on the activity after it concludes. They are thinking about the posts they shared, as well as reflecting on the Flip discussion overall. I begin the activity series by asking students to verbally speak as they pull ideas from Adichie’s text when preparing to record their Flip post. The task also encourages students to deepen their thinking in the construction of their post. They perform similar exercises when they create reply posts, this time considering the ideas of their classmates. Finally, at the conclusion of the discussion, they reflect on new ideas offered in the Flip. When we come back together in the synchronous meeting, students make connections between the work we are doing and the iterative nature of the writing process.

While we often think of online learning as disconnected and solitary, this particular lesson utilizes the discussion platform provided by Flip as a space to build community with the voices, text, video of student contributions. Having conversations about difficult topics can be challenging because it requires us to reveal our own ideas and show some vulnerability. Students are encouraged to use the text as a basis for reflection and then share a thought or idea about a difficult topic through video or audio. In doing so, they see others including their instructor put forward that vulnerability, too. With clear discussion guidelines set before class, students have the safety to share their ideas and respond to the ideas of others. Our community is built as we ponder and relate our thoughts of this particular text together. This metacognitive task is enhanced when we meet and hear the mixtape video then reflect on what we’ve learned and how we will use those lessons going forward.

Looking ahead, the next step would include the process of students composing a one-page paper synthesizing Adichie and connecting to another mentor narrative text. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide details about that second assignment here. I would use a prompt similar to the one below as the kernel of the task.

Prompt: Choose one idea that Adichie and one idea that the <mentor text author name> both discuss. Compose a one-page synthesis essay that explores this idea as it is presented in both mentor texts.

As an instructor, there are multiple points in this week-long series to offer feedback, though I don’t offer feedback on all of those points to each student every time (as that would be excessively time-consuming). Instead, I use the rubric noted above to focus feedback on a student’s strengths and where they might need support and offer students thoughts on how they might build upon the skills they already have.

When I think of the connection to better practices, I see it as a consistent thread. Connecting with students, both individually and collectively, is at the heart of our teaching, regardless of modality. The connections made are not accidental, they are intentional moves that come from a genuine commitment to supporting students. The chapter began with a student, Julieta, who I connected with to offer support. The better practice shares an approach for guiding connections as well: connections with text, with peers, and with a classroom community. The hopeful result of having completed this lesson is that our community will be more encouraged to engage in difficult discussions and support one another as writers as we progress through the semester.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Technological tools can empower learners and build confidence. Technological tools can also be used to enhance equity and access to learning with features that promote community, critical thinking, and perception. However, those same technological tools can be prohibitive, limiting access and increasing inequity in the classroom.

In this case, Flip as a tool did not create a more equitable classroom, in and of itself. This aligns with the OLI principle 4.2 which emphasizes sound pedagogy and quality instruction regardless of the online delivery model or technology. While it is true that the functions available within Flip made a more equitable approach possible, I needed to design an assignment that would capitalize on features of this tool to provide students with multiple ways of fulfilling the assignment requirements, all while being given the opportunity to express their ideas in the manner they preferred.

Equity in online environments begins first with the instructors and their perceptions of the learners in their classes as well as what “learning” itself really means. After considering one’s role and disposition as the instructor, one should consider the context in which the learning is occurring; this includes the communities where we are teaching and learning and the life experience of the students in front of us. Additionally, lifting up the work of Tia Brown McNair and colleagues (2020), the data that comes from our classrooms—both quantitative and qualitative—can share another perspective of what is happening in our classroom:

Indeed making the equity gaps visible can be disquieting—this is, in large part, the point. Seeing race-based equity gaps is intended to “create an ‘indeterminate situation’” by which practitioners realize that their practices are not working as intended and are “moved to a mode of deliberation or reflection that prompts them to ask ‘Why do unequal outcomes exist’ What can we do?”

