Reflections on Select Works of Professional Writing and Rhetoric

Joy Tersigni
joykt@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons, and the Technical and Professional Writing Commons

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Repository Citation
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english/122

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.
REFLECTIONS ON SELECT WORKS OF PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND RHETORIC

Joy Tersigni
joykt@bgsu.edu

A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the field of English with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric

20 March 2024

Dr. Lee Nickoson
First Reader
Dr. Rachel Ann Walsh
Department of English Graduate Program Coordinator
TABLE OF CONTENTS: REFLECTIONS ON SELECT WORKS OF PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND RHETORIC

Analytical Narrative........................................................................................................................................3

Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices: An Effective Instructional Guide for the Newrow Class Connect Online Pedagogical Platform (Research and analysis) ........................................... 8

Newrow for Teachers: Instructional User Guide 2.0 (Pedagogy)...................................................................... 32

The Toxicity and the Power of Destruction White Heteronormativity Plays in the Lives of James Baldwin’s Characters within Giovanni’s Room and Another Country ................................................. 62
Through my Master of Arts in English with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric program I have had numerous opportunities to research, plan, draft, and revise meaningful works of writing. I chose to apply and enroll in the MA in English with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric program due to my love of writing. During my undergraduate education where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education and an Adolescence to Young Adult (7-12) Integrated Language Arts teaching license, my writing was mostly focused on pedagogy and literature analysis. The knowledge I gained during my undergraduate education and the writing I produced was invaluable and prepared me to further my education to seek out a different genre of writing. Throughout my graduate education in this program, I have been able to explore and contribute to other writing genres.

I chose the following three pieces to be included in the Master’s Portfolio because they showcase my strongest writing produced throughout the program. First, the manual analysis, Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices: An Effective Instructional Guide for the Newrow Class Connect Online Pedagogical Platform, awarded me the opportunity to evaluate the user guide for the pedagogical platform I use to teach in my current career. By incorporating research and discourse on the topic of document design I was able to draw out the document’s strengths and areas for improvement. Second, the manual design project, Newrow for Teachers: Instructional User Guide 2.0, provided me the opportunity to take the previous evaluation a step further and redesign the user guide into version 2.0 to address the areas for improvement and ultimately make the user guide more user centered through the use of visuals and navigability. Third, the scholarly essay, The Toxicity and the Power of Destruction White Heteronormativity Plays in the Lives of James Baldwin’s Characters within Giovanni’s Room and Another Country
is included in the Master’s Portfolio because the knowledge I gained throughout the 6800 course gave me the opportunity to think critically and write analytically about topics and literature I have never had the opportunity to do so before.

All three included pieces were cultivated in different ways. The idea for Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices came from my natural critiques of the current published user guide for the pedagogical platform I use daily in my teaching. The idea for Newrow for Teachers came out of necessity. Now that I have drawn out the original document’s areas for improvement through my first project, Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices, I was excited to draft an improved version which became the Newrow for Teachers. The idea for The Toxicity and the Power of Destruction developed over several weeks of the course. The more I learned about James Baldwin, his life, and his writing, the more interested I became in how the social constructs of Baldwin’s lifetime influenced the world in which his characters also live.

The strategies applied to revise Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices include the addition of a cover page, navigable Table of Contents, visuals, cross-references within the document, and three Appendices. Other revisions to the first project apply to the overall tone of the document, sentence structure, updated in-text and works cited citations, and elaborating in the “Recommendations” section. The strategies applied to revise Newrow for Teachers are geared toward improving the document’s readability, and ultimately the user experience. For the revision of the second project, I changed the typeface to a sans-serif from a serif typeface, changed the leading (line spacing) to 1.15 from 1.0, and bolded the "NOTE" text for emphasis. The strategies applied to revise The Toxicity and the Power of Destruction rely heavily on conversations with and feedback from the professor of the ENG 6800 course, Dr. Rachel Ann Walsh. The revisions to the third project focus on deepening the analysis of Giovanni’s Room
and *Another Country* by James Baldwin while maintaining my original purpose and claim. During the revision process of the final included piece, I revisited and included a more thorough analysis of Magdalena J. Zaborowska’s “Queer Orientalisms in *Another Country,*” in relation to the characters’ lives in Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room* and *Another Country.* I clarify my argument throughout the essay in relation to spaces and their effect on race and gender. I also develop clearer arguments that discuss David’s struggle with his nonbinary identity and how that impacted Giovanni’s life and David and Giovanni’s relationship. Regarding the discussion of *Another Country,* I clarify my argument from the perspective of Rufus instead of from the white heteronormative perspective. Also, I clarify how Ida attempts to use her Black sexuality, that is used against her by society, to her advantage to survive in certain situations in white society. Finally, necessary revisions were made to update works cited entries.

