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On Analyzing Literature and Visual Rhetoric With Practices of Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing

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ON ANALYZING LITERATURE AND VISUAL RHETORIC WITH PRACTICES OF
TEACHING GRAMMAR IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION

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A Final Portfolio

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Analytical Narrative

In January 2020, I began using my professional writing and editing experience to teach undergraduate courses at a university. A couple months before, I was working in a bookstore and considering looking for another job in publishing (I had had one previously), but the idea of teaching never crossed my mind except for the passing thought that it might be fun to teach a writing class someday. Out of the blue, a professor from the university where I got my BA reached out to me to ask if I wanted to teach their professional writing class the following spring. I jumped at the opportunity and have been in love with teaching ever since. However, at the time, I only had an MA in Theological Studies, and I learned I would need to pursue another degree to keep teaching English classes. Since I was teaching primarily professional writing and college composition classes, Bowling Green State University's MA in English with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric seemed to be the perfect fit.

In this program, I was given the opportunity to study professional writing and learn more about technical writing and what all that field entails. In addition to writing technical documents, I had opportunities to complete several research papers that further explored the field of technical writing and communication. In terms of rhetoric, this was incorporated into most of my classes, but my visual rhetoric course helped me to explicitly consider rhetorical analysis and practice it by applying terms I learned in the class to actual images in order to come to conclusions about those images (as seen in the third project included in this portfolio). Finally, I learned about various research methodologies such as quantitative research, qualitative research, critical theory, literature review, content analysis, formalist analysis, genre analysis, and source criticism. Although only some of these methods are explicitly used in the projects in this portfolio, these methods have influenced the way I think about research by helping me consider

various ways I can approach a topic. Among the projects included here, I chose the methods I thought would best fit each topic, and at times, I also considered how other methods could be used for future study to take a different approach to that topic (this is specifically seen and discussed in the second project).

In this portfolio, I have included three analytical essays—two of which are focused on literature, one is focused on visual rhetoric—and one lesson plan. The first three projects are examples of substantive research projects while the last is a teaching-based project. However, since my goal is to use this degree to continue teaching, all these projects work toward that goal in some way. Primarily, each project contains information I could use when teaching various courses whether that is information from the research from the projects or discussions that could be built from the ideas in the project.

For the first essay, "Technology and Utopia: Dystopian Literature's Warning for the Future," I chose to rework an annotated bibliography I wrote for my dystopian literature class. This reworking involved making the annotated bibliography into a full research paper. This was a significant amount of work, but I chose this piece and to substantially revise it because I am passionate about the topic. This project also serves as the primary substantive research project for my portfolio. As a part of the revision process, I did more research on the topic and included a few additional sources to help strengthen my points throughout the paper. For example, some of the sources I added were used to help define and discuss social media addiction, to explain algorithms and how they are used to promote consumerism online, and to show how the Internet promotes political participation.

This first piece uses M.T. Anderson's *Feed* to consider how this work of fiction was written in a way that was intended to have real-world implications. In the piece, I examine the

things happening in the story (the feed technology, how society pushes consumerism, and the environmental impact consumerism has on the world) and discuss how these things can serve as a warning for us in the real world and in our current societal context. In the piece, I also look at the history of technology from the radio to the Internet and discuss how certain goals that were intended for both the radio and the Internet both were and were not met in these technologies. For example, I discuss the goals to create equality, a stronger community, and better participation in politics and how consumerism has taken over these goals and, in some ways, prevented them from being reached. I also point out the physical and mental impact technology has on the characters of *Feed* and how our real-world technology appears to be heading in the same direction.

Revising this piece has helped me to consider how I can analyze various texts as pieces of literature and consider how fictional stories can have serious messages for the real world. This has also helped me consider how I could teach this text and other pieces of literature in classes that are focused on either literature or writing. If I ever have the opportunity to teach *Feed* or other dystopian novels, I will be referencing this piece for additional research and information as I consider various types of discussions I should open up to my class. I can also use this information in courses where I discuss technology with students as a way of helping them practice critical thinking skills.

For my second piece, I chose an analytical essay I wrote in my teaching literature class: "Analyzing *The Hobbit* to Learn About Writing Children's Literature." Like my first piece in this portfolio, this one analyzes various aspects of a piece of literature to consider what can be learned from it. However, instead of considering real-world implications, I discuss how this text can be used to teach students how to write their own stories in the same genre. I chose this piece

because it combined what I was learning in class about methodologies of critiquing and teaching literature with my desire to use a work of literature to help teach a course on writing.

This second piece is intended to show how analyzing a book (in this instance *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien) can be used to help students think critically about the text to determine elements of a specific genre (in this case, children's fantasy literature) and how they might incorporate those elements in their own writing. I originally wrote the piece with this goal in mind; however, the first version ended up being primarily an analysis of *The Hobbit* with little practical application. When I went back to revise, I looked at the specific elements discussed in the essay (the age of the characters in the text, the elements of fairy story, and the films compared to the movies), and I added a practical application to each of the sections to discuss how students might use an analysis of the novel to consider what to include in their own children's fantasy literature.

Ultimately, revising this project has helped me think more critically about *The Hobbit*. The initial piece was more focused on research and what other experts thought about the text; however, with the revision, I included both additional research and more of my own thoughts that help expand the practical portion of the piece. This piece is another substantive research project that I can easily refer to if I ever do teach a course on writing children's literature. Although this piece is not a lesson plan, it could serve to help me consider what supplemental material I might want to bring into this type of course. Finally, this project also helped me learn more about literature critiques, specifically how to use formalist critiques and genre studies. I did not explicitly use source studies to analyze *The Hobbit*; however, I did find a significant amount of information on this while doing research for this project. This information helped me

understand how a source study might work as well as consider how I could teach students how to do source studies and how I might even write my own source study of *The Hobbit* in the future.

The third project included in this portfolio, "Social Media Fitspiration: The Rhetoric of Fitness Posts and How They Impact Mental and Physical Health," was one of the first papers I wrote for this degree program. I chose to include this paper because it not only displays my analytical skills, but it seemed fitting to include a piece that applies a portion of the specialization of my degree: rhetoric. Specifically, this piece looks at fourteen images that could be defined as "fitspiration" or fitness inspiration. The goal of the paper is to analyze the rhetorical impact these images have on viewer's mental and physical health since they are meant to be inspirational. This also loosely relates to my first piece since it discusses the impact these fitness images (often posted on social media) can have on physical and emotional health and the first piece focuses on technology's impact on the future; both pieces are closely related to the impact of technology, just in different ways.

Revising this piece allowed me to revisit many of the terms I learned in the visual rhetoric course it was written for, terms such as "demand," "offer," "goal," and "vectors." Other than several minor revisions I made to tidy up the piece, I also added four images for analysis. Initially, the piece included ten fitspiration images; however, most of those were of women, so adding four images of men to have an equal number of images featuring men and women helped round out my analysis. This was interesting, too, because I had to revise some of my conclusions accordingly. For example, I had originally made assumptions about fitspiration images based on the initial ten I included (such as most images did not include a person's head/face, they had a low activity level, and included negative motivation), but when I added the other four images

these things were more balanced (the final four images included a head/face, they had a high activity level, and three of the four included text that I categorized as positive motivation).

The final piece in my portfolio, "Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing in College Composition: A Lesson Plan" is a lesson plan for a first-year college composition course. This project does not relate well to the others in this portfolio except perhaps that it is one I could use for teaching as with the first two. This piece originated in a class on teaching grammar in the context of writing, so the lesson plan is designed to focus on grammar and how it can be implemented into the course topics. Although the homework assignments included in the lesson plan are focused on the themes and topics of the composition course, the information in the daily lessons focuses on grammar rather than the course topics and themes to show how certain grammatical concepts can complement those topics and therefore be taught in context.

When revising this piece, I primarily revised the introduction, which was originally the rationale for the lesson plan explaining how the lesson plan for college composition was used to teach grammar in context, but this was written more specifically for the course in which the assignment originated. I revised this accordingly to broaden the rationale and make it more of a general experiment with these ideas. I also added an analysis section to the beginning of the lesson plan to describe my own experience teaching the plan in the Spring 2022 and how I would revise the plan accordingly for future courses. However, I also noted that, although I would personally cut some of the sections I originally included, those sections could be useful for those who teach younger students or even creative writing students, so I did not make some of those revisions to the current plan.

The process of creating these works and researching for them has taught me how to use various methodologies to critically analyze pieces of literature, visual images, and classroom

studies. Primarily, based on the works included in this portfolio, I used literary analysis, formalist analysis, genre critique, source critique, content analysis, and rhetorical analysis to analyze, create, and revise these works. The revision of these pieces has enhanced my learning on two levels. First, going back through these projects and adding additional research and reconsidering what I originally wrote has helped expand my knowledge on each of those topics and helped me consider how to use critical analysis to find a practical application to a classroom context. Second, by going back through these works, I was able to see how my writing and thinking has grown and changed throughout this program. For example, since my third project was the first I had written for this program, I noticed that my writing has improved significantly as I have learned more about analyzing and critically thinking about various topics. Also, for my final piece, since I used this to teach a course in my own career context, I was able to reflect on how well that lesson plan worked as well as what I might change in the future.

Overall, creating this portfolio has given me the opportunity to reflect on my time here at BGSU as well as to reflect on how my writing and thinking has changed throughout this program. Although my specialization in English was not focused on teaching, I was able to take some courses on teaching and consider how my other courses could also apply to my current teaching context as well as my future teaching goals—especially considering other types of classes I would like to teach in the future such as literature. Because of this program, I feel more prepared to teach additional courses on writing and to enhance the courses I currently teach. I also, unexpectedly, feel this program has prepared me to enter the field of technical writing and communication if I choose to in the future.

Technology and Utopia: Dystopian Literature's Warning for the Future

Introduction

Using technology to create utopia is not a new concept. For years, various new technologies from radios to smartphones have been produced and promoted with the idea of creating equality, stronger communities, and furthering participation in politics. At first glance, new technologies with these goals seem to only have positive results. Not only does the Internet make certain processes faster and easier, but it also provides more opportunities for learning, educational advancement, and communication. However, dystopian literature, and in this case M.T. Anderson's *Feed,* shows us that this technology we find so helpful and so addicting, at times, can be harmful.

Anderson's *Feed* is a young adult novel set in future America. In this world, 73% of the population have a chip in their brains called "the feed," which is similar to our modern-day Internet and smartphones. The main character of the novel, a teenager named Titus, explains the feed and the excitement surrounding it when it first came out: "It was all *da da da, this big educational thing, da da da, your child will have the advantage, encyclopedias at their fingertips,* . . . That's one of the great things about the feed—that you can be supersmart without ever working" (Anderson 47). Interestingly, the technology used in this dystopian novel is not far from where we are now. Phone technology is so far advanced that iPhones even allow you to authenticate payments in certain Apple Apps with face ID. Consumerism has become so much easier. A quick glance at the phone is all that is needed to validate a purchase. Although we do not have chips implanted in our brains (chips planted under the skin for identification purposes and other records have been used in some countries), our phones serve as a computer in our hands that we can use to communicate, to search, to learn, to buy, and to sell.

However, as amazing as this technology is, the initial goals for new technologies (that are not far from those in *Feed*) have not all been met to the degree that was originally hoped for, and in some cases, more problems have been created. For example, greater gaps exist in educational equality because not everyone has access to certain technologies like the Internet. Technology can create communities through shared interests and an online presence, but this can also hinder personal face-to-face relationships.

Giving citizens a stronger sense of democracy with more participation in politics through technology does not always happen since media is often both manipulated and censored. Beginning with the radio in the 1970s and moving to the Internet in the twenty-first century, it quickly becomes clear that good intentions for technologies are often thwarted to create a more consumerist culture and a capitalist society. In this paper, I use Martin Spinelli's "Radio Lessons for the Internet," which examines Hans Enzensberger's theory of media, to discuss various aspects of technology's history and how it is still changing, the original goals for technology and Internet theory, and how those goals have become distorted over the years. Specifically, I look at equality, community, the world and politics, and consumerism and discuss how M.T. Anderson's dystopian novel *Feed* serves as a warning for our future; finally, I discuss the implications this technology has for future generations based on these warnings. This research is not intended to discount the significance and helpfulness of the Internet, rather it is intended to show that what we hoped for in the Internet has not been the reality, and we should look at the results as a warning for our future as we continue to research and adopt new technologies.

Equality

One of the main goals of new technologies over the years has been to create equality. The goal has traditionally been to eliminate classes or a separation between the bourgeoisie and the poor. In Hans Enzensberger's "Constituents of a Theory of the Media," he points out that media in terms of television (with the exception of closed-circuit systems) helps "do away with all educational privileges and thereby with the cultural monopoly of the bourgeois intelligentsia" (20). The idea is that everyone has access to equal educational programming—or at least everyone who owned or could afford to own a television at the time. He notes this same basic concept in terms of radio, proposing that "every transistor radio is, by the nature of its construction, at the same time a potential transmitter" allowing for two-way communication (Enzensberger 15). This two-way communication could be used to help promote and enhance equality since people could then communicate and in doing so impact each other.

However, until the radio would be used for two-way communication, Enzensberger notes that all media is manipulated—"There is no such thing as unmanipulated writing, filming, or broadcasting"

(Enzensberger 20). Even before it is edited, specific shots and angles can be done in a way to influence an audience. But instead of arguing against those in control of media and the things they choose to publicize, he emphasizes that "a revolutionary plan should not require the manipulators to disappear; on the contrary, it must make everyone a manipulator" (Enzensberger 20). In this way, the radio could be a means of making everyone a producer which would promote equality. Today, we see these attempts to move toward equality with the Internet. In fact, while reading Enzensberger's article, it is easy to forget he is talking about the radio. His conversations are so relatable that it sounds like he is referring to the Internet, especially since anyone can post videos online and become an "influencer"—a term relatable to Enzensberger's "manipulator."

In his article "Radio Lessons for the Internet," Martin Spinelli examines Enzensberger's article, and he discusses how Enzensberger's ideas in relation to the radio can be applied to the Internet today. He also critiques the original vision for the Internet from The White House, called *The National Information Infrastructure: Agenda for Action*. He quotes this, noting "the best schools, teachers, and courses would be available to all students without regard to geography, distance, resources, or disability" (The White House). Like the radio, one of the goals was for equal educational opportunities. However, Spinelli points out that the attempt for equal education would put poorer students who could not access the Internet even further behind—as was the case with the radio. It could be argued that most people have Internet access today; however, according to the FCC's "Eighth Broadband Progress Report," about nineteen million Americans still lack access to the Internet at threshold speeds (that is about 6% of the population). There are Americans who choose not to have Internet access, but others cannot access it due to location or financial reasons. In other words, the Internet does not provide equal opportunities for every person at this time which means the Internet cannot effectively produce equality.

Looking beyond the U.S., Itibari Zulu discusses existing concerns about the Internet both in the present and in the future in "The 2016 Internet Society Report." Concern surrounds those in poorer societies who do not have the same Internet access. Zulu states, "those with access only through slow connections or smart phones living in poor remote communities and regions that lag in Internet skills and

advanced infrastructure are seen as particularly at risk in falling behind compared to wealthy countries and more developed regions of the world" (5). Even for those who do have access to the Internet, there is a plethora of information available for free; however, much of the quality information comes with a price—a price not everyone can afford. Although the Internet is beneficial to some, it falls short of meeting the goal for equality and instead widens the equality gap. The wealthy have access to the Internet and the money needed for the advanced educational opportunities it provides (like online courses through a university or other organization). For those who either do not have access at all, only have access at slower speeds, or do not have the financial means to afford advanced educational opportunities, they are left to fall behind.

This is seen to the extreme in the book *Feed.* Instead of creating more equality and better opportunities for everyone, the feed put a larger gap between those who had it and those who either did not have it or got it later in life. An example of this is seen through the experience of Titus' girlfriend, Violet. Her parents did not have the money for the feed at first. Toward the end of the book, her father tells Titus of a job interview he had where the interviewers discovered he did not have the feed: "I realized they had chatted me, and that I had not responded. They found this funny. Risible. That a man would not have the feed. So they were chatting about me in my presence. Teasing me when I could not hear. Free to assess me as they would, right in front of me. I did not get the job" (Anderson 288).

Two people chatting each other in this way would be worse than texting each other to make fun of a third person in their presence who does not have a phone. With the physical phones removed from the situation, Violet's father was left to figure out what was happening on his own. And there was nothing he could do to fix the situation; he could not even pretend to have the feed since unlike a cell phone, it did not need a phone number to connect. This was both humiliating and degrading to Violet's father who, ironically, was a college professor and is arguably one of the most intelligent people in *Feed.* Due to this experience, he chose to get the feed for Violet. He did not want her to face the same embarrassment or to be denied certain opportunities due to not having the feed.

Unfortunately, Violet was not able to get the feed until she was seven which caused other problems (Anderson 112-113). She explained to Titus that "if you get the feed after you're fully formed, it doesn't fit snugly. . . . It's more susceptible to malfunction" (Anderson 170). She then admits to problems she had been having with her feed for a while. To make matters worse, since the feed is implanted in the brain, a malfunctioning feed is not the same as when a smartphone stops working. Some may argue that a broken smartphone could affect a person mentally and emotionally, but a malfunctioning feed had physical effects and caused parts of her body to not work properly.