Teachers who understand the classrooms, students, and communities in which they are teaching can better design learning experiences and address the needs of the learners before them. Utilizing better practices, the instructor needs to consider the educational objectives that are required of students in their class, reflecting on if these objectives also meet the needs of the students in their courses. Perhaps using a framework for integrating technology, one can consider the tools at their disposal that would meet the objectives, provide equitable access, and support the needs of students. Educators can consider how the tools could be used to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the material with flexibility, too. It is only after this preparation and reflection that one can begin designing assignments that serve students well. While each of these elements could require a much longer explanation, I mention them here to emphasize the fact that the design of this particular activity and the consideration of equity in this exercise comes from a deeper exploration of the educational context and the students in my classroom in addition to considerations of content and design.

Having an awareness of all of these things, even if not a full understanding, provides us with a perspective that we can then use to ask the same question we've always asked ourselves as teachers—What can I do in my classroom to support my students in their success? To do this, we need an equity-orientated lens.

As I reflect on the lesson described above, and continue to refine it, what becomes most clear to me is the importance of *intentionality* in the way that we craft our teaching. Teaching is a crafted profession, full of choices that lead to the opportunities we offer our students to learn. The threads come together to create beautiful experiences in the hopes that someone else will learn or appreciate its form. Tying together each of the elements of the lesson, the writing skills (annotating, reading aloud, textual evidence), the technology, community building, and finally the reflection are all parts of the lesson that provide a space for students to make connections with one another while learning with and from their instructor. While the full picture might not be evident at the start, as each of my choices came together the art of the learning revealed itself.

At the end of the day, I believe that I am learning with and from a group of learners who are in front of me. We contribute to learning in the ways that we engage with one another. We do so through the connections we forge by sharing our ideas, asking for support, providing guidance, and opening ourselves to the opportunities to understand the world from a different perspective.

CONCLUSION

When Julieta and I met for the fourth and final time during our six-week abbreviated semester, she brought her printout—with annotations—of Gloria Anzaldúa's

“How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (1987). The conversation began with some quick pleasantries, and then we jumped right in. Right away, Julieta noted key points about Anzaldúa’s article: it was written in three languages and this emulated what the author was aiming to do in a discussion of border spaces. Julieta shared her annotations, and she initiated new stages in our conversation from the many items she had noted. More importantly, at one point, she even pushed back on my interpretation of Anzaldúa’s text, again citing a place in the text where she was able to draw in additional evidence. In short, Julieta had grown as a reader, thinker, and writer.

In this last meeting, she gained confidence in the way that she presented her ideas, asserting her role as a scholar. I didn’t hear the pauses in her voice or the uncertainty that I recalled from our first meeting. She was assured and comfortable in the way she responded to my inquiries. Julieta wasn’t searching or looking for me to provide answers because she was using the skills she’d adopted to share her ideas. I asked her what she thought of the in-class discussion we’d had about Flip.

“I liked listening to the ideas of other students. I realized that even though I didn’t agree with everyone’s views, I learned from listening to what they said.”

“That’s good,” I replied. “I also learned a lot from reviewing everyone’s responses and reflections on Adichie. We all come to the class with different perspectives, experiences, and world views. That’s why I brought us back together in that class meeting.”

Her eyes drifted a bit from the screen as she shifted to that final reflection paper. “Yeah, the classmate I spoke to gave me good ideas for my reflection. And I used some of those ideas in my one-page synthesis paper.”

I smiled. We spoke for a few more minutes before we ended the call. While it seemed like the meetings were there to support her learning, they taught me about my strengths and weaknesses as an instructor, too. In our conversations, I took the time to ask how she was doing before we began and listened. I also took away lessons that applied to all students in the course. I considered where I might need to build in more support and where I could do with less guidance as we moved through the lesson. She had a guide in me, yes, but I also was being guided by Julieta.

MOVING BETTER PRACTICES ACROSS MODALITIES

- **In-Person, Real-Time Learning:** Students can still make annotations in a Google Doc before coming to class with opportunities to engage in discussion in-person instead of using Flip.
- **Online, Any Time Learning:** While the asynchronous components of this lesson could remain the same, students could reflect on what they learned by contributing to a final Flip discussion instead of meeting synchronously to discuss those final takeaways.

- **Hybrid Learning:** This better practice could largely remain the same in hybrid learning environments, with synchronous online conversations occurring during in-person meetings and asynchronous activities still completed online by students between in-person sessions.

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