Throughout the courses where these writings originated and through the revision process of these three included pieces in the ENG 6910 course, I was able to develop my writing across multiple genres. The ENG 6400 and ENG 6460 courses where I developed Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices and Newrow for Teachers was my first experience in the field of Technical Communication. In these courses, I was immersed in Technical Communication through readings, discussions, research, and writing. With this being my first exposure to the world of Technical Communication, I was able to learn and develop through the reading of published discourse in the field and contribute to the ongoing discourse by developing my own writing, included in the first and second pieces of the portfolio. With the third piece included in the portfolio, I have developed a deeper understanding and appreciation for English literature and the critical thinking involved in analyzing, researching, and writing in this genre as well.
All three pieces included in the portfolio required substantive research throughout the planning, drafting, and writing phases. Primarily, Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices required research of the current version of the “Instructional User Guide 1.5” for the Class Connect Newrow platform. Secondarily, research on published scholarship and discourse to contribute to the analysis of the user guide was conducted. Multiple sources aided in the analysis including textbooks on Technical Communication and peer-reviewed articles on document design, the use of visuals, and online pedagogy. The research conducted in the creation of Newrow for Teachers includes primary research of the “Instructional User Guide 1.5” for the Class Connect Newrow platform. From this research I was able to draw out areas needing improvement in the document’s content and design. I then drafted and included these revisions in the Newrow for Teachers: Instructional User Guide 2.0 that I created and included as the second piece of the portfolio. More primary research was conducted for Newrow for Teachers through an initial round of usability testing with a participant using think aloud protocol. Finally, the research conducted through the writing process of The Toxicity and the Power of Destruction includes the primary analysis of the two James Baldwin texts, Giovanni’s Room and Another Country, along with the secondary research of numerous other supplementary sources.

Two of the pieces in the portfolio, Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices and Newrow for Teachers, exemplify a pedagogical connection. The currently published version 1.5 of the Instructional User Guide for the Class Connect Newrow platform that was analyzed in the first piece of the portfolio is used to train users on how to use the online pedagogical platform. The version 2.0 Newrow for Teachers Instructional User Guide that I created and included as the second piece of the portfolio is an updated and user centered user guide for the same online
pedagogical platform. I have used and will continue to use the visuals from Newrow for Teachers on my teacher’s website for my current role as an online middle school teacher.

My goals and objectives in pursuing a Master of Arts in English with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric are to broaden my scope in education and experience. I wanted to challenge myself outside of my background in Education by branching out to a different genre, Technical Communication. Throughout this program I have gained new experiences in the areas of technical writing and communication, visual rhetoric, and instructional design, along with the opportunity to build on my prior knowledge and expertise in education and literature analysis. Much of what I gained throughout this program I have already put to use in my teaching.

Ultimately, I hope to use my Master’s education to further my career goals to open future professional opportunities. I am currently finishing my second year as an online middle school English Language Arts teacher. Before that I worked for a brick-and-mortar public high school teaching English to 9-12 grade students for 11 years. I am looking forward to the opportunity to further challenge myself by making a possible career change made possible by my graduate education. This change may include staying in Education, but at a different level or a more administrative role, or it may mean making a complete change from Education to one of the many professions in the field of Technical Communication. Whatever changes may come, I feel prepared for these challenges due to my education and the knowledge I have gained throughout the Master of Arts in English with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric program.
Rhetorical Perspectives and Visual Practices

An Effective Instructional Guide for the Newrow Class Connect Online Pedagogical Platform

Joy Tersigni

Bowling Green State University
# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ................................................................................................................. 9  
Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 10  
Theoretical Foundation and Scholarship .................................................................................. 11  
Methodology ............................................................................................................................ 11  
Analysis ..................................................................................................................................... 13  
  *Situationally Embedded* ........................................................................................................... 13  
  *Interactive* ............................................................................................................................... 15  
  *Functionally Mapped* ............................................................................................................ 15  
  *Modular* .................................................................................................................................. 17  
  *Navigable* ............................................................................................................................... 18  
  *Hierarchically Embedded* ...................................................................................................... 18  
  *Spacious* .................................................................................................................................. 19  
  *Graphically Rich* .................................................................................................................... 20  
  *Customizable and Publishable* .............................................................................................. 21  
Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 22  
Implications ................................................................................................................................. 23  
Recommendations ....................................................................................................................... 23  
Works Cited .................................................................................................................................. 25  
Appendix A – Instructional User Guide 1.5 .................................................................................. 27  
Appendix B – Plan for Usability Testing ..................................................................................... 28  
Appendix C – Sample Participant Consent Form ....................................................................... 30  
Appendix D – Sample Participant Survey Questionnaire ............................................................ 31
Introduction