Thankfully, technology in the real world has not reached this point, but Anderson's novel certainly can cause us to wonder what may happen if a chip implanted for identification purposes malfunctions. But we are already at the point where not having certain technologies can make people seem inferior or set them back in life. It is not just the Internet. It is also the ability to access the Internet via smartphones and other technology. Many, if not most, jobs now require Internet access. If the Internet is not used for email or communication between a company and their employees, it is often used at least for a person to view their pay stubs, choose benefits, and access other important documents.

Relationships and Community

Another goal for the Internet was to create stronger communities. The idea was that users would "develop new 'electronic communities' and share knowledge and experiences that [could] improve the way that they learn, work, play, and participate in the American democracy" (The White House). In many ways, this goal has been reached, as we can see with social media; however, Spinelli points out that the radio had this same goal. It was intended to bring people together and create a community through a unified message. But oddly, the idea was to keep people in their homes, and therefore isolated, strengthening their family unit and community bond through shared ideas (Spinelli). However, this proposition does not make sense. "Radio is the proposed antidote for the very social fragmentation it encourages. It is a provider of stability that works toward an America of happy homes while it limits broader human interaction" (Spinelli). If the goal for radio was to isolate people in their homes, this goal has certainly been met with the Internet except that the isolation is more extreme. People are not only

isolated in their homes, but they no longer need to gather in a single room to listen to one radio. Instead, family members are separated in rooms as teens and adults alike hang out alone with their phones. Even when in the same room, families become isolated from each other when each person has their own electronic device. They bury themselves in social media, online shopping, YouTube videos, and even work after hours instead of communicating fact-to-face with those physically around them.

Jean Twenge builds on this idea in her article "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" Although the focus of her research is on teens, it is likely much of her research can be applied to adults. Twenge uses studies to show correlations between smartphones becoming popular and people spending less time together face-to-face. "The number of teens who get together with their friends nearly every day dropped by more than 40 percent from 2000 to 2015; the decline has been especially steep recently. . . . The roller rink, the basketball court, the town pool, the local necking spot—they've all been replaced by virtual spaces accessed through apps and the web" (Twenge 346). Twenge goes on to discuss that research, although difficult to prove, shows that these online communities do not seem to cause any increased happiness among teens, and at least at the time of her research, she concluded that teens were less happy and lonelier than they had been in the past before smartphones were so common. So even though smartphones allow access to the Internet and online communities, people are no happier than they were before.

Despite the goal of both radio and online communities to help people connect, György Túry, in an article critiquing Enzensberger's article, notes that "In the era of ubiquitous electronic media people have become more individualized, and society has become more fragmented" (621). So, sadly, even though the Internet does help people connect more frequently online, it is not strengthening relationships or deeper bonds that happen in person. Unfortunately, social media has the opposite effect. In an article by Arzu Uyaroğlu et al., the researchers found that social media addiction—"defined as the increase of a person's desire to use social media over time, neglecting responsibilities in other areas of life because of excessive time spent on social media platforms" (1)—contributes to depression and loneliness (7). This is not surprising since it does not take special research to simply see and observe a group of teens in public and

notice that every one of them is on a phone. They choose to jump online instead of interacting with those around them.

Although the characters in the novel *Feed* do frequently hang out together in groups, like teens today, they are not always comfortable in social situations. For example, in the novel, they will chat each other through the feed so others cannot hear what they are saying. Sometimes they even use the chat when they are with each other in person, even in one-on-one situations. This would be like two people sitting next to each other and texting instead of talking. For example, after leaving a get together with a group of Titus' friends where they made fun of Violet, she and Titus were both "too angry to speak out loud" (Anderson 167). They chatted instead. But when their conversation turned to a more serious matter, Violet requested to talk out loud: "Talk to me. In the air" (Anderson 169). This made Titus uncomfortable: "I was like biting my lip. I hate these kinds of conversations. I was feeling completely squeam" (Anderson 169).

Titus' reaction to speaking in person reflects that of teens today who say they prefer texting over talking face-to-face. A 2018 Common Sense Social-Media study revealed that 35% of teens prefer texting their friends to getting together in person. Additionally, "54% say that using social media 'often distracts [them] when [they] should be paying attention to the people [they are] with'" ("New Common Sense Research"). Unfortunately, as Spinelli explains, virtual communities promote an "eagerness to abandon and move on, rather than to work in and develop a community" this "mirrors the promise of that first radio ad: the better world is always just through the next gateway, ready-made and without those noisy neighbors" (Spinelli).

The World and Politics

Finally, one would think the Internet would strengthen a democracy and an individual's sense of citizenship; however, Enzensberger had a vision for radio to build better community connections *without* the intention that people participate in politics. He seems to have expected content to remain "apolitical and limited" with the idea that "work on the media is possible for an individual only in so far as it remains socially and therefore aesthetically irrelevant. The collection of transparencies from the last holiday trip

provides a model" (22). "The last holiday trip" sounds like the modern Instagram post that does not involve sharing personal beliefs or ideas.

Enzensberger goes on to note that "by producing aggressive forms of publicity which were their own, the masses could secure evidence of their daily experiences and draw effective lessons from them" (Enzensberger 23). He is specifically talking about "tape recorders, ordinary cameras and cine cameras" (23), but it sounds exactly like the Internet and social media, especially since many do use it to document their experiences and share them with others. Even though much of what is on the Internet is based on pictures that are nice to look at (think aesthetic scenery, coffee shops, and the like), as both producers and consumers of media, we know that it does not remain apolitical, which in terms of citizen participation is good. In a study exploring how people use various forms of social media to participate in politics, Cheonsoo Kim and Soobum Lee use their research to show that "New media, such as the Internet, improve political participation by reducing the cost of information gathering and providing easier ways to engage in politics" (2943). They argue that social media websites help citizens stay informed on current politics including when, where, and how to vote and get involved in politics offline. In this way, the Internet has positively impacted at least U.S. citizens by enhancing their learning and ability to participate in society.

Although, with differences in opinions, it is no surprise that the Internet does add to political tensions. Now that virtually anyone can become a manipulator and a producer, nearly everyone also has the ability to express their opinions online. With hot political topics such as environmental issues, abortion, immigration, and the LGBTQ community, it is no surprise that the Internet can cause serious divisions in communities. Many people choose to no longer keep their opinions to themselves, instead, they jump online and make their thoughts known—sometimes this is done in response to something that was read or seen on the news that has prompted an angry outburst. Thus, arguments ensue.

In addition to enhanced political participation and tension, the Internet is sometimes used to prevent participation in politics. In "The 2016 Internet Society Report," when Zulu discusses the Internet and the issues of those who do not have access to it in terms of the disadvantages, he also notes that in

some areas that do have Internet access, it has been "abused by [the] government to stop or hamper protest against actual and perceived injustices" (Zulu 5). In these cases, the Internet is used to control society and suppress them from their freedoms. This is not unlike what happened with the radio. Enzensberger considers other views and critiques on this topic, noting that governments would like to control this system and listen in and censor what is on the radio; however, this would limit the freedom of press and freedom of ideas (17).

In the futuristic America of *Feed,* even though users have the ability to be more in the know of what is going on around the world and therefore to participate in society, the focus on consumerism is so strong that the feed keeps people focused on buying the next new thing and therefore distracted from public affairs. The utopia the feed technology aims for does not exist everywhere and may eventually come to an end. For example, near the end of the novel, Titus talks about the things that are happening: "The Global Alliance had issued more warnings about the possibility of total war . . . there had been rioting in malls all over America and that no one knew why . . . the White House had not confirmed or denied reports that extensive bombing had started in major cities in South America" (Anderson 296). The world seemed to be falling apart, but for the most part, except for brief mentions throughout the novel, the characters do not seem to notice.

An argument for the Internet could be made here that people are so connected these days that it is impossible not to notice what is going on in the world, which is true. However, the warning from the text still stands. In an interview with Anderson about the novel *Feed*, Blasingame asks whether the destruction of Violet and her father "the only critical thinkers in a ravished world peopled by unquestioning citizens totally under the control of a faceless corporate entity" is a warning that "we need to change our ways" (Anderson and Blasingame 98), and Anderson's answer is "yes." He notes that "overpopulation, destruction of the forests, exploitation of other populations in the name of good business sense . . . [are] statistical realities, and they're going to impact the way we live" (Blasingame and Anderson 98). The point is not to say that this is where our world is now; it is to be a warning for what the future may bring if a change does not happen. Citizens need to move beyond simply staying informed and even

participating in politics. They need to find out what they can do to help make a change in the world and go out and do it.

Consumerism

"Our nation has a vicious prejudice against anything that doesn't yield quick profit" (Anderson and Blasingame 98), Anderson notes this unfortunate reality in his interview about *Feed*. Similarly, Spinelli points out that attempts to reach a utopia where everyone would have equal education and a deeper community and cultural investment has turned into a new mode of buying and selling products: "The utopian rhetoric that surrounded the emergent medium of radio functioned largely to obscure a profit motive; and, in a celebration of consumption-as-citizenship, the needs for real democracy, fulfilling community, and equality in education were not realized even in a virtual sense in the surrogate space of radio" (Spinelli). To further explain, he uses an example of an investigation done on a radio station in Buffalo when it became clear they only played popular songs rather than music from local bands (Spinelli). Spinelli notes that the results of the investigation showed that local bands were not played because they might cause the station to lose profits due to damaged ratings. In other words, strengthening the community through local music and giving musicians opportunities to promote themselves was no longer the goal; instead, profitability took center stage.

In *Feed*, instead of going to school to learn, since students have all the knowledge they need implanted in them, schools are run by corporations and are designed to teach students to be better consumers. "The young people of *Feed* are trained not as citizens but as consumers" (Bradford 129). In addition to this training, the feed tracks purchases, searches, and even emotions to see what each person is interested in to better target ads to each individual. Violet explains how this works: "Everything we do gets thrown into a big calculation. Like they're watching us right now. They can tell where you're looking. They want to know what you want" (Anderson 97). This sounds similar to how the Internet uses algorithms to show users more of the types of content they regularly view. This is common on social media. Basically, the more someone views a certain type of content, the more likely that type of content will show up. This is also why, after looking at certain products online, ads on various websites will show

similar products to those recently viewed. Spinelli explains this well: "Marketing analysts are employed not to determine general popularity but only to define what is the most sellable or what will be most appealing to an audience of consumers." These days, actual people are not needed to monitor the interests of Internet users, the algorithms do that for them.

Natasha Just and Michael Latzer discuss the impact of algorithms in their article "Governance by Algorithms: Reality Construction by Algorithmic Selection on the Internet." They explain how algorithms work based on an input and output system where what is inputted into a system gets assigned relevance by an algorithm to create an output (Just and Latzer 241). This is how algorithmic functions use what is viewed online to target certain content to users. Algorithms look at what is viewed online and show additional content accordingly. Additionally, "Algorithmic selection on the Internet influences not only what we think about (agenda-setting) but also how we think about it (framing) and consequently how we act" (Just and Latzer 245). The more we view something online, the more we see it, which causes us to think about certain things more and arguably to potentially be more likely to buy a certain product or service.

Like our modern algorithms, in the book, Violet explains how the feed studies people and targets them with certain ads to attempt to form them into a certain type of person: "They try to figure out who you are, and to make you conform to one of their types for easy marketing. It's like a spiral: They keep making everything more basic so it will appeal to everyone. And gradually, everyone gets used to everything being basic, so we get less and less varied as people, more simple" (Anderson 97). Having people "conform to one of their types" is similar to what businesses do when they create consumer profiles, which seem to be exactly what Violet is referring to. Businesses study customers of certain departments or products and create a profile that describes a particular type of person. This profile, or made-up person, will be given a name, age, gender, and even have a list of interests and hobbies. This becomes the target market or audience for those departments or products. But Violet is suggesting those who track their feeds take this even further. Beyond just studying for target marketing, over time they make simpler products that appeal to multiple audiences in order to sell more. Instead of creating products

that are useful to people, they begin to create products that may not have a purpose, but marketing is used to help sell those products anyway. Profit is the goal.

But the impact of the vast amount of products sold reaches far beyond profit. More products mean more waste which means there is more in the landfill and more harm done to the environment. In *Feed* the environmental impact is devastating. In the beginning of the novel, Titus and his friends go to the moon for spring break. In a very brief comment, we learn that even space is polluted: "we stared out the window. Wrappers were turning through space like birds" (Anderson 21). Hints about the amount of trash and pollution are noted throughout the novel but Violet is the only one who seems concerned for the environment. For example, when she and Titus are planning to go on a date, they consider going to a forest; however, Titus' dad points out that the forest does not exist anymore because, ironically, it was replaced with an air factory (Anderson 125). Violet argues that "trees make air," but Titus' dad pushes back "Do you know how inefficient trees are, next to an air factory?" (Anderson 125). A little later we learn that beaches are so polluted that Titus and Violet have to wear suits when they visit one so they "wouldn't smell it" (Anderson 179). While on the beach, Titus chatted Violet to try to encourage her that things would be okay. She responds with "*Have you looked at the sea? . . . Everything's dead. Everything's dying*" (Anderson 180). This makes Titus angry, and they get in a brief fight and quickly change the subject. Even though the characters are made aware of the environmental issues, they are so caught up in themselves that they do not consider the seriousness of the problem or that their own buying habits may be what contributes to it.

One positive thing for the environment today is that many influencers on the Internet promote minimalism and thrift shopping. However, there are more ads out there for other new products whether that is something practical to make life easier or an advertisement for the latest fashion trends. When it comes time to get rid of those products we no longer need because they break or because trends change, we have plenty of opportunities to donate or to recycle, but there are many who choose not to since it is easier to throw something away and pay a small fee to have it hauled to the landfill than to clean out recyclable containers or to drive to a donation center. There are also many products, especially food

products, that come in packaging that is not recyclable which adds to the landfill. In this way, *Feed* serves as a warning that if we continue our current habits, we may one day need a hazmat suit to go to the beach. Some may argue that they cannot control the packaging their food comes in, but everyone can control what they buy and how much.

Sadly, consumerism is so extreme in the novel that it goes far beyond environmental impact. Since Violet figured out how the feed works to market to individuals, she decides to play the system. She knows they are tracking what she buys and even what she looks at, so she begins viewing different types of products, so the system is unable to create an accurate profile of her. "What I've been doing over the feed for the last two days, is trying to create a customer profile that's so screwed, no one can market to it. I'm not going to let them catalog me. I'm going to become invisible" (Anderson 98). This seems to be a fun game until she is in dire need of a solution to her malfunctioning feed. As mentioned earlier, the feed is implanted in the brain and therefore crucial to each person's physical life. If it does not function properly, the person cannot survive. But when she begins to seek help for repairing the feed, she is rejected as a candidate for the procedure: "*We're sorry, Violet Durn. Unfortunately, FeedTech and other investors reviewed your purchasing history, and we don't feel that you would be a reliable investment at this time. No one could get what we call a 'handle' on your shopping habits. . . . Sorry—I'm afraid you'll just have to work with your feed the way it is*" (Anderson 247). Since Violet was not a reliable consumer, corporations did not see her as being worth the investment needed to save her life.

In looking at this novel as a warning for our future, investors rejecting Violet is terrifying. The idea is that the world is running on a consumerist culture to the point that human life only matters to the extent that people are able to buy products—to consume. And as with Violet, those facing life-threating realities are not worth saving if they are unwilling to conform to that culture. Violet is not even offered the option of a payment plan to allow her to get the life-saving procedure and to pay for it herself over time, she is simply left to die. Thankfully this is not where we are yet, and hopefully we will never get there.

What Technology Is Doing to Current and Future Generations

When asked whether Anderson had a positive or negative view of today's youth, he had mixed responses. On the negative end, he said, "I worry that we're producing a nation and a generation that is inarticulate and clumsy in their thought; self-absorbed; incapable of subtlety; constructed by products; unable to learn from the past, because the past is forgotten; blind to global variation; violently greedy and yet unaware of how much we ask for already" (Anderson and Blasingame 99). These ideas are reflected throughout *Feed* in various characters, which may be why, as noted above, most of the characters are unaware or at least unconcerned about the environmental impact and global happenings around the world. Instead of creating better informed citizens, the feed made people more absent-minded.

Violet explains this idea to Titus right after telling him she did not get her feed until she was seven. He apologizes to her for not realizing so many people did not have the feed. She responds, "*No one with feeds thinks about it*, she said. *When you have the feed all your life, you're brought up to not think about things. Like them never telling you that it's a republic and not a democracy. It's something that makes me angry, what people don't know about these days*" (Anderson 113). In our world, the Internet keeps the younger generation distracted. Some may keep up on current news via online articles, but many focus their attention on social media and watching "cat videos"—a term that has become somewhat of a cliché, but I use it to mean any video or reel that is watched mindlessly that has little value beyond entertainment.

Another warning in *Feed* is that this technology causes Titus, and just about everyone in the book, to take on the role of the bystander rather than becoming active participants in society. Actors challenge and question the world whereas bystanders simply watch what is happening without trying to question or change it (Bullen and Parsons 134). It is possible that the Internet is making us bystanders. Instead of paying attention to what is going on in the world, we are more focused on our phones and what the online news (if we look at it at all) tells us than what we see physically around us. For those who do pay attention to what is going on in the world, many use the Internet as a place to vent and complain about what is happening rather than using it as a medium to actively pursue change.

In the novel, Violet seems to be the only one who is concerned about what is going on in the world; she is the only actor in *Feed.* We hear her pondering things going on in the world throughout the novel, but near the end during a serious medical episode, she begins yelling, "Can I tell you what I see? Can I tell you? We are hovering in the air while people are starving. This is obvious! Obvious! We're playing games, . . . We're losing it, and we're making out. . . . . *We've got to all stop it!*" (Anderson 201). She finally snaps and tries to get those around her to see what is going on. She continues, "*Look at us! You don't have the feed! You are feed! You're feed! You're being eaten! You're raised for food!*" (Anderson 202). Violet is trying to warn those around her to help them see the world the way she does. "The novel makes it clear that the bystander does not escape the tragic fate of the activist" (Bullen and Parsons 134). In this case, all are victims of the larger corporations, and all will suffer some fate. Bystanders become the feed large corporations use for profit. Unfortunately, like the characters in *Feed,* the Internet may keep us so distracted that we do not realize the problems in the world around us. For example, when it comes to consumerism and the environmental impact of too much waste, everyone is affected. We may not see the impact today, but eventually, it will become obvious if we do not make a change soon.

Bullen and Parsons point out that because of the Internet, as with the feed in the novel, we no longer have an excuse to be bystanders. However, the teens in the novel "never engage with politically pertinent information because it cannot compete with the entertainments offered by constant chat with friends, feedcasts of soap operas, the government sanctioned news bulletins that reassure them about the proliferating risks of their world, and the constant advertising that motivates their existence" (Bullen and Parsons 136). This novel, like most dystopian literature, does not have a happy ending. But the point is to help readers think about their society and the way things are rather than living passively as bystanders. As Bullen and Parsons point out, the happy ending releases "the reader from their engagement with the problem" (137). In contrast, Violet's tragic fate helps readers realize the weight of the problem and the weight of the implications this has for our world if it does not change.

Conclusion

The good news is many of the goals of technology and the Internet have been met at least to some extent; however, the concern is more for the problems that are also caused by this technology—the widening equality gap and unequal opportunities for those who do not have the Internet, the damage online communities do to in-person relationships, the censorship and tracking of individuals online, and the consumerist culture taking over and distracting Internet users from important events. Spinelli explains this well: "The utopian promotion of the net under the rubrics of democracy, community, and educational opportunity, will serve only to obscure economic and representational disparity and thwart any democratizing potential the net might have." It is helpful to look at how the novel *Feed* stands as a warning to our present world to avoid creating a dystopian society. "What the imagined space and time of science fiction thus offer the reader is not a vision of a possible future, but an interrogation of the present" (Bullen and Parsons 128). Ultimately, the primary question of Bullen and Parsons' article comes into play here, how can anyone survive a dystopian society? (128). M.T. Anderson's answer to this is "no-one" (Bullen and Parsons 135). Therefore, among all the goals for the Internet and new technology, we must also consider and be aware of the negative impact certain technologies can have on our society.

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Analyzing *The Hobbit* to Learn About Writing Children's Literature

Introduction

Many of the students who come to my university's upper-level English and literature

classes are deeply interested in studying literature and in writing their own stories, especially

fiction. They enjoy stories, discussing texts, and practicing writing in various genres with

different skills and techniques. Due to this interest, I have designed a course that helps college

students to read children's literature with an analytical eye to learn whatever possible about

writing children's literature. The course covers and analyzes several books from *Alice in*

Wonderland by Lewis Carroll to R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*. The idea is to cover books written over

many years to study elements of children's literature and how it has changed and stayed the same

over the years. One of the books to be studied in this course is *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien.

The Hobbit is an interesting book to analyze in the context of children's literature since it

was written as a fairy story for children—specifically for Tolkien's own children (Donovan 11).

In fact, according to Perry Bramlett, in his book *I Am in Fact a Hobbit: An Introduction to the*

Life and Work of J. R. R. Tolkien, he notes that "In later correspondence with W. H. Auden,

Tolkien told the poet that the *Hobbit* was 'unhappily meant' as a children's story and that it

contained some of the 'silliness' of certain children's books he had read in his childhood" (26).

But the interesting part of *The Hobbit* being written for children is that there are no child

characters within the text.

Additionally, it is helpful to compare Tolkien's original text to Peter Jackson's film

adaptations since Jackson's trilogy is intended for adults rather than children. His intention was

to reach the audience of *The Lord of the Rings* movies while also tying together the storyline of

The Lord of the Rings and other works by Tolkien. Also, studying the additional scenes and

characterization in the films and considering what was necessary to change to help the movies reach an older audience helps students see how the novel works as a piece of children's literature. Analyzing *The Hobbit* as a piece of children's literature in terms of character, fairy story, and how it relates to Peter Jackson's films can be helpful to students as they think about what they might want include in or leave out of their own stories when writing for children.

Methodology

As Elaine Showalter mentions in her book *Teaching Literature,* "Unlike poetry, drama, and even literary theory, teaching the novel has no specific, time-honored, or new trendy methodologies" (89). However, there are several methodologies that could be used to approach *The Hobbit* from an analytical and critical perspective. Those methodologies include a formalist analysis, genre study, and source analysis; however, those primarily used in this analysis are formalist analysis, which looks at various parts and features of the text itself, and genre study, which focuses on what makes *The Hobbit* children's literature and a fairy tale.

If time allowed it within the course, looking at *The Hobbit* in terms of the sources Tolkien used to write the text would prove to be interesting and produce fruitful conversations. However, this type of study may be more fitting for a class dedicated to Tolkien and his work since there are many sources that Tolkien used to build his mythology for Middle-earth and the story of *The Hobbit*. Many of those stories are other famous works of children's literature such as *Alice in Wonderland*. According to Nicholas Birns, "Although Tolkien read *Alice*, this famous children's book did not have any especial appeal to him; according to Humphrey Carpenter it 'amused' but did not thrill him as a child. . . . But part of the alchemy of authorship is that books which do not seem to register on a surface level can inform on a deep one" (Birns 16). It is interesting to consider how books can inform on a deep level as well as how various texts may

have informed Tolkien's writing. However, there is not enough time within a one-semester course to study this aspect of the text in-depth since so many other books are studied for the class as well. As Showalter notes, "everyone who teaches the novel has to reach some compromise between breadth and depth, between history and intensity" due to the length of the texts (93). With that said, the goal of this class is to approach the book with a formal analytical perspective and in terms of analyzing the genre.

Reading through *The Hobbit* when studying children's literature helps students consider the elements of the story that make it children's literature, even without child characters in the text. It helps them see how Bilbo, the main character who is a middle-aged adult, can still relate to children. This gives students the ability to consider new ways they might want to write their own stories in the same genre whether that is realistic fiction or fantasy or fairy tale. Additionally, to help students consider how analyzing *The Hobbit* can help them with their own writing of children's literature, a formalist approach that looks at the elements of the story is helpful. Considering plot, characterization, and what specifically makes the story a fairy tale helps students approach the text analytically. Finally, comparing the book to Peter Jackson's film adaptations of the novel brings to light the ways the original scenes in the text were written for children and allows a comparison of the same scenes in the movie which is designed for adults.

Rationale

Using genre study and formalist analysis to help students learn to write well in a specific genre can help them think more critically both about the text they are reading and their own writing. Often, students read several texts within the genre they want to write in; however, a surprising number of students admit to not reading literature of any kind and simply studying writing craft or writing without any prior study. Writers learn to write by reading, writing, and

studying experts. Reading books by various authors can spark new ideas that inspire writing in terms of structure, plot, language, character, and images. It also helps students to consider what elements make up a certain type of story. Having a class that analyzes a specific genre through texts from that genre and focuses on writing can help students learn to critically analyze and think more deeply about texts in general while learning how to apply that analysis to something they are passionate about: writing.

Analyzing Form and Genre

The sections that follow analyze the ages of the characters in *The Hobbit*, examine the elements of the story that make it a fairy story, and compare the text of the book to Peter Jackson's films in order to discuss how the text works so well as children's literature. At the end of each section, I explain how these elements and comparisons can be used to help students study literature with the intention of writing literature as they can begin to think about genre and craft in their own writing.

The Lack of Child Characters in the Text

Thinking of *The Hobbit* as children's literature may seem a bit unusual since there are no children mentioned in the book. Nonetheless, as Birns points out in his article, "'The Inner Consistency of Reality': Intermediacy in 'the Hobbit,'" all hobbits, especially Bilbo in *The Hobbit* serve as "intermediate between children and adults" (15). Even in the adult books, *The Lord of the Rings*, the hobbits Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin all seem younger in how they act compared to other characters. Yet, Bilbo, the main character in *The Hobbit*, a book written for children, is middle aged, and as Birns explains, Bilbo has very real adult problems he faces throughout the novel: "hobbits are little adult human beings. Indeed, though Bilbo's small stature and lack of sophistication lead him occasionally to take on the role of a child in the new, wider

world, Bilbo's problems are fundamentally middleaged ones—complacency, a sense of potential left unfulfilled, the very Jamesian sense of an unlived life" (17). This makes Bilbo an interesting choice as a main character for a children's book since many children do not have these struggles.

This leaves readers wondering why Bilbo would be the main character of a children's novel; however, throughout the text, Bilbo, although he is indeed not a child, displays several childlike characteristics that may help him relate to young readers. This is expressed especially toward the beginning of the novel when the dwarves mention that they "may never return" from their journey, at which point Bilbo shrieked and fainted (Tolkien 17). His fear is reasonable, especially since he feels inadequate as someone who has never gone on or cared to go on an adventure. "Sorry! I don't want any adventures, thank you. Not today" (Tolkien 6). Although a child would be more likely to be excited about an adventure than an adult (especially a middle-aged adult who loves his home and is stuck in his ways), this fear and unwillingness to go gives his character an element of innocence. He has not been on adventures—that is not his personality nor the typical personality of a hobbit—so he does not have much experience outside of his safe home that he loves.

This idea of "home" as a safe place or a place to be anchored is another element that makes this novel a piece of children's literature. Cheryl B. Klein notes this in her book *The Magic Words: Writing Great Books for Children and Young Adults*: "Middle-grade protagonists are acquiring some independence, certainly, but they still need the anchor that 'home' and all it represents provides. When they participate in a grand adventure, it usually ends with the promise of a return home to a safe space" (Klein 16). Bilbo, again, is by no means a child and is already independent; however, his home is clearly his anchor throughout the novel. Thinking of home and getting back home is what keeps him going through some of his most difficult moments.

Building on the idea of innocence, Bilbo does not often know how to approach various situations since he has few experiences being away from home. Throughout the book, several things seem to just happen to him, and he does not always know how to thoroughly think through certain actions. For example, when spying on the trolls in the woods as an inexperienced burglar, he should have run away from them, yet he decides to try to prove himself to the others: "Somehow he could not go straight back to Thorin and company emptyhanded. . . . Of the various burglarious proceedings he had heard of picking trolls' pockets seemed the least difficult" (Tolkien 36). However, this instance of trying to prove himself worthy ultimately gets all the dwarves captured and nearly eaten. This innocence may be relatable to young readers as children often strive to prove themselves to others. Klein explains this well when quoting another novelist to clarify one difference between middle-grade and young adult fiction: "Laura Ruby observed once, 'Middle grade is about ability; YA is about identity'" (Klein 17). In this case, Bilbo wanted to show his ability to help the dwarves, perhaps to help himself feel he fit into their company.

It is possible one could argue that Bilbo's innocence and thinking are justified and fitting for an adult character (which they are), but the way the dwarves treat him is perhaps one of the main reasons his character is relatable to young readers. Due to his size and lack of confidence, the dwarves (begrudgingly) take the responsibility of looking out for him, sometimes even to the point of physically carrying him. For example, after being dropped by Dori (who was carrying him through the goblin tunnels), getting lost, and escaping both the goblin tunnels and Gollum by himself, Bilbo finds the company only to overhear them expressing their true frustrations with him: "He has been more trouble than use so far" (Tolkien 92). The dwarves see Bilbo as a burden rather than someone who can help them accomplish their mission. In his essay "Child of

the Kindly West: Innocence and Experience in *The Hobbit*," Brian Walter explains this when he points out that the dwarves "treat Bilbo as something of a helpless child for much of the book, dismissing him as useless or something even worse: a detriment to their revenge/treasure quest. Even though the dwarves' opinions of him change in the course of their deadly adventures, the new authority and leadership Bilbo eventually assumes remain rooted in his comparative innocence of the world" (Walter 65). Part of his ability to maintain his innocence may be due to his desire to return home at the end of it all. He learns much through his journey, makes new friends, and even gains a magic ring, but by the end, he wants to return to his home in the Shire. Bilbo's desire to return home is, again, a reminder of that need for home as an anchor for young characters and young readers.

Ultimately, reading *The Hobbit* as children's literature is interesting, too, in the sense that not only is Bilbo, the main character, not a child, but there are no child characters in the book at all. "Only Fili and Kili are young among the dwarf-company, and indeed Fili, Kili, and Bard are the only young people—not children, but younger adults—in the book. Given Fili and Kili's tragic deaths, this accentuates even more the lack of youth in the book, leaving Bard to bear all the youth among the survivors" (Birns 19). This should not be confused with Peter Jackson's films, however, since his adult film version of the story does add in some child characters. For example, there are children seen among the people of the lake-town. And Bard, who is portrayed as young in the text is the father of his own three children who play a somewhat important role in the movie.

Finally, regardless of their ages, "In their own life trajectories, the characters in *The Hobbit* are at an intermediate stage of development. Not only does *The Hobbit* have no children in it, but most of the characters, within the terms of their own fictional world, are quite old"

(Birns 19). In his article, Birns mentions the various ages of the characters in the book (Bilbo, Thorin, Balin and Dwalin, Gandalf and Radagast, etc.) to show that this type of fantasy fiction frees the author from worry about age constraints in writing: "Remember that in a work of fantasy, as opposed to a work of realistic fiction, the author has more liberty to take with characters' ages, and is less constrained by actual events" (Birns 20).

Also, because of the vast age differences, Bilbo, in comparison to other characters, is very young. In the novel, elves and wizards seem to be able to live the longest and are therefore the oldest, then dwarves and hobbits followed finally by humans. Bilbo being young compared to other characters and therefore at an intermediate stage is reflective of middle-grade literature even if the problems faced are not the same as those a child may face, the fact that Bilbo is at this in-between stage makes him relatable. Mary Kole explains this in her book *Writing Irresistible Kidlit* when she notes that "Kids between the ages of eight and twelve live in a world made up of contrasts. . . . When you're this age, you're finding a place in the world without straying too far from the comforts of childhood" (16). In many ways, Bilbo's life is made up of these contrasts as well. Primarily, he does have a desire for adventure, which is seen by his sudden eagerness to go with the dwarves in the first place, but he constantly longs for home.

With this information in mind, students can begin to think critically as they analyze the text and consider how they might apply this information to their own writing. In terms of age, the most obvious example is that students could consider how they might write their own children's literature without using child characters while still making those characters and their middle-aged problems relatable to young readers. However, since writers are not limited in their stories, students could begin to think of other ways they might want to write their stories with characters of various ages. For instance, maybe students do want to include some children in their novels,

but perhaps the focus is not on those children and is instead on other adult characters. Or maybe there are pertinent adult characters in a student's story, but they need the tools to help them consider how they might write about them in a way that will resonate with young readers. Understanding the concept of a home being an anchor for the main character as it is with Bilbo could be one way students may consider incorporating older characters into their writing. Characters could either have a desire for home or to return home, or they could help another character who has this desire to return home.

Considering character age could also help students think through the types of problems their characters (whether adults or children) may be facing. As young adults who are seeking to discover their own vocation and possibly their own identities, it may be tempting to give child characters problems that are more complex than necessary or that are beyond what an actual child may be concerned with. However, as mentioned earlier, middle-grade is more about ability than identity (Klein 17). It is important students understand this difference to reach younger audiences. They can also examine the more middle-aged problems (both internal and external) that the characters in *The Hobbit* face (the dwarves' desire for their home and treasure in the mountain, Bilbo's inner conflict between adventure and home, Gandalf's dealings with the Necromancer) and how they are written about in a way that resonates with young readers.

Another example of how students might use *The Hobbit* to help them think about how to write their own children's literature is having them discuss and consider how the characters change throughout the novel. According to Klein, "In more literary novels, the protagonist will be different at the end of the novel than he was at the beginning, and usually for the better, as he will have gained some new understanding, wisdom, connections, or security within himself or the world" (14). This is exactly what happens with Bilbo. Bilbo comes from two very different

families. On his father's side, the Bagginses were considered to be "very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected" (Tolkien 2). However, it is noted that Bilbo "got something a bit queer in his make-up from the Took side [his mother's side], something that only waited for a chance to come out" (Tolkien 3). As noted above, he initially resisted the idea of an adventure; however, over the course of the novel, he embraces it even though he longs for home. When Bilbo does return home, he is not only a very different hobbit— "Gandalf looked at him. 'My dear Bilbo!' he said. 'Something is the matter with you! You are not the hobbit that you were'" (Tolkien 302)—he is also seen differently by those around him: "He had lost his reputation. . . . he was no longer respectable. He was in fact held by all the hobbits of the neighbourhood to be 'queer'" (Tolkien 303-304).

Considering this change in Bilbo can help students consider how they might choose to have their own characters (regardless of age) change throughout the story, yet still have their grounding in their concept of "home." Bilbo is clearly very different at the end of the novel; however, the fact he is happy to return home to his life—rather than desiring to move or go on endless adventures—still provides his character with that middle-grade reader desire to return home. Students could discuss how their own characters relate to this desire and even what their stories might look like if a character happens to have had their home destroyed (through something as dramatic as an epic battle or as simple as moving to a new place).

Finally, students can use *The Hobbit* to consider how they may want to defy age boundaries in their fiction. As mentioned above, Bilbo being middle aged in the novel and portrayed as being at an intermediate stage in contrast to the wizards, elves, and some of the dwarves is a great reminder that fiction, especially fantasy or fiction intended for children, does

not need to conform to the ages or lifespans of actual humans. However, readers will have general expectations about characters based on their ages. For example, readers will expect the older characters to be wiser. Even if several of the characters are older in terms of what our world sees as being old, a middle-aged person compared to someone who is over a thousand years old is actually very young. Unless a student decides to play with time and age and specify something different, they can use this knowledge to build their characters' personalities and backgrounds. However, students should also consider the purposes of vast age differences and utilize those age differences in a way that both works for the story and makes sense. In other words, there should be a purpose behind the character's age even if it is simply to show that the world the author created is different from the real world.

Elements of Fairy Tale in the Text

In analyzing the story of *The Hobbit* as a whole, there are several elements of fairy tales (in addition to the character's ages—especially old ages) that make it feel more like a children's story. In *Modern Critical Views: J. R. R. Tolkien*, Harold Bloom points out that the story contains "structural and folkloristic elements" (Bloom 95). First of all, there is a quest or an adventure to be had, and Bilbo as the main character has to accept that quest (Bloom 95). The story begins with Bilbo "enjoying his prosperity, safe and secure in Hobbiton," but he is quickly pulled out of the comfort of his own home to go on an adventure (Bloom 96). The moment of the acceptance of the quest is significant when analyzing texts to help with writing fiction since, although an element of fairy tale, it is an element of all types of stories. This is often referred to as the "inciting incident," and it is the moment where a character makes a big decision that is considered the point of no return. This means that no matter what happens, even if the character

does return home and if their home is unchanged, the character will be very different when they do return.

This type of fiction also often has a character that serves as a donor—Gandalf takes this role in *The Hobbit* (Bloom 95). The donor provides aids to help the main character(s) on the journey (Bloom 95). In this case, Bilbo and Thorin receive "the map of Thror and his silver key to the secret back entrance into the Lonely Mountain" (Bloom 95). However, in *The Hobbit* Gandalf could also be considered a guide—another significant character in many fictional stories. Birns describes Gandalf as "a life-coach, specializing in the counseling of dwarves and hobbits in midcourse who have lost their patrimony (in Bilbo's case, actually, the inheritance from his Took mother). Thorin's is literal, Bilbo's psychological, but they both need to be restored to what they once could have been" (Birns 19). Gandalf serves as a coach to the main characters of the text to help them gain back what they have lost, whether a part of who they once were or a literal treasure, but he also serves as someone who literally guides and leads them part of the way on their journey to find those things.

Additionally, in terms of fairy story, in Kate Bernheimer's essay "Fairy Tale is Form, Form is Fairy Tale," she lists the elements that make up a fairy story, many of which can be seen in *The Hobbit*. These elements are flatness, intuitive logic, and normalized magic. She also mentions abstraction, but that element is a bit less fitting for most of *The Hobbit* since many of the scenes are described in detail—at least enough detail for its child readers.

In terms of flatness only Bilbo, Gandalf, and the dwarves are described fully enough to be considered round characters. Beorn could be included in this group as well, since he is described physically and with background information that provides deeper insight into who he is, but other key characters are not described with enough detail to make them round. Elrond and

Bard, for example, are given just enough detail to help move the plot of the story forward, but there is not enough information to give the reader a fuller mental image of them, which is interesting since Bard ends up being the one to kill Smaug.

As children's literature and fairy story, this seems to work; however, "this flatness, violates a technical rule writers are often taught in beginning writing classes: that a character's psychological depth is crucial to a story" (Bernheimer 67). However, in line with the lack of description in terms of fairy tales, Bloom argues that "Really good-natured fantasy is hard to come by, and one convincing personality at its center is all it requires. No other figure in *The Hobbit* can be called a personality, but Bilbo Baggins is so vivid and persistent that he makes up for all the others" (2). Even though characters are not fully described with the depth they are typically given in regular fiction, Tolkien's lack of description for most characters other than Bilbo works well as a typical characteristic of fairy tales. This could also be argued as something that works well as an element of children's literature, since many fairy tales are written with children in mind.

The idea of flatness fits well with the next category: intuitive logic. Like characters and characterization, not everything in the fictional world is explained. For example, there is no information on where the magic ring came from except that it was a birthday present to Gollum (Tolkien 80-81). Readers are expected to accept this without wondering more details about its background or history. The same goes for the subplot of the Necromancer, which is mentioned, but not detailed. It seems to play a larger role in Tolkien's mythology and in his other works, but it takes a very minor role in *The Hobbit*.

Along with this, the final element of fairy story included in *The Hobbit* is normalized magic. According to Bloom, "Tied closely to the developing hero personality in Bilbo as well as

Gandalf is the concept of magic. For magic in Tolkien's terms does not mean any cheap, artificial, or external display of trickery and deception, but rather an immanent power of nature that men have somehow lost the ability to tap, presumably forever" (94). Gandalf and other wizards, specifically Radagast, appear to be nothing unusual in Middle-earth and the magic they use is simply accepted by both other characters and readers. In the book, the magic is used for various reasons from the smoke rings Gandalf uses to entertain those around him (Tolkien 13) to the blasts of light he uses to defeat goblins and save the dwarves (Tolkien 65). There is also the more obvious aspect of the magic ring. When Bilbo puts the ring on for the first time and realizes he is invisible, we learn briefly that he had heard of magic rings before, but as mentioned above, we are not given any more details about its history, where it came from, or the purpose for which it was intended (Tolkien 85). All we know is that the ring comes in handy for Bilbo several times throughout the novel. Again, this is considered normal.

A final detail about *The Hobbit* that reflects fairy tales is the scene that takes place in Mirkwood. According to Marco R. S. Post in his article "Perilous Wanderings through the Enchanted Forest: The Influence of the Fairy-Tale Tradition on Mirkwood in Tolkien's the Hobbit," "Mirkwood by and large fits within the literary *topos* of the enchanted forests in the fairy-tale tradition. Within West-European fairy tales, forests, too, have an important thematic and structural function, and as such they would have provided a template for Tolkien to draw on" (68). In many fairy tales, a forest, especially an enchanted one, involves significant events in the story and often a major character change. This forest is significant in *The Hobbit* because it is where Bilbo begins to gain confidence. It is true that he seems to become more confident after finding the magic ring in the goblin tunnels; however, in Mirkwood, he is given the opportunity to save the dwarves when they are captured by the spiders. This is where he kills his first

enemy—one of the giant spiders, and in the following scenes, he rescues the dwarves from the Elvin dungeons (Post 75). Ultimately, Mirkwood helps shape Tolkien's story into a fairy tale.

Understanding the genres of fairy tales and children's literature is crucial for students to have the ability to write well in these genres. However, children's novels do not have to be fairy tales or fantasy to include a quest, which could be as simple as a new kid trying to figure out how to fit in at school or as complex as an adult attempting to save the world. Any story can also contain a donor or a guide. This could be a mentor whether that is an older kid, an adult, or as in the case of *The Hobbit*, a very old wizard.

Furthermore, the broadening of the Bernheimer's elements of a fairy story to other genres is possible as well. The first two elements (character flatness and intuitive logic), for example, could be applied to any subgenre of children's literature. Normalized magic is more applicable to fairy tales and fantasy, but with these ideas in mind, students can consider how to make their main character and perhaps a secondary character complex while writing others as flat characters. Again, this is something that tends to be the opposite of what we are told to do when writing fiction, but this idea opens a discussion for students when considering how they want to shape their stories. Finally, the idea of an enchanted forest is by no means a requirement for children's literature or fantasy but is a common one and therefore one that needs discussion. Students could also consider other places where character change could happen or begin to happen—either physical spaces, events, or other internal elements that could spark character change.

Finally, considering and understanding the complexities of Tolkien's made-up world can help students think about how to create their own worlds for their own children's literature. Middle-earth is far more complex than what readers see when reading *The Hobbit*. Studying

Tolkien's other works can help readers gain a deeper understanding of this world Tolkien created; however, it is not necessary for the understanding of *The Hobbit* as a standalone text. But what does matter is that Tolkien knew and understood this world and all its complexities when writing the book, even those that do not make it into the book itself. Orson Scott Card explains this idea in terms of the rules it takes to make a fictional world work: "The reader is uncertain about what can and can't happen in the story *until* the writer has spelled out the rules. And you, as a writer, can't be certain of anything until *you* know the rules as well" (36-37). Writers cannot effectively write a story when they only know some of the rules that govern their fictional world. Readers will pick up on this and be pulled out of the story. It is important students understand this before attempting to create their own fictional worlds.

However, even when an author's fictional world does have specific rules, there needs to be at least a few things in the created world that are the same in our real world as reference points for the reader. Paolo Bertetti explains this in his article "Building Science-Fiction Worlds." "Generally speaking, any possible world overlaps with the Actual World to a large degree, while differing from it in some respects" (Bertetti 49). He goes on to point out that when reading fiction, people assume the world is the same as our actual world until they encounter something in the text that tells them something different (Bertetti 49). In other words, most books need at least a few things that are relatable to our world, especially humans. He gives an example of hypothetical novel about aliens and points out that it is very difficult to write a novel without any humans at all: "The presence of humans in a story about aliens, even if the story is told from the alien point of view, gives the reader (who is quite likely to be human) a frame of reference, a way to contrast the aliens with humans and see exactly how the aliens are different and how this affects their society" (Card 37).

Although humans are only minor characters in *The Hobbit*, Tolkien compares hobbits to humans almost immediately to help give readers a better mental picture of hobbits: "I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays, since they have become rare and shy of the Big People . . . They are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than bearded dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. . . . They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they wear bright colours . . ." (Tolkien 2). These comparisons and descriptions serve as another point of discussion for students as they think about their own characters and how to help readers picture characters who are not human. Discussing world-building in terms of how the worlds students write about are different from and similar to our actual world is another way students can think more deeply about and enhance their writing.

Analysis of the Text and the Films

A final point of analysis is considering the novel compared with Peter Jackson's films. According to Frank Riga et al. in their article "From Children's Book to Epic Prequel: Peter Jackson's Transformation of Tolkien's the Hobbit," Jackson knew he did not want to make a film for children. Instead, he wanted to find a way to make it appealing to an older audience. Jackson explains, "the way I've done that is through the characters of the Dwarves" (qtd. in Sibley 23). Having settled on the character of the Dwarves, he could also incorporate the larger issues dealt with in *The Lord of the Rings* (104-105). Riga et al. explain that Jackson examined and studied Tolkien's work and plans for revision for *The Hobbit* and sought to incorporate that into the movies rather than creating the movies for children. This would help *The Hobbit* films align better with *The Lord of the Rings* films as a prequel. "Jackson is therefore continuing a process that Tolkien had already begun" (Riga et al. 100).

Since the films are designed for older audiences, some of the scenes in the movies are intensified and involve more danger and action than the same scenes in the books. One example of this is when Bilbo and the dwarves are traveling through a thunderstorm and facing the stone giants (who are in the middle of their own fight). In the book, it appears the characters are in a bad position as they watch the fight from a short distance (Tolkien 56-57), but in the films, they are in immediate danger as they are standing on the moving legs of one of the giants involved in the fight.

Another example of this is when Bard kills Smaug. In the novel, it takes place over only a few pages, and the actual shooting of the dragon, which takes up a long dramatic scene in the film, only takes a few sentences in the book. "The dragon swooped once more lower than ever, . . . his belly glittered . . . but not in one place. The great bow twanged. In it smote and vanished, barb, shaft, and feather, so fierce was its flight. With a shriek that deafened men . . . Smaug . . . crashed down from on high in ruin" (Tolkien 251). In the film, there are added characters of Bard's children (who add to the intensity of the moment) and the destruction of the only bow that can fire the black arrow. The result is Bard having to use his son (who brings him the only black arrow) to stabilize and aim the arrow before he fires it. There are many scenes in the book that seem like they would benefit from extra details; however, explaining everything might make the story lose some of the fairy tale elements (such as flatness and intuitive logic) as well as make it too long or too intense for children.

Ultimately, the expansion of certain scenes and storylines in the film help bring together events of the book that were unclear: "Jackson's revisioning of *The Hobbit*, then, involves a transition from an episodic novel, in which discrete events are loosely linked through the main character or characters, to a series of causally and visually linked story lines" (Riga et al. 110).

Several storylines mentioned in the book are not made clear. For example, Gandalf disappears before the dwarves and Bilbo enter Mirkwood to go learn more about the Necromancer; however, the book follows Bilbo, and Gandalf's adventures are only summed up at the end leaving out many details and much of the background of Tolkien's mythology. However, the films help draw together many of Tolkien's ideas: "The overarching themes of the homecoming quest and the gradual spread of an as yet unknown evil have begun to connect the scenes in the film in a way that the quest of the Ring links the events depicted in *The Lord of the Rings*" (Riga et al. 110). The movies expand the undetailed storylines of the novel and follow Gandalf when he goes to fight the Necromancer, which helps those watching to understand the story itself as well as how it fits into *The Lord of the Rings* as one united narrative.

Comparing the novel to the movies can help students draw deeper contrasts between the two and consider how and why certain scenes and storylines were adapted for the films. For example, the scene with the dwarves fighting off the Wargs (wolf-like creatures) takes place in both the novel and the first film; however, the scenes play out differently in each. In the novel, the Wargs are teaming with the goblins to attack the woodmen (men who had been building places to live in the woods) and happen to be meeting where the company (the dwarves, Gandalf, and Bilbo) has fled after escaping from the goblin tunnels (Tolkien 102). However, in the movie, the attack is more intentional. The Wargs are a part of an orc army led by the Pale Orc, or Azog, who is after Thorin. Many years before, Thorin cut off Azog's arm in an attempt to kill him since Azog had killed his grandfather, Thror, many years before that.

In the scene in both the book and the movie, Gandalf, Bilbo, and the dwarves climb trees to escape the attack. Gandalf sets pinecones on fire and throws them to ward off the Wargs. In the book, this scene is focused on the Wargs and goblins who think those in the company are

spies for the woodmen they are planning to attack (Tolkien 103). However, Gandalf, Bilbo, and the dwarves are rescued by the Eagles who happen to notice the commotion of the fight (Tolkien 105-111). This scene is significantly less eventful than in the film. In the film version, Thorin and Azog have their own fight where Thorin almost gets killed, but Bilbo leaps from the trees and comes to his rescue. This is a significant scene in the film because it is where Bilbo finally gains Thorin's respect, but it does not take place in the novel.

Jackson added this scene to the movies primarily to help include more background from Tolkien's other works; however, this still opens discussion for students to consider why this additional information not being included in the novel aids in its genre as children's literature. This could give students the opportunity to discuss the complexities of some of the additional storylines in Tolkien's works and also consider why the simplicity of the novel works for children. For students who are more focused on fantasy, this could help them consider what may or may not work to include in their own writing in terms of additional information about made up worlds. Lastly, students could also discuss how the scene impacts Bilbo's character in the film and how that affects the way the dwarves view him.

Finally, looking at both the novel and the film gives students the opportunity to consider how the mediums differ as well as details that are necessary to include in one medium but can be left out of the other. For example, certain choices may be helpful to make the novel more accessible for children and the films work better for adults, but some differences between books and movies are always necessary since visuals must be described in books when they can be shown visually in a movie. This could help students think about what they should include or leave out of in their own writing in terms of scene and character descriptions.

Conclusion

To write well, we must be able to read well. Reading well involves reading widely and in various genres as well as thinking critically about texts. This study of *The Hobbit* as children's literature as discussed in this paper is intended primarily to help enhance students' own writing in the same genre. The goal is to help them develop critical thinking skills by analyzing a text's structure, content, elements (such as themes, plot, characterization, figurative language, etc.), and looking at the author, the context in which the author wrote the story, and the author's other works. Interpreting *The Hobbit* as a work of children's literature while keeping in mind Bilbo's character and the lack of child characters in the text, the elements of a fairy tale, and the lack of intense scenes in the book compared with the films can help professors teach the text in a way that analyzes these details and may bring about new questions or ways of thinking about the book and the genres of children's literature and fantasy or fairy tales. Also, analyzing the text in this way provides fun opportunities and exercises for students to consider as they think about how to include similar elements of children's literature in their own writing.

At the university level, students should be able to engage in and deepen interpretations and conversations about the text based on their own thoughts, interpretations, and study. These kinds of in-depth discussions not only aid in student's critical thinking and analytical skills but can also be used to help students translate what they are learning and studying to their own writing. In a course that is both analytical of literature and intended to teach writing, professors can give students various types of assignments to enhance students' thinking and writing skills. For example, analytical essays would allow students to practice critical analysis methodologies and come up with their own interpretations of a text. Creative assignments could give students opportunities to practice writing stories in a certain genre while incorporating some of the

elements and techniques they learned from their textual analysis. Lastly, reflection assignments could be incorporated to allow students to critically think about a text they analyzed and the elements they incorporated into their own stories, why they made those choices, and how those choices enhanced their own writing.

Finally, students could use the methodologies applied in a course like this as a springboard for further study of other methodologies such as source analysis or source criticism. In this case, students could examine how various sources influenced Tolkien's writing. They could discuss how elements of other stories show up in *The Hobbit* and the impact those stories have on the novel and how that helps make the novel a work of children's literature. As a result of applying this methodology, students could consider how books like *The Hobbit* may influence their own writing even without them realizing it.

Overall, teaching *The Hobbit* and other texts in a way that allows students to critically analyze the text, apply what they learned from that analysis to their own writing, and reflect on what they learned from the process can help students learn how to analyze texts in a way that helps them learn to read more effectively in order to write well in various genres. The goal of a course that studies literature specifically with the intention of discovering what can be learned about writing is to help students learn strategies of reading, analysis, and reflection that they can apply to other genres and areas of their lives to help them become better writers.

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Social Media Fitspiration: The Rhetoric of Fitness Posts and How They Impact Mental and

Physical Health

Today's culture highly values fitness, but viewers often seek to be fit not to be healthy

but to improve their appearance. The significance of this phenomenon is that it impacts nearly

everyone, those who are fit, those who want to get fit, and those who avoid workouts.

"Fitspiration" or "fitness inspiration" is a term that has become popular over the past few years.

Fitspiration refers to specific types of images found on social media intended to inspire fitness

and health. According to Raggatt et. al. in their article "'I aspire to look and feel healthy like the

posts convey': engagement with fitness inspiration on social media and perceptions of its

influence on health and wellbeing," "Some social media users who follow the fitspiration trend

also engage in discussions that shape an online 'fitness culture' including expressing views

around 'healthy' appearance and 'correct' dieting and exercise behaviours" (2). In other words,

those who view and follow fitspiration, often engage with it in some way, whether in terms of

likes or comments online or by changing their own actions or thinking. In this paper, I will

analyze how the visual aspects of fitspiration images capture a viewer's attention and how these

images affect one's physical and mental health either positively or negatively. First, I will

explain the methods used for this analysis, then I will introduce the images I will examine in a

content analysis. Next, I will discuss further research and case studies on fitspiration and how it

can impact fitness and mental wellness. Finally, I will discuss what actions can be taken in light

of this study.

Methods Used and Figures Explained

The content analysis method from *Visual Methodologies* by Gillian Rose is my primary

method of analysis since it most directly applies to the type of research and analysis presented

here. In this method, a large number of images are examined and coded for certain features to be analyzed accordingly. Content analysis is an ideal method in situations like this one where the images examined are a part of popular media culture and there are many similar images produced by various media users.

To enhance my analysis, I will also consider key ideas from Roland Barthes such as denotation and connotation as well as his ideas of myth to help fully realize how our culture creates and perceives these images. Barthes' ideas provide a solid grounding for my methods and analysis as his work is widely recognized and used when considering semantics and rhetoric. Finally, I will use other methodological elements described throughout *Reading Images* by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen with the focus on terms such as represented participants, vectors, and goals. This text is key when it comes to image analysis and considering the elements that make up an image and the impact those elements have on viewers.

Below is a chart of the images I will be analyzing and referencing throughout this paper. The images come from a variety of online sources including fitness magazines, social media, and personal websites. For this study, I will only be examining fourteen images, which is limiting. An analysis of one hundred or a thousand images would allow for a more complete study in terms of detailed statistics as to how often certain features appear in the images. However, looking at only fourteen images allows for specific referencing of individual photos which will allow for more detailed discussion in this analysis.

Figure 1: *It's Monday…Go Workout!*. 24 Feb. 2014.	Figure 2: Girl Stretching Leg. *Fitnessmag*, 18 Jan. 2018.
Figure 3: Mary. Girl Running. Photo by Slimgenics.com, 21 Jan. 2015.	Figure 4: *Runner Things #1155*. *FuelRunning.com,* 21 Feb. 2013.
Figure 5: Simply_Fit_ (Fitspiration). Dream Body, *Twitter*.	Figure 6: Men's Health. Man Lifting Weight with Right Arm. *Menshealth.com*, 23 June 2015.
Figure 7: Fighting-fit-83. Sweat. *Tumblr.com*, 2013.	Figure 8: All-fitness. Girl Running/Sky. *Runwithjess.com*, *Tumblr*.
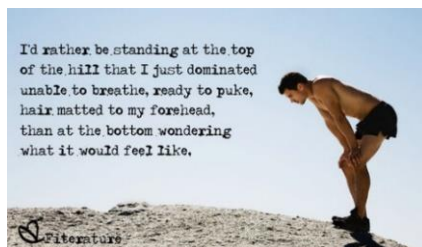
Figure 9: Man with Food. *Tumblr.*	Figure 10: Futurenutritionist. Trash Can. *Tumblr.*
Figure 11: "Gym Quotes for Motivation When Exercising." *The Gone App.* 4 Oct. 2022.	Figure 12: "Best 180 Fitness Quotes to Fire You Up Before a Workout." *Happy. Better. Wiser.*, 3 Sept. 2022.
Figure 13: Vikram. "Gym Quotes for Fitness Freaks, Gym Goers and Health Enthusiasts | Ultimate Gym and Fitness Quotes for Gym Goers." *Quote Bus*. 14 July 2021.	Figure 14: Fitness Motivational Quotes. "Once You See Results, It Becomes an Addiction." *Facebook*. 22 Jan. 2020.
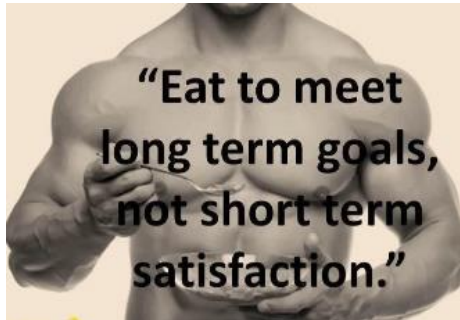
Figure 15 below shows how I have coded the images based on various features within them. According to many of the studies I will discuss later, fitspiration seems to be targeted more often toward women; however, Scott J. Fatt et al. studies the impact it has on men. The coding categories examined (gender, face/head shown, activity level, vertical angle, modality, distance, and text type) were all included based on salient characteristics that are typical of fitspiration photos. Some categories, however, were difficult to determine, specifically modality.

Kress and van Leeuwen discuss modality in *Reading Images* in terms of how realistic an image is based on things like color saturation, color differentiation, color modulation, contextualization, representation (abstract vs. detailed), depth, illumination, and brightness. These images mostly have a medium or realistic modality; however, the color in figure 8 suggests that photoshop enhanced the color saturation and differentiation, and figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 appear to have color filters which impact the modality as well.

Figure 15:

	Images and Coding		
Gender	Male	Female	
	Figures 6, 7, and 9, 11-14	Figures 1-5, 8, and 10	
Face/Head Shown	Yes	No	
	Figures 6-8 and 11-14	Figures 1-5, 9 and 10	
Activity Level	Heavy	Medium	Low
	Figures 1, 3, 6, 8, and 11-14	Figures 7 and 9	Figures 2, 4, 5, 10
Vertical Angle	High	Medium	Low
	Figures 7, 8, and 12	Figures 1-6, 9-11, 13, and 14	None
Modality	High	Medium	Low
	Figures 8	Figures 1, 3-7, and 10-14	Figures 2 and 9
Distance	Close-up	Far personal distance	Public Distance
	Figures 1, 4-6, 9, 10-12, and 14	Figures 2, 3, and 13	Figures 7 and 8

Text Type	Positive/Motivational	Negative/Shaming
	Figure 8, 11-13	Figures 1-7, 9, 10, and 14

Image Analysis

Considering this from an analytical process perspective, the represented participants contain few possessive attributes in terms of fashion and clothing but instead focus primarily on body type and figure. Only half of the photos show the person's face/head and of those that do, six out of seven are men and one out of seven are women. Figure 8 is the only photo of a woman that shows her face, and even then, it is shadowed. The fact that half of the photos don't include the person's head/face removes the gaze of the person in the image and, therefore, both the demand (when the subject of an image looks directly at the viewer) and the offer (when the subject is unaware that the viewer is looking at them as in Figure 6-8 and 11-14) that could be presented in the photos and instead allows for more focus on the person's body.

In terms of viewer angle, the majority of the photos allow the viewer to look directly at the represented participant (or a part of their body). Figures 4, 7, and 12 angle slightly up at the represented participant and figure 8 looks more sharply up at the runner. These indicate that those in the image have more power over the viewer. But the majority of the images look directly at the represented participant which places the viewer at an equal status with them. These angles impact how viewers may feel when viewing the image, whether they feel what they see is achievable or above their own physical ability. However, even the images that show an angle of equality include possessive attributes (defined muscle tone; a fit, thin body; the lifting of heavy weights; etc.,) that many viewers would see as unachievable.

Text Analysis

Looking at the linguistic implications of the messages overlaying the photos is helpful in considering how these images impact the viewer. In "Rhetoric of the Image," Barthes explains the significance of the text in terms of size and location in relation to the image. In Figures 1, 3-5, 9, and 10, the words in the image cover a significant portion of the represented participant. Figures 2, 6, 13, and 14 show the text off to the side and figures 7, 8, 11, and 12 does not involve the text touching the represented participants in any way.

In addition to the represented participant in each image, the text catches a viewer's attention as the eye is naturally drawn to text. Figures 7, 8, 11, and 12 are the exceptions to this since the representation of the background is the clearest in these images (not blurred or discolored). Figure 7 has a largely plain blue sky as the background, which places the attention back on the represented participant and the text accompanying him. The dark backgrounds of Figures 11 and 12 have a similar feel. However, figure 8 has a strong color differentiation between the background (which has a higher saturation) and the represented participant in the foreground of the image (which is absent of most color and appears to be a silhouette). These colors place the viewer's focus on both the text and on the background, perhaps to enable them to place themselves in the runner's shoes and imagine their own figure there. This is interesting because figure 8 is also one of the few images where the text is positive/motivational as opposed to shaming (either of the body or of eating habits).

One study by Ivanka Prichard et al. that looks at the text in fitspiration images showed that, although one would expect the supposedly motivational quotes of fitspiration to inspire health and fitness, many are focused on appearance, weight loss (42%), objectifying messages (36%), and text that promotes guilt related to the body (26%) (790). With the text being one of

the most salient aspects of the images and the images including negative motivation within the text, the denotations of the words can have an adverse impact on viewers. It may help some feel more motivated, but it seems more likely that viewers may feel shamed or negative about themselves.

Visual Rhetoric

The represented participant in images has a significant impact on viewers. For example, in *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, Charles Hill explains some of the psychology behind rhetorical images by noting studies that have been done to confirm that visuals often have a stronger emotional impact than text alone (33). Hill states that "verbal text, because of its analytic nature . . . is more likely to prompt systematic processing, . . . while images, . . . tend to prompt heuristic processing. Therefore, these psychological models might explain why vivid images tend to overpower verbal arguments in a decision among opposing or controversial claims" (33). Hill refers here to images that are meant to persuade in terms of significant issues (like politics); however, his point can still apply to fitspiration as the images often persuade viewers to feel either positively or negatively about themselves.

Edward Mcquarrie and David Glen Mick research how visual rhetoric impacts advertising noting that it "testifies to the acute sensitivity of consumers to the visual element in advertising" (51). Some may argue here that fitspiration isn't necessarily a direct advertisement, but at times, it is indeed pushing a fitness program. Even when the fitspiration is not advertising something specific, the visuals in the images still strengthen what our culture sees as a fitness ideal. According to Marika Tiggemann and Mia Zaccardo in their article "'Strong is the new skinny': A content analysis of #fitspiration images on Instagram," "The limited representation of body types displayed in fitspiration imagery . . . carries the strong implication that only a certain

body type can be fit and healthy, whereas in fact a diverse range of body types can enjoy fitness and health" (1008). In my own content analysis of the fitspiration images, it was not necessary to create a coding to determine the fitness level of those in the images since they would all fall into the same category: very fit. The level of fitness is also obvious in these images since each person is either thin or has a well-defined muscle tone.

Forming an Ideal: Our Culture's Created Myth

As mentioned in the introduction, those who post and view fitspiration become involved in it by engaging in social media posts (likes, comments, follows). This shows that the posts likely impact these viewers, and even if it does not change them on a deep level, their engagement still reinforces the ideal of what society considers to be "fit." In turn, this ideal often comes to disappoint. In "A Rhetoric of Fitness," Susanna Rich describes the ideal we strive for when it comes to fitness, especially in terms of numbers (sets, reps, the number on the scale, etc.). However, many of these numbers are determined by our culture which then sets a standard for everyone. This then causes some viewers to become disappointed if they do not meet that standard.

Barthes talks about this idea in his book *Mythologies*. The point he makes is that certain things (like the standards we often strive to meet) are myths that are determined by our culture. From a semiotic standpoint, language—which contains its own signifier, signified, and sign— becomes a signifier for something else, which then has a signified and a sign (Barthes 224). In this case, these fitspiration images show fit bodies (the signifier) supposedly represent fitness and health (the signified); however, in reality, they create a sign, a determinate that our culture uses as an ideal and standard, not necessarily for health (ironically, these images cause many health problems—more on this later) but for appearance. When studying the myth behind them, we

need to take into consideration who is posting and viewing the images. These become the creators and reinforcers of this myth.

A False Ideal

Not only is our culture's created fitness ideal unrealistic, but many of the images found online are not real. An article by Miranda Larbi that appeared on the *Metro* website in 2017 interviewed one Instagrammer who admitted to editing the photos that she posted online. The article includes a side-by-side comparison of the original photo and the edited version. The edits are minor, a few changes here and there to different parts of the body, but the difference in the photos is substantial. In fact, the Instagrammer admitted to editing one photo so heavily that the background became slightly distorted. Nevertheless, the distortion in the background was minor, and as viewers were focused on the represented participant in the photo, they did not notice that something was off and thought the photo was real.

Another article posted in *Cosmopolitan* in 2020 interviewed Emily Clarkson, a body confidence influencer, who showed that there are several editing apps out there. She also explained how easy it is to enhance one's face, shrink or grow certain body parts, and even change the color tone of one's skin. Clarkson's concern is for the young girls who are frustrated that they cannot look like those on Instagram, so her primary message is to let them know that these images are not real (Savin). When considering editing apps, it is difficult to tell whether the fitspiration images examined in this paper have been edited. Also, the specific images examined in *Metro* and *Cosmopolitan* were not necessarily fitspiration posts, but they are closely related in terms of this analysis and the concerns of fitspiration and body image.

Fitspiration and Physical Health

Ultimately, "Imagery which focuses on active movement and body competence could prompt a focus on what the body can do and its functionality rather than on its appearance" (Prichard et al. 790), but most of these images do not focus on active body movement. As seen in the image analysis above (with Figures 1-14), just over half of the images show a heavy activity level. These active images "should elicit a less objectifying experience for young women and result in more positive outcomes on body satisfaction and mood than would posed images" (Prichard et al. 790). But as we have seen, even images that involve a heavy level of activity appear to be posed (see Figures 6 and 11-14), and those images are of men, not women. Additionally, the text paired with some of these images is more shaming than motivational, which adds to the negative psychological impact fitspiration has on viewers.

Although, fitspiration is not intended to contain harmful messages like thinspiration (another similar phenomenon that, at times, promotes eating disorders), it can still contain "potentially dangerous thematic content in terms of emphasizing dietary restriction and harmful messages about women's body ideals" (Tiggemann and Zaccardo 1004). For example, "extreme attitudes toward exercise (e.g., 'Crawling is acceptable, puking is acceptable, tears are acceptable, pain is acceptable. Quitting is unacceptable')" (Holland and Tiggemann 76) are often promoted in these posts. The unhealthy view of exercise encourages viewers to try to reach an impossible standard.

Another concern is the objectifying of those in the image, especially women. According to Tiggemann and Zaccardo, "Some images [contain] clearly objectifying features, such as particular poses or focus on particular body parts" (1004). We see this in figures 1, 2, 4, 5, and 10 where the close-up or even far personal distance shots focus on particular body parts which

creates and sends negative messages to viewers. This is especially true in figures 5, and 10, where the women in the photos are not wearing traditional workout clothes but appear to instead be dressed and posing in a sexual manner. As for the photos of men (Figures 6, 7, 9, and 11-14), although most of them do not include the man wearing a shirt, only Figure 9 is focused on the man's body. The focus is emphasized by his head/face not being in the photo. However, even in this case, the man is not sexualized as with the women in the images, especially in Figures 5 and 10 where the women's garments are either extremely low-cut or being pulled out of the way to allow for viewers to see more skin.

These objectifying images seem to negate the goal that fitspiration is a good thing. Many argue for fitspiration because it "promotes health and well-being through the promotion of healthy eating, exercise and self-care, and the overall philosophy is one which emphasizes strength and empowerment" (Tiggemann and Zaccardo 1004). Yet, as we have seen, the images are often objectifying, and many viewers cannot reach the ideal look that our culture demands of them. In fact, "Recent research has also demonstrated that women who post fitspiration images on social media are more likely to engage in disordered eating and compulsive exercise behaviours" (Prichard et al. 796). Instead of inspiring healthy change, these images unintentionally inspire negative drastic behaviors.

Fitspiration and Mental Health

These studies make it clear that fitspiration, which is intended to promote "health and fitness, rather than thinness and weight loss" (Tiggemann and Zaccardo 1004), inspires low self-esteem and often has negative results on mental health. According to Raggatt et al., "Experimental studies also suggest that acute exposure to fitspiration images can increase short-term body dissatisfaction and negative mood among female undergraduate students. This is

concerning as body dissatisfaction is a significant risk factor for eating disturbances including

anorexia and bulimia nervosa" (2). In other words, eating disorders that have been problematic

(for females especially) for years may be implicitly promoted through fitspiration photos.

Students who view fitspiration may find themselves drawn to images that display a body-type

different from their own. In this case, they may turn to an eating disorder to try to reach an

unattainable goal. Rather than focusing on what fitness should look like for themselves based on

their own body-type, they strive to look like the person in the image even if it means taking

dangerous steps to meet that goal.

However, fitspiration does not only impact females. According to a study by Fatt et al., in

men, "Viewing more fitspiration content was associated with greater muscular-ideal

internalization and higher appearance comparison tendency, which in turn was associated with

less body satisfaction, more appearance-based exercise motivation and less health-based exercise

motivation" (1311). One could argue that in Figures 6, 7, 9, and 11-14 discussed in this analysis,

are truly aimed to encourage healthy behavior. Instead of focusing on the body, the vectors in the

images point toward the top of the hill in Figure 6, the weight being lifted in Figure 7, the food in

Figure 9, and the weights in Figures 11-14. These things may be the "goal" of the person in the

photo, but Figures 6, 9, and 11-14 focus on the represented participant more than the goal. They

are the most salient aspects in the photos as they are pictured directly in the center and take up

most of the frame. In the majority of these photos, for viewers, looking like the man in the photo

is the goal rather than the accomplishment of eating healthy or completing a workout.

I must note that there are those who do not find fitspiration to be harmful to body

satisfaction. Results from a study done at the University of Liverpool by Maria Limniou

determined that "there was not a significant effect on body satisfaction, but there was a

significant effect on state self-esteem, mood satisfaction and fit-ideal internalization scores after participants were exposed to fitspiration photos" (4). Although Limniou measured body satisfaction, self-esteem, mood satisfaction, and fit-ideal internalization separately, they all are interrelated. Her study may show no negative results in terms of body satisfaction, but it does obviously state the negative impact on mental health. Even if viewers were okay with their body after viewing the photos, they felt more negatively about themselves overall.

Limniou reinforces some support of fitspiration stating, "Although the results appear overall to be quite negative, this study did find some unexpected positive results in the form of Instagram use and how posting can be related to higher levels of self-esteem. This suggests that there is potentially some benefit in the use of the fast-growing online platform on users' self-confidence" (Limniou 9). I have to disagree with these findings. Yes, posting images and receiving many "likes" on their photos could cause higher self-esteem, but it also can cause lower self-esteem for those who do not get the "likes" they hope for. Also, I wonder about those who do edit their photos, whether their self-esteem is still higher knowing that the person in the photo does not actually look like themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, fitspiration is intended to inspire viewers to get fit in a healthy way—through exercise and a nutritious diet; however, the text that overlays the photos or captions posted along with them often uses negative motivation to shame viewers who do not work out regularly or eat well. The photos themselves frequently objectify women and create an ideal of what our culture thinks it means to be "fit." However, to strive to reach this level of fitness, many viewers engage in drastic measures such as extreme dieting, overexercise, and even eating disorders. This cultural phenomenon impacts both men and women and "appears to be more

closely related to appearance than health" (Fatt 1311). Women may be tempted to strive to be unrealistically thin to meet this ideal, and men may be tempted to overexercise to bulk up and gain muscle tone. In both cases, the focus is on appearance which may be a distraction for the viewer and prevent them from getting healthy based on their own body type and needs.

Looking at the images themselves, although the represented participants may have a specific goal like eating well or lifting weights, the focus of the image is on their body rather than what they are doing. As discussed here, viewing fitspiration ultimately evokes negative feelings in the viewer rather than inspiring and motivating them to be better and implement healthy behaviors. This is sad, in part, because it is very likely that many of the images posted are heavily edited, which creates an unrealistic ideal that is unachievable for everyone, including the one posting the image.

Solutions

To combat the negative effects of fitspiration, stopping it altogether would be the most beneficial. Unfortunately, it is not possible to control what individuals post on social media. Emily Clarkson suggests that those who post fitspiration note in their post that an image has been edited (Savin). This would allow them to post the same image with as much editing as they want while letting viewers know that the image is not exactly what they look like. It is obvious that those who post fitspiration would push back on this and be reluctant to let viewers know when a photo has been edited because, most likely, they have built their following using edited photos and want their viewers to see them in a certain way. This may also cause the person posting the image to feel shame about themselves. Editing photos is deceptive, but it is also human nature to want others to see the best of us, even if that is not what we actually look like. But this is harmful

to viewers, especially those who are young and think the ideal is reachable regardless of the dangerous measures it may take to get there.

Part of the pushback from those who post fitspiration may come from the fact that "from a semiotic perspective, it is not possible to change the style of an advertisement without also changing some of its meaning" (Mcquarrie and Mick 38). Without changing anything in the fitspiration image itself, simply noting that it has been edited would, therefore, change the meaning for viewers. Those who post want viewers to think that they have reached the fitness ideal, and viewers would be disappointed to learn that the influencers they follow are not who they said they were possibly causing them to unfollow certain accounts. This negative spiral would then lead the one posting the image to feel more negatively about themselves.

Ultimately, even requiring people who post fitspiration, or any type of body images, to note when they have edited a photo would significantly help viewers, even if nothing else changed. Changing the content overall by not editing photos would be even more effective in inspiring viewers since they would see what is achievable and realistic. Avoiding posting text with the images that involve shaming would help as well. For example, as noted earlier, Figure 8 includes a positive text. Since the woman in the photo has a low color value compared to the background, her body is not the focus of the image, nor is she objectified in the image. Even though the viewer angle looks up at the represented participant giving the sense that the represented participant has the power, the image overall is motivational and does not shame viewers.

Finally, one practical step we can all take, especially if we are simply viewers of fitspiration, is to avoid viewing it altogether. If we don't "like" the photos of those who post them and if we choose not to follow them, they will be less likely to continue posting the content

and images that are so harmful to viewers. Or if we do come across an image, we can respond in kind to some of the comments on the photo and note whether we notice that the photo was edited. Or instead of being negative about the photo itself, we can point out that not everyone will fit into the ideal these photos attempt to create, and that is okay. The photos are simply a cultural myth.

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Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing in College Composition: A Lesson Plan

According to Constance Weaver in *Grammar to Enrich & Enhance Writing*, "Teaching grammar as a separate subject divorced from writing wastes valuable instructional time because few students transfer their grammar study to writing without teacher guidance" (26). In her book, Weaver ultimately argues against the idea of requiring students to complete grammar worksheets in which students simply correct the grammar in prewritten sentences. Instead, she presents the idea of teaching grammar in the context of writing which would require students to practice grammar by writing their own sentences rather than simply correcting prewritten sentences. The main concern with grammar worksheets is that students often do not transfer what they learn from the worksheet to their own writing and therefore are unable to use grammar to their advantage for effective communication.

Additionally, Darren Crovitz and Michelle Devereaux, authors of *Grammar to Get Things Done*, point out that "students know grammar innately—after all, they've been practicing it their whole lives. . . . Discussions and activities that show students their understandings of language help them begin grammar instruction from a foundation of confidence in their own in their own bank of knowledge and ability" (25). This idea emphasizes the need for student reflection on their own knowledge as well as what they are learning in class. Their argument is that students will learn grammar more effectively if they are aware of what they already know. With this, it is important students are given opportunities to reflect on what they have learned throughout a course to help solidify that knowledge.

Keeping these two perspectives in mind, the following lesson plan is designed to teach grammar in the context of writing while using reflection to help students be able to transfer what they learn about grammar to their writing. These lessons were developed around the topics and

themes of the College Composition class I teach at Cornerstone University; this provides the context for the grammar lessons. The information in this lesson plan is focused primarily on grammar; the other topics and themes of the units are noted, but not detailed as much as they could be in order to keep that focus. To help create this accurately as well as to help me think through the dates and breakdown of the lessons, I based this on the three days a week, one hour a day class I taught in Spring 2022. I included notes on where breaks fell per our university schedule. The breaks were helpful to note to give an accurate example as to how many class days I would be actively teaching in the classroom.

Cornerstone University does not have a strict standard of what needs to be taught in our college composition courses. The main requirement is that the primary textbook is *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing,* 12th edition by Rise B. Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper. The readings for each lesson primarily come from this textbook and anytime "your textbook" is mentioned in any of the daily assignments, this is the book I am referring to.

Each unit starts with a brief description, a list of grammatical unit objectives, a list of readings that will be discussed in that unit, and a list of assignments and assessments related to that unit. Following the readings, I have organized each week of the unit into a table. Above the table, the week of class is listed as well as the dates for that week. In the table itself, on the left side, I noted the day of the week to help provide the table with a clear structure. Since Week 1 is only part of a week, the table does not include Monday; however, all other partial weeks still include all class days but are noted with "no class" and the reason there is no class that day.

The middle column of the table lists a breakdown of class time for that day. Most days start with a warm-up at 1:30 p.m., a grammar discussion at 1:40 p.m., a time for students to practice grammar at 1:50 p.m., and a discussion of the reading at 2:00 p.m. This is intended to

give students a chance to think about what will be discussed that day or what was discussed in class previously and to provide an opportunity to practice what was taught in the grammar lesson. Since the assignments that are based on the readings are a bit longer and larger than the grammar practice exercises, these are homework assignments—rather than in-class assignments—and are listed at the end of the unit.

In the "Assignment" section of the table, the warm-up is written out along with what students will be required to do that day to practice the grammatical concept they learned. I placed this per day of the week since there will be a warm-up and practice exercise almost every day. These are also smaller, more minor in-class assignments. These mini assignments will sometimes involve a larger assignment the student is working on for class, but sometimes they will be their own reflection/exercise that does not get submitted for a grade. In the latter case, students will be graded based on their participation in class that day.

The larger homework assignment titles are listed in bold on the days that they are due. At the end of the unit below the weekly calendars, there is a "Unit # Homework Assignments" section. This is where homework assignments are listed and described. These assignment descriptions include a prompt for the assignment, point value of that assignment, as well as a grading guide—a simplified version of a rubric. Also listed in bold in the assignment section are unit quizzes. There is also a take-home quiz for each unit. The unit quizzes are listed under "Assessment(s)" under the assignment list at the beginning of each unit; however, some quizzes will be due at the beginning of the next unit to allow students more time to study for and complete the quiz.

Overall, organizing the lesson plan in this way (unit objectives, weekly schedule, and assignments) makes it clear which assignments are graded homework assignments and which

assignments are to be completed in class and do not need to be turned in. However, some of the units do contain warm-up and practice exercises that align with the homework assignments that are due. This is intended to encourage students to get started on their assignments before they leave the classroom and to practice grammar in the context of their own writing.

Rationale

The lessons in the plan below are not all-inclusive since the main focus of what is noted each day is on grammar. This is to show how grammar will be taught alongside certain types of writing for the purpose of teaching grammar in the context of writing. Therefore, the focus of the warm-ups and daily assignments in this lesson plan are to help integrate the teaching of grammar into the writing themes and topics students are already studying in the course; however, there are some instances where a warm-up question was better fitting to be focused on a reading question rather than a grammatical question. Both types of warm-ups are intended to help students think reflectively about their previous knowledge as well as what they have been learning in the class and how they have been applying grammatical concepts to their own writing—whether they have been doing so correctly or incorrectly.

As discussed above, reflection is important to helping students solidify their learning of various concepts, and it is necessary for knowledge transfer. Providing opportunities to reflect on their own knowledge, what they have learned in class, as well as what they might need to edit or change in their own writing helps students properly apply what they are learning in the grammar lessons to their writing. For example, Crovitz and Devereaux explain that "by talking with students about *what they are trying to do* when they make errors, teachers can provide contextual constructive assistance" (7). The idea here is that students should not be expected to get everything right in terms of grammar in their writing on the first try. Making errors shows

forward progress and, in fact, is necessary for student growth (Crovitz and Devereaux 6-7). Allowing opportunities for reflection and to correct grammar in their own writing can help students learn and apply the grammatical concepts they have been studying.

Additionally, many of the homework assignments noted are focused on assignments that need to be completed for the class itself rather than grammatical assignments. The themes and topics covered in the course are more clearly reflected in these assignments; however, the grading of those assignments does reflect some of the grammar learned in class as students are required to include certain grammatical concepts and ideas in their own writing. Furthermore, since error is a necessary part of the learning process, students can only lose a certain number of points on an assignment due to grammatical errors—they cannot fail an assignment solely because of poor grammar.

Analysis

As noted above, this lesson plan was designed for my college composition class in Spring 2022. I have since taught this course following the lesson plan below and determined various aspects of the plan that worked well in terms of teaching grammar in the context of writing as well as what did not work well for the course. Overall, the structure of each day worked well. The breakdown of the class by certain times and the transition of activities (warm-up, grammar lesson, application of lesson, discussion of reading) worked to keep students engaged in the class better than if I simply lectured for the entire hour. I also did see results of knowledge transfer from what the students learned about grammar from the lessons to how they applied it to their own writing. There were still errors, of course, but that is a part of learning and students did make intentional efforts to implement certain grammatical techniques into their writing, so I consider this to be successful.

In the future, however, I would combine units 1 and 2 and eliminate the sections of unit 1 that focus on profile writing, remembering an event, and explaining a concept, then I would expand the unit on argumentative writing. Although the students did an excellent job with the grammar taught in the first unit, the concepts of adjectives, action verbs, specific verbs and specific nouns are a bit elementary for a first-year composition course and less applicable to academic writing than the other grammatical concepts. In place of these, I would add a section on appositives to the lessons that focus on chapters 18 and 19 of the course textbook that look at integrating research into writing. This would help students consider how to smoothly note a source author's credentials to strengthen the ethos of their papers.

The changes noted here are not simply due to students needing to focus on other aspects of grammar. I note these because the three topics I would cut (profile writing, remembering an event, and explaining a concept), although useful, are simply less applicable to most students in their future academic studies and careers. Focusing on argumentative writing and paper structure would be more beneficial to students overall. Despite these changes, this current lesson plan could still benefit those who teach younger students or creative writing students of both fiction and nonfiction. Ultimately, the lesson plan served students well the semester I taught it, but as with every time I teach this course, there are always topics and areas to revise for future classes.

Lesson Plan for Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing

Class: College Composition (ENG 114)

Time and Day: 1:30-2:30 PM; MWF

Intro to College Composition (1/2 a week)

Description: For this first week, grammar will be discussed in terms of its importance to writing and its value as something that helps the writer say what they want to say.

Week 1 (January 18-21)

Day	In Class	Grammar Assignment
Wednesday	1:30: Warm-up/Discussion 1:45: Take attendance/get to know students 1:50: Introduce self/begin going over syllabus	Warm-up: Good vs. Bad Grammar: What is the difference in meaning between these two sentences? A woman without her man is nothing. A woman: without her, man is nothing. Discussion: We can use grammar to help us say what we mean.
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:50: Complete going over syllabus 2:10: Have students take initial class assessment	Warm-up: Students will fill out the Grammar Income Test from Noden's *Image Grammar* (244-246)—see below. After the test: Explain that the income test is not real, but we need to take English and Grammar seriously because it truly can help us in future jobs.

Grammar Income Test (from Harry R. Noden's *Image Grammar* pages 244-246)

THE SHALERSVILLE UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL INVENTORY OF GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE

Name _____

As demonstrated in the research of Shalersville University's Doctor Edward McCormick, an individual's grammatical habits correlate with his or her income. The fewer grammatical mistakes an individual makes, the more money that individual tends to earn. The test that follows will show you with 85 to 95 percent accuracy your future income level based on your current grammatical knowledge.

Instructions: Mark each sentence as C if it is grammatically correct, *I* if it is incorrect, or ? if you are uncertain. Wrong answers count for a minus two. A question mark, indicating you are uncertain, only counts for a minus one. Keep in mind that errors may be of any variety of convention: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, or usage.

____1. When the fire started, we was downtown at the movies.

____2. The principal didn't have no business accusing Josh.

____3. Luther and I were there and saw the whole show.

____4. Each 30 second television ad shown during the Super Bowl costs sponsors on the average of $1.9 million dollars. Partly because of the 85 to 90 million viewers.

____5. In some playing cards, Charlemagne is represented by the king of hearts, Caesar is represented by the king of diamonds, Alexander the Great is represented by the king of clubs, and King David is represented by the king of spades.

____6. While helping a patient, a bullet went through Clara Barton's sleeve and killed the wounded soldier she was treating.

____7. After the long day of practice, we sat down to rest.

____8. Using Texas Holdem cards, bluffing played a key role.

____9. Winning fifty chess games and drawing six, the blind-folded, simultaneously chess match set a record for Grandmaster George Koltanowski.

____10. Maria Sharapova is Wimbledon Champion, a multimillionaire, and also does very well acting.

____11. The team of students are going in a bus instead of a van.

____12. There is hardly no problem more difficult than national defense.

____13. Dan's ability to sing certainly surprised Albert and I.

____14. Edgar Allan Poe did not have a steady hand, as you can see from his handwriting.

____15. Don Braddick landed a 3450 pound Great White Shark in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of New York but Frank Mundus, the captain of the charter boat, is given much of the deserved credit.

____16. Mark Twain once wrote a novel about his steamboat experience on the mississippi river.

____17. Before buying the car, we set down with the owner and discussed repairs.

____18. Their here to see the new movie.

____19. Before Aswan Dam was constructed, the Egyptians used the flooding of the Nile as a natural enrichment for their crops.

____20. Stephen King has dreamed of attacking insects, falling elevators and also zombies who walk in the night.

____21. Roger don't care if he fails this test.

____22. Having watched 12 hours of Twilight Zone reruns, the movie special finally came to an end.

____23. The halfback turned, spun, and plowed through the line.

____24. Neither the captain nor the coach did their job.

____25. The Peregrine Falcon which can reach speeds over 175 miles per hour has been sighted passing small airplanes.

____26. The airplane with over 200 passengers were late to arrive.

____27. The game of Sizzle ended, having used all of the game cards.

____28. The collection included books by Jay Leno Dave Barry and Steve Martin.

____29. Each of the plans have their problems.

____30. The plant smuggling which generates five billion dollars a year is a growing illegal business.

ANSWER KEY		
1. I	11. I	21. I
2. I	12. I	22. I
3. C	13. I	23. C
4. I	14. C	24. I
5. I	15. I	25. I
6. I	16. I	26. I
7. C	17. I	27. I
8. I	18. I	28. I
9. I	19. C	29. I
10. I	20. I	30. I

INVENTORY RANKING		
Score	**Projected Salary**	**Occupational Level**
0 to -1	$400,000 and above	Top executive
-2 to -3	$90,000 to $400,000	Upper management
-4 to -5	$60,000 to $90,000	Key personnel
-6 to -8	$25,000 to $60,000	Semiskilled
-9 or -10	$10,000 to $25,000	Unskilled
-11 or more	$0 to $10,000	Unemployable

UNIT 1: Getting Started with Writing (3 Weeks)

Description: This unit will introduce students to some basic writing principles. Instead of being focused on heavy academic writing, the lessons, reading, and writing involved in this unit will allow students to get some practice writing with basic grammatical concepts.

Grammatical Unit Objectives: By the end of this unit, students will be able to . . .
- Correctly spell commonly misspelled or confused words (there, their, they're, to, two, too, affect, effect, etc.).
- Write sentences with correct subject-verb agreement.
- Embellish their writing with adjectives out of order (Noden 10), action verbs (Noden 11), and specific verbs and nouns (Noden 32).
- Write simple and compound sentences.

Readings/Context: Chapters 1-4 from *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 12th edition.

Assignments to be submitted:
- Literacy Narrative
- Remembering an Event
- Writing Profiles
- Explaining a Concept

Assessment:
- Unit 1 Quiz

Week 2 (January 24-28)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Spelling 1:50: Edit 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 1 "Composing Literacy"	Warm-up: Write sentences in response to the following prompts using the required words. Required words: Their/There/They're To say the dog belongs to the family. To say a group of people is going to the store. Required words: Your/You're Ask your friend to borrow a book they own. Required words: Effect/Affect Explain that something impacts something else. Edit: Read back through your warm-up sentences. Were any of your words incorrectly used? If so, take a few minutes to correct them.
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Subject-verb agreement 1:50: Edit 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 2 "Remembering an Event"	Warm-up: What does it mean for subjects and verbs to agree? What are some examples of good or bad subject-verb agreement? It's okay if you're not sure, but try to write down at least some of your thoughts. Edit: Read through your literacy narrative. Do you see any possible issues with subject-verb agreement? If so, go back and edit those. **Literacy Narrative Due**
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Subject-verb agreement and Adjectives out of order 1:50: Sentence imitation 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 2 "Remembering an Event"	Warm-up: What can grammar be used for other than writing a professional-looking paper? How could grammar be helpful in non-academic types of writing? Imitate: Use your own words to create a sentence with the same structure as the following: "The large bull moose, red-eyed and angry, charged the intruder" (Noden 10).

Week 3 (January 31- February 4)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Adjectives out of order 1:50: Layering-in exercise 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 2 "Remembering an Event"	Warm-up: Read through what you have so far for your Remembering an Event assignment. Is there anywhere you can add some detail? Go back through and include as several adjectives. Layering in: Go back through your edits from your warm-up and try rewriting your adjectives to create at least one example of where adjectives are used out of order. Be prepared to share a sentence or two with the class.
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Action verbs 1:50: Layering-in exercise Activity/Discussion 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 3 "Writing Profiles"	Warm-up: What are action verbs? How are these different from *being* verbs? What purpose do they serve? Which type of verb is better? Layering in: Read back through your Remembering an Event assignment and replace as many *being* verbs with action verbs as you can. **Remembering an Event Assignment Due**
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Specific verbs and nouns 1:50: Layering-in exercise Activity/Discussion 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 3 "Writing Profiles"	Writing prompt: Your next assignment will involve writing a profile. To get started, think about an interesting person, group, or place you're familiar with. Take a few minutes to write a bit about it. Be prepared to share with the class. Bonus: Try to include some adjectives out of order and some action verbs. Layering-in: Now that we've discussed using specific nouns and verbs to add detail, read back through the profile you just wrote and replace general nouns and verbs with more specific ones.

Week 4 (February 7-11)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Simple sentences 1:50: Layering-in exercise 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 3 "Writing Profiles"	Warm-up: What is a simple sentence? What does it need to include? Take a few minutes to write down what you already know about simple sentences. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. Layering-in: Read through your Writing Profile assignment. Identify at least one simple sentence you used. How do you know it's a simple sentence? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. **Writing Profiles Assignment Due**
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1: 40: Grammar Discussion: Simple sentences and sentence fragments 1:50: Layering-in exercise 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 4 "Explaining a Concept"	Warm-up: Take a few minutes explain a concept in writing. Try to think of something abstract (if you can't physically pour gravy over it, it's abstract). Topic ideas: what is . . . freedom, hospitality, justice, leadership, vocation, etc.? Bonus: Try to spice up your explanation with techniques we've been discussing in class (using adjectives out of order, action verbs, specific nouns and verbs). Layering-in: Take a few minutes to reread your concept explanation. Try to find a place where you can add in a sentence fragment to make your explanation more interesting.
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Coordinating conjunctions and compound sentences 1:50: Layering-in exercise 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 4 "Explaining a Concept"	Warm-up: What is a compound sentence? How can you make a compound sentence? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. Layering-in: Read through your Explaining a Concept assignment one last time. Did you use any compound sentences? If so, do they work grammatically? If not, edit them. If you didn't use any compound sentences, try to add in at least one. **Explaining a Concept Assignment Due**

Unit 1 Homework Assignments

Literacy Narrative (10 pts.)

Write a paragraph (approximately 150-200 words) telling a compelling story that explains a memory you have of how literacy has impacted you in either a positive or a negative way. Your textbook describes this as an experience that involved "learning, unlearning, or relearning . . . to communicate with others" (Axelrod 4). Use the rhetorical framework presented on page 2 to answer *who, what, when, where, how,* and *why* questions.

Use the questions on pages 3 and 4 as well as the "Devise a topic" section on page 5 for inspiration. You may also want to use the two readings at the end of chapter 1 as examples.

As you write, consider what we discussed about spelling and proofread your writing to ensure you've used the correct spelling of each word.

Grading Guide:
All words are spelled correctly (1 pt.)
All subjects and verbs agree (1 pt.)
Literacy narrative is roughly 150-200 words (1 pt.)
Literacy narrative tells a compelling story with vivid descriptions (7 pts.)

Remembering an Event (10 pts.)

For this assignment, write a paragraph (approximately 150-200 words) about a remembered event (use page 37 of *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* to get some ideas of what you might want to write about). Make sure your mini-story is compelling, includes action, and a resolution.

As you write, use techniques we've discussed in class (action verbs, adjectives out of order, etc.). Be sure to proofread your final copy before submitting it. Bonus: Try using a sentence fragment to effectively make your story more interesting.

Grading Guide:
Profile is roughly 150-200 words (1 pt.)
Spelling correct and subject-verb agreement correct (1 pt.)
Story is compelling and uses vivid details and descriptions (uses adjectives out of order and action verbs) (8 pts.)

Writing Profiles (10 pts.)

Write a profile of a person, group of people, or a place that you find interesting. This should involve something you can effectively observe and describe in an interesting way as well as something your readers will find intriguing. Keep this to about a paragraph (approximately 150-200 words).

Use the profile example essays from chapter 3 of *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* to help guide and inspire you in your writing.

As you write, include techniques we've been discussing in class such as adjectives out of order, action verbs, and specific verbs and nouns. Bonus: Try using a sentence fragment to effectively make your story more interesting.

Grading Guide:
Profile is roughly 150-200 words (1 pt.)
Spelling correct and subject-verb agreement correct (1 pt.)
Profile is compelling and uses vivid details and descriptions (Uses adjectives out of order, action verbs, specific verbs, and specific nouns) (8 pts.)

Explaining a Concept (10 pts.)

Write a paragraph (approximately 150-200 words) explaining a concept to your readers. Try to think of something abstract (if you can't physically pour gravy over it, it's abstract). Topic ideas: what is . . . freedom, hospitality, justice, leadership, vocation, etc.? Page 136 of your textbook may be beneficial to helping you come up with a topic.

As you write, include techniques we've been discussing in class such as adjectives out of order, action verbs, and specific verbs and nouns. Also, try to include a variety of sentences, especially focusing on both simple and compound sentences. Bonus: Try using a sentence fragment to effectively make your story more interesting.

Grading Guide:
Concept explanation is roughly 150-200 words (1 pt.)
Spelling, subject-verb agreement, simple sentences, and compound sentences are all used correctly (2 pts.)
Explanation uses a variety of sentence types (simple and compound) (1 pt.)
Concept explanation uses is compelling and uses vivid details and descriptions (Such as adjectives out of order, action verbs, specific verbs, and specific nouns) (6 pts.)

UNIT 2: Reading and Writing Strategies (3 Weeks)

Description: Reading well is crucial to learning to write well, so this unit is intended to help with reading comprehension by analyzing stories and learning how to take notes on and outline readings. This unit is also intended to help with writing strategies, primarily prewriting—brainstorming and outlining.

Grammatical Unit Objectives: By the end of this unit students will be able to . . .
- Write effectively with colons and semi-colons.
- Write with transitional words as well as be able to effectively structure a paper.
- Write sentences and lists with parallel structures (Noden 57-68).
- Effectively write compound sentences.

Readings/Context: Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13 from *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 12th edition.

Assignments to be submitted:
- Story Analysis
- Reading Strategy Assignment
- Arguing a Position Paper Topic

Assessments:
- Unit 2 Quiz
- Mid-term exam

Week 5 (February 14-18)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Colons 1:50: Discuss/Imitate 2:05 Reading discussion: Chapter 10 "Analyzing Stories"	Warm-up: Take a few minutes to write down your thoughts about Ernest Hemingway's six-word story: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." What are your first impressions of this story? What could it mean? Who is selling these baby shoes and why? What does the brevity of the suggest about the emotion involved? Why is this written like an ad? Discussion: What purpose does the colon in this story serve? Does it work even though it kind of breaks one of the rules of a colon? (That the words before the colon should be a complete sentence.) Imitate: Take a few minutes to come up with your own six-word story written in the same style and with the same punctuation Hemmingway uses. Be prepared to share it with the class. **Unit 1 Take home Quiz Due**
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Semi-colons and run-ons 1:50: Try-it/Discuss 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 10 "Analyzing Stories"	Warm-up: How does Jamaica Kincaid use semi-colons in the story "Girl"? (See page 417 of your textbook.) Is this use effective? Why or why not? What else do you notice about the use of grammar in this story? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. Try-it: Take a few minutes to try writing a long sentence using semi-colons to string several sentences together. Try to do this so it's grammatically correct. If needed, try imitating a few lines from Kincaid's story (follow the same sentence structure, but use your own words).

		Discuss: How do you feel about your sentence? Does it work? Why or why not?
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Semi-colons and compound Sentences 1:50: Sentence imitation 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 12 "A Catalog of Reading Strategies"	Warm-up: Write a brief reflection on what you learned this week in terms of grammar (as a reminder, we've been talking about colons, semi-colons, and run-ons). Do you see yourself implementing these grammatical tools in your own writing? Why or why not? Imitation: Imitate at least two sentences that use semi-colons or colons from the section of Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood* (found in your textbook on pages 22-25). 1. "I was seven; the boys were eight, nine, and ten" (23). 2. "He was in city clothes: a suit and tie, street shoes" (23). 3. "He impelled us forward; we compelled him to follow our route" (23). 4. "The man's lower pant legs were wet; his cuffs were full of snow, and there was a prow of snow beneath them on his shoes and socks" (24). 5. "My lips felt swollen; I couldn't see out of the sides of my eyes; I kept coughing" (24). **Story Analysis Due**

Week 6 (February 21-25)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Review of grammatical concepts from weeks 1-5 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 12 "A Catalog of Reading Strategies"	Warm-up: Write a brief reflection discussing which grammatical concept we've discussed over the past few weeks that you've found to be the most helpful. Are there any concepts you'd like to go over again or need more clarification on? If so, what are they?
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Using commas with	Warm-up: What is a transitional word? How can transitional words be used to help improve writing? Which grammatical tools might you use when using a transitional word?

	transitional/introductory words and phrases 1:50: Identify and discuss 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 13 "Cueing the Reader"	Identify and discuss: Turn to Susan Cain's essay "Shyness: Evolutionary Tactic?" starting on page 128 of your textbook. Skim through the essay and identify at least two examples of transitional words or phrases. How is grammar used to offset these words and phrases?
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Using commas and semi-colons with transitional words within a sentence 1:50: Sentence imitation 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 13 "Cueing the Reader"	Warm-up: Are transitional words only helpful at the beginning of a sentence? Why or why not? How might using a transitional word in the middle of a sentence benefit the reader? Imitation: Come up with your own sentence that mimic's the sentence structure of the following sentence from Susan Cain's "Shyness: Evolutionary Tactic?" "Anxiety, it seems, can serve an important social purpose; for example, it plays a key role in the development of some children's consciences" (Axelrod 130). Be prepared to share your sentence with the class. OR Mimic the sentence structure of this sentence, from Amitai Etzioni's "Working at McDonalds" (starting on page 209). "Closer examination, however, finds the McDonald's kind of job highly uneducational in several ways" (209). **Reading Strategy Assignment Due**

Week 7 (February 28-March 4)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Using parallel sentence structure 1:50: Sentence imitation	Warm-up: What do you notice about the flow of the following passage from the selection from Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood*" (see page 23 of your textbook). "He chased us silently, block after block. He chased silently over picket fences, through thorny hedges, between houses, around garbage cans, and across streets." Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

	2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 11 "A catalog of Invention and Inquiry Strategies"	Imitation: Try writing parallel sentence structures by imitating the sentence structure of Annie Dillard's sentence from the warm-up. Use your own words to come up with a new sentence.
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Using parallel sentence structures 1:50: Discussion 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 11 "A catalog of Invention and Inquiry Strategies"	Warm-up: What is the difference between parallelism and redundancy? What value does parallelism add to a sentence that redundancy doesn't? Discussion: We've talked about using parallelism for lists when brainstorming a paper topic. What other invention or inquiry strategies could use parallelism and how could this help with the brainstorming process? **Unit 2 Take Home Quiz Due**
Friday	1:30: Attendance 1:35: Mid-Term Exam	**Mid-Term Exam** **Arguing a Position Paper Topic Due**

Unit 2 Homework Assignments

Story Analysis (20 pts.)

Analyze *one* of the stories from chapter 10 that we have *not* gone over in class. "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin (pages 409-410), "Araby" by James Joyce (pages 411-413), "The Use of Force" by William Carlos Williams (pages 414-416). After you read the essay, answer the questions in the "Analyze & Write" section that follows the story.

Additionally, answer the following questions: What stood out to you in terms of how the author grammatically constructed their sentences? Did they seem to use grammar in a way that was standard? Did they break any grammatical rules you're familiar with? If so, did this breaking of the rules or their grammatical constructions seem effective? Why or why not?

Aim to keep responses between 150 and 300 words.

Grading Guide:
Analysis is appropriate length and attempts to use some of the grammatical constructions that have been discussed in class (simple sentences, compound sentences, semi-colons, colons, adjectives out of order, specific verbs and nouns, etc.) (5 pts.)
Analysis answers the grammatical questions mentioned above (5 pts.)
Analysis effectively analyzes one of the three stories mentioned above by answering questions in the "Analyze & write" section of the book (10 pts.)

Reading Strategy Assignment (20 pts.)

Use one of the reading strategies from chapter 12 (Annotating, Taking Inventory, Outlining, Paraphrasing, Summarizing, etc.) to analyze a reading you're required to do in another class.

Grading Guide:
Assignment submitted (5 pts.)
Assignment is at least one full page (5 pts.)
Assignment effectively uses a reading strategy from chapter 12 to analyze a reading for another class (10 pts.)

Arguing a Position Paper Topic (5 pts.)

Submit your paper topic for your arguing a position paper for approval. Tell me what topic you chose and why. This can be done in a paragraph or less.

Spring Break (March 7-11)

UNIT 3: Research (3 Weeks)

Description: Since research is such an important part of academia, this unit focuses on getting students acclimated to using the university library website as well as helping them learn how to effectively choose scholarly sources for research papers.

Grammatical Unit Objectives: By the end of this unit, students will be able to . . .
- Write complex sentences with subordinating conjunctions.
- Correctly quote source material in a paper using quotation marks.
- Use an ellipsis, especially to take out material within a quoted source.
- Use brackets to add material within a quoted source and edit a quoted sentence to help flow with the rest of the paper.

Readings/Context: Chapters 17-21 of *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 12th edition

Assignments to be submitted:
- Research Question and Key Words
- List of Sources
- Annotated Bibliography

Assessment:
- Unit 3 Quiz

Week 8 (March 14-18)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: MLA format (chapter 20) 2:00: APA format (chapter 21) 2:20: Discussion	Warm-up: Have you ever used APA format before? MLA? Both? If you've used them both, is there one you prefer over the other? Whether you have or have not used them, how might a structured format be beneficial to both students and professors? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. Discussion: What differences do you notice between the two formatting styles?
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance 1:35: Library Orientation Day	A guest from the library will be in the classroom to show students how to navigate and use the school's library website.
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Subordinating conjunctions and complex sentences 1:50: Edit 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 17 "Planning and Conducting Research"	Warm-up: Use the topic you chose for your Arguing a Position paper and write a brief paragraph telling your peers why you chose that topic and what main ideas you plan to research relating to that topic. Edit: Read through your warm-up again and look for sentences you could combine using a subordinating conjunction. Try to make at least one change. Be prepared to share your new sentence with the class. **Research Question and Key Words Due**

Week 9 (March 21-25)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Subordinating conjunctions and complex sentences 1:50: Sentence imitation 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 17 "Planning and Conducting Research"	Warm-up: Now that we've talked about using subordinating conjunctions to create complex sentences, think about how you might be able to rearrange a complex sentence. For example, is it possible to start a sentence with the word "because"? Why or why not? Is there a way to start a sentence with that word and still have it be grammatically correct? Imitate: Take a few minutes to create your own sentences (using your own words) while following structures from Victoria C. More's "Dumpster Dinners: An Ethnography of Freeganism" (see pages 66-68 of your textbook).

		"After each veggie had a good scrub, we set them up to dry on the counter, where for purposes of this ethnography, we arranged our findings for a picture" (Axelrod 67). "Once the work was done and I saw the giant pile of beautiful food, I was changed" (Axelrod 67).
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance 1:35: Library Orientation Day 2 2:00: Researching your Arguing a Position paper topic	A guest from the library will be in to guide students in groups as they search the library website for sources for their arguing a position paper.
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Using single and double quotes 1:50: Practice and Imitate 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 18 "Selecting and Evaluating Sources"	Warm-up: Why is it important to quote and cite sources accurately? How do we use quotation marks to properly quote sources? Does this use single or double quotes? Does it matter? If so, which one is correct when? Practice: Place the quotation marks in the correct place in this sentence. A research study done by Harvard University found that 95% of students who use paper and pencil to take notes in class score 10% higher on exams than those who take notes using a laptop. Correct: A research study done by Harvard University found that "95% of students who use paper and pencil to take notes in class score 10% higher on exams than those who take notes using a laptop." Once you have the quotation marks in place, try writing your own sentence with a similar structure (you're welcome to make up the information you include here for the purpose of this exercise). **List of Sources Due**

Week 10 (March 28-April 1)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up	Warm-up: Have you ever used an ellipsis (. . .) before? What did you use it for? Why might someone use an ellipsis in academic writing?

	1:40: Grammar Discussion: Using an ellipsis to cut out source information. 1:50: Practice 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 19 "Using Sources to Support Your Ideas"	Practice: Try using an ellipsis (or two) to eliminate material from the following paragraph from Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*. This segment comes right after Peeta tosses Katniss a loaf of burned bread. She's starving and needs it to keep herself and her mom and little sister alive. "By the time I reached home, the loaves had cooled somewhat, but the insides were still warm. When I dropped them on the table, Prim's hands reached to tear off a chunk, but I made her sit, forced my mother to join us at the table, and poured warm tea. I scraped off the black stuff and sliced the bread. We ate an entire loaf, slice by slice. It was good hearty bread, filled with raisins and nuts" (Collins 31). As you consider what to take out of this paragraph, think about what you might want to say in the text surrounding your quote. For example, do you want to focus on the bread and what's in it, the fact that Katniss insists on taking a few minutes to make it feel more like a real meal, or the fact that it was so crucial to the family's survival? Or something else?
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Peer reviews Annotated Bibliography Peer Reviews	In groups of 3, students will spend 15 minutes looking at each person's annotated bibliography and providing feedback on the paper. **Annotated Bibliography rough draft due (needs to be brought to class)**
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Using brackets to add information 1:50: Practice 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 19 "Using Sources to Support Your Ideas"	Warm-up: Have you ever used brackets in writing? What did you use them for? If you haven't used them, why would you use them? Practice: Use brackets to edit this sentence and make it flow more smoothly. In her essay "Dumpster Dinners: An Ethnography of Freganism," Victoria C More explains that "I met the girls at their apartment and we prepared for the dive" (Axelrod 67). **Annotated Bibliography Due**

Unit 3 Homework Assignments

Research Question and Key Words Due (Before Class) (10 pts.)

With your research topic in mind and considering what we learned in class about library research, come up with at least one research question and 8-12 key words or terms you might use while researching your Arguing a Position paper topic. When thinking of your key words, remember to try to narrow your topic and think of what specific words will help you get search results as close to what you're looking for as possible.

Grading Guide:
Assignment lists paper topic (1 pt.)
Assignment lists a research question (1 pt.)
Assignment lists at least 8 keywords to research (8 pts.)

List of Sources (10 pts.)

For this assignment, submit a working list of sources you plan to use for your final annotated bibliography. Either take these sources from those you found on our library research day, and/or find some of your own sources. Aim to include at least 10 sources you plan to annotate. Properly cite these sources in MLA format before submitting your source list. This also means that the list should be in alphabetical order, double spaced, and include a hanging indent.

This assignment serves as a bit of a rough draft for your annotated bibliography.

Grading Guide:
Each source included that is properly cited in MLA format will receive 1 point. A half a point will be lost for every source that is not at least attempted to be put into MLA format (i.e., nothing more than a source link).

Annotated Bibliography (50 pts.)

Research the topic you chose for your Arguing a Position paper. Find 10 scholarly sources to use for this assignment (you'll likely want to choose from the sources you found on the library research day as well as those you used in your List of Sources). Write a paragraph for each source. In that paragraph, you'll want to summarize the source (note what it's about) and evaluate the source (determine how it's useful to your Arguing a Position paper).

Please write your bibliographies in MLA format.

See pages 174-176 of your textbook for more details on creating an annotated bibliography.

Grading Guide:
"Bibliography" title is included and properly formatted (2 pts.)
Entire paper is double spaced without extra space between paragraphs (2 pts.)
Sources are in alphabetical order (2 pts.)

Each source has a hanging indent (2 pts.)
Sources are cited in proper MLA format (2 pts.)
Annotations are clear and provide a summary and evaluation of the text (35 pts.)
Annotations have been proofread and edited (5 pts.)

UNIT 4: Arguing in Writing (3 Weeks)

Description: This is an application unit of everything learned throughout the semester. Through being able to write well, to effectively analyze and read sources, to prewrite, and to find scholarly sources, students will now be able to combine what they've learned to write their own argumentative paper.

Grammatical Unit Objectives: By the end of this unit, students will be able to . . .
- Effectively fix run-on sentences and comma splices (or use them to enhance their writing).
- Write compound-complex sentences, especially when writing a paper thesis.
- Effectively use commas to discuss comparisons and contrasts between two ideas.

Readings/Context: Chapters 5, 6, 16 from *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 12th edition.

Assignments to be submitted:
- Arguing a Position Paper Introduction Draft and Thesis Statement
- Arguing a Position Paper Outline
- Peer Review Reflection
- Arguing a Position Paper

Assessment:
- Unit 4 Quiz

Week 11 (April 4-8)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Run-on sentences and comma splices 1:50: Practice 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 5 "Analyzing and Synthesizing Opposing Arguments"	Warm-up: What makes a run-on sentence? How do you fix one when you see one? Are you familiar with the term "comma splice?" If so, how do you fix it? If not, what do you think that could mean? Practice: How would you fix the comma splice in the following sentence? I'm looking forward to Easter break, I have plans to see my extended family. Once you've fixed the comma splice, write your own compound or complex sentence based on the model you just created.

		Unit 3 Take home Quiz Due
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Run-on sentences and comma splices review; compound-complex sentences 1:50: Edit 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 5 "Analyzing and Synthesizing Opposing Arguments"	Warm-up: Based on what we discussed last class about creating an informative and interesting introduction, practice writing an introduction for your Arguing a Position paper. It's okay if you need to do some research before your intro is complete, just try to jot down some of your thoughts. Edit: Take a few minutes to read back through your intro to see if you've included any comma splices. If so, fix them. If not, are there any sentences you can combine to help with sentence variety? Be prepared to share at least one example sentence with the class.
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Compound-complex sentences 1:50: Practice 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 16 "Arguing"	Warm-up: We've talked about thesis statements quite a bit throughout the semester already. Take a minute to reflect on what you know about a thesis statement, its typical placement, and what it should include. Practice: Compound-complex sentences are great to use for a thesis statement. Try to draft a thesis statement for your paper by using a compound-complex sentence. (This includes at least two independent clauses and one dependent clause. i.e., Because after-school programs and sports are so important for student's high school experience, schools should start at 8 AM; this allows students to get the sleep they desperately need while avoiding messing with after-school programs, bus schedules, and parent work schedules). **Arguing a Position Paper Introduction Draft and Thesis Statement Due**

Week 12 (April 11-14)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Commas used to help contrast ideas	Warm-up: Why is it important to write a paragraph acknowledging a reader's objections to your point? What types of sentences might help in writing an objection paragraph? What can you do grammatically to help introduce a contrast in thought?

	1:50: Practice/Review 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 16 "Arguing"	Practice: We've already talked about how to use transitional words and phrases and how to use commas, but we can use these to introduce contrasting ideas. Complete the following sentence with information from your own Arguing a Position paper topic (you can find this sentence model on page 196 of your textbook). Some claim _____, but in reality _____. Review: What kind of sentence is the above sentence?
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Commas and signal phrases to introduce quotes 1:55: Reading discussion: Chapter 6 "Arguing a Position"	Warm-up: Try to punctuate the following sentence from "Children Need to Play, Not Compete" by Jessica Statsky: "According to a poll from the National Alliance for Youth Sports" Julianna W. Miner writes in the *Washington Post* "around 70 percent of kids in the United States stop playing organized sports by the age of 13 because 'it's just not fun anymore'" (Axelrod 201). Hint: Try to imagine it without the quotation marks. Corrected: "According to a poll from the National Alliance for Youth Sports," Julianna W. Miner writes in the *Washington Post,* "around 70 percent of kids in the United States stop playing organized sports by the age of 13 because 'it's just not fun anymore'" (Axelrod 201). **Arguing a Position Paper Outline Due**
Friday	NO CLASS Easter Break	

Week 13 (April 18-22)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Hyphens, dashes, and em-dashes 1:50: Imitation 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 6 "Arguing a Position"	What is the difference between a hyphen and a dash? When would you use one or the other? Imitation: Practice using an em-dash by imitating the following sentence from "Working at McDonald's" by Amitai Etzioni: "No wonder quite a few would rather skip school—and certainly homework—and instead work longer at a Burger King" (Axelrod 211). As you create your own sentence, consider what these em-dashes are doing. What purpose do they have within this sentence? Is there any other punctuation mark that could also work here?
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance Arguing a Position Paper Peer Reviews	Arguing a Position Paper Peer Reviews Students will be divided into groups of three and review each other's papers, spending about 15 minutes on each.
Friday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Grammar Discussion: Hyphens, dashes, and em-dashes 1:50: Identify 2:00: Reading discussion: Chapter 6 "Arguing a Position"	Warm-up: It's been a few days since we've reviewed hyphens and dashes. What do you remember about when to use them? Write a sentence using at least one em-dash. Be prepared to share your sentence with the class. Identify: Look at Working at McDonald's" by Amitai Etzioni on pages 209-211 of your textbook. Skim through the essay and note where all you see em-dashes or hyphens. How are they used? Be prepared to discuss. **Peer Review Reflection Due**

UNIT 6: Review/Wrap Up

Description: This unit is a review unit for the final exam. Students will verbally note what they would like to review during this week, and it will be reviewed and studied in class. If possible, all three days will be used for review. However, it is also possible that we will fall a bit behind during the semester and need a day or two to catch up. So these days could be used for that if needed.

Assessments:
- Final Exam (given during finals week—week 15)

Week 14 (April 25-29)

Day	In Class	Assignment
Monday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Review	Warm-up: What are some topics we've discussed this second half of the semester that you'd like to review more in-depth before the final exam? These can be grammatical concepts or involving our reading discussions. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. **Unit 4 Quiz Take Home Quiz Due**
Wednesday	1:30: Attendance/Warm-up 1:40: Review	Warm-up: What has been your biggest takeaway from this class? Is there anything you've learned that you can apply to future classes or that you've already applied to current classes? Be prepared to share your thoughts. ***Arguing a Position Paper Due***
Friday	1:30: Attendance 1:40: Review Games	Review Games

Arguing a Position Paper Introduction Draft and Thesis Statement (10 pts.)

Submit the introductory paragraph you've been working on in class. Feel free to take this home and edit it as well. This is a rough draft, so this might change (sometimes intros are better if they're written after the paper is completed). Be sure to include a clear thesis statement in your submission. The feedback you receive will help you edit the intro for the final paper.

If possible, proofread this before submitting this assignment. You will not lose credit on grammatical errors in this paper, but you will receive feedback of what you might need to work on for your final paper.

Grading Guide:
An introduction paragraph that's at least 100 words is included (5 pts.)
A clear thesis statement is included (5 pts.)

Arguing a Position Paper Outline (30 pts.)

Create a complete outline for your arguing a position paper. This outline should be in-depth, meaning that it should not only list the main points of your paper, but it also needs to expand on them. You may use information you've gathered for other assignments throughout this

class to help you create this outline. See the grading guide for what your outline needs to include.

Grading Guide:
Edited thesis statement (1 pt.)
Edited introduction paragraph (2 pts.)
A list of the main points you will discuss in your paper (these points need to back up your thesis)
A summary of each of the main points—feel free to include quotes from your sources, but the summary should not be made up entirely of quotes (10 pts.)
A summary of your objection paragraph and how you plan to refute it (5 pts.)
A conclusion rough draft (2 pts.)
A completed works cited page (taken from your annotated bibliography) (10 pts.)

Peer Review Reflection (10 pts.)

Write a paragraph (150-200 words) reflecting on your experience with peer reviews. Here are some questions to get you started: What was the most helpful part about peer reviews? What did your peers comment on that surprised you? What didn't your peers comment on that surprised you? What was the least helpful thing about peer reviews? What are you working to improve in your final draft based on your peer reviews?

Grading Guide:
Assignment completed on time (10 pts.)

Arguing a Position Paper (100 pts.)

Write an argumentative paper on the topic of your choice. This should be based on the topic you chose at the beginning of the semester, and this should utilize the research you've done and the sources you used for your Annotated Bibliography assignment. I would not recommend changing your topic this late, but if you really want to, you may do so, but please email me your new topic for approval before writing your essay.

Extra Credit:
You can earn up to 5 pts. extra credit on this paper by taking it to the writing center. You can sign up for an appointment via MyCornerstone. When you meet with a tutor, ask them to send me an email (julie.stevens@cornerstone.edu) letting me know that you visited them. I cannot give extra credit unless I receive an email from them.

Grading Guide:
Logistics
-Assignment submitted on time
-Entire paper is in proper MLA format
-Works Cited page is included and formatted correctly and in-text citations are used and formatted correctly (-10 pts. if works cited page is not present)
-Length (3-4 pages + works cited page)

Maximum score 60

Overall Structure
-Introduction (clear, interesting); introduces two sides of an opposing argument
-Thesis (defines scope of paper); includes a forecasting statement
-Transitions (smooth movement between ideas)
-Includes both sides of an opposing argument as well as the writer's perspective
-Includes a paragraph that refutes possible objections to writer's argument
-Conclusion (rises from content, objective)
Maximum score: 10

Content
-Knows subject (more than a series of citations)
-Development (orderly, logical)
-Support (assertions clearly stated or illustrated)
Maximum score: 10

Mechanics/Form
-Sentence structure (coherent, unified, varied)
-Grammar (punctuation, capitalization)
-Proofreading (spell check, spacing, correct forms)
-Diction (word choice, word tools)
-Paragraphing (coherent, not overly lengthy)
Maximum score: 10

Research
-Signal phrases
-Appropriate sources (legitimate, traceable, scholarly)
-Citations correct (no plagiarism, intended or unintended)
-Appropriate number of citations and sources for assignment
Maximum score: 10

Works Cited

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Noden, Harry R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*.

    Heinemann, 2011.

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