This research critically analyzes the effectiveness of an instructional user guide for an online pedagogical platform and evaluate if the intended goal of the document is met. According to the education company’s website which utilizes the platform, the intended goal of the instructional guide “covers 95% of what you need to know in a series of visual slides, making it very easy to get up-to-speed in about 10 minutes! It also serves as an excellent reference guide!” (Stride Talent Development). The full user guide can be found in Appendix A. This research is pertinent because this document serves as the foundational introduction to the platform for delivering instruction and conducting classes in an online environment. The more effective this teacher user guide is, the more effective and engaging instruction will be, the more learning happens, and the more knowledge is transferred. If this instruction guide fulfils its intended purpose not only does the direct user (the teacher) benefit but also their audience (the learner/student). I have a connection to this research as I would like to get the most out of this online pedagogical platform and to do so I need to get the most out of the instructional user guide. I will analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the effectiveness of the document and offer suggestions as to how to make the instructional guide more user-friendly, leading this document to fulfill its purpose of being “an excellent reference guide” (Stride Talent Development). The analysis is as objective as possible. As the analyzer and evaluator, I bring to the table the fact that I have already been using this online pedagogical platform for over a year and I have prior experience with two other online pedagogical platforms (one extensively and one minimally). I leave a compare and contrast evaluation of the online pedagogical platform out of this essay and instead offer an analysis of the technical writing in this instructional user guide. I focus on rhetorical analysis and visual theory of the technical writing of the instructional user guide itself.
Theoretical Foundation and Scholarship

Using the text *Central Works in Technical Communication*, edited by Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Stuart A. Selber, I base the analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the instructional user guide for the online pedagogical platform on the theories of rhetorical analysis in technical writing from Carolyn R. Miller, Linda Driskill, Robert R. Johnson, and Teresa M. Harrison. The rhetorical perspectives discussed in the articles of Miller, Driskill, Johnson, and Harrison apply directly to the methodology used to critically analyze the instructional guide in this essay. Simultaneously, a critical analysis of the visual practice of the instructional guide will be conducted with the basis of Stephen A. Bernhardt’s “nine dimensions of variation” (410). Bernhardt’s nine dimensions to analyze on-screen text are broken down into the following categories and asks if the text is: situationally embedded, interactive, functionally mapped, modular, navigable, hierarchically embedded, spacious, graphically rich, customizable and publishable (410). Using these dimensions, I evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional guide in relation to the effectiveness of the visuals used throughout the document.

Methodology

The technical writing piece evaluated in this rhetorical and visual analysis is the Class Connect Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5. The document is intended to instruct teachers how to effectively use the platform to deliver instruction in a safe and inclusive online learning environment. As Miller deduces, “Technical writing is sometimes characterized by its particular concern for audience analysis” (51). The instructional guide is divided into three sections as follows:

“Section 1 of 3: Getting Started in Newrow – How do I create and enter a classroom?” (3).
Subheadings: Schedule a Session, Launch Newrow, Access Attendance and Recordings, Device Activation, Interface, Browser Zoom

“Section 2 of 3: Preparing Your Classroom – What options do I have as I prepare my lessons?” (19).


“Section 3 of 3: Classroom Management – How do I manage students in a Newrow classroom?” (49).

Subheadings: Participant Window – Microphone, Participant Window – Webcam and Stage, Participant Window, Content Interaction, Content Interaction – Play Shared Files, Webinar Mode, The Student Experience (Classroom Mode), The Student Experience (Webinar Mode)

I use the following topics of rhetoric to evaluate this instructional guide throughout the critical analysis:

Writer/creator- What did the writers of this document have in mind when creating this instructional guide? What are their goals, and do they reach them in the most effective way possible? Did the writers create this instructional guide with the audience in mind?
Audience- Who is the intended audience? Does it appear the audience was part of the writing and creating process of this document? If so, did the audience's involvement help or hinder the effectiveness of the document?

Topic/content- Are all necessary topics covered? Is the content of the instructional guide sufficient? Is there any content that needs to be added or omitted?

Purpose- Is the intended purpose of the instructional guide fulfilled? If so, is it fulfilled in the most effective way? If not, what strategies should be considered to better communicate the purpose of the document?

Context/culture- Does both the writer/creator and the audience receive a transference of information? Does each group understand the environment in which this document is needed? Is the culture of writer/creator and audience considered in the writing of the instructional guide?

These topics and their corresponding questions will aid in the analysis through a rhetorical lens of the effectiveness of the instructional user guide for the online pedagogical platform. The rhetorical analysis is ingrained throughout the evaluation of Bernhardt’s nine dimensions of on-screen text regarding the instructional guide.

**Analysis**

Because the instructional guide is presented as a PowerPoint presentation PDF it is important to evaluate the visual practices used in the layout of the 60-page document, hence the use of Bernhardt’s nine dimensions of on-screen text as subheadings for the analysis of this essay.

_Situationally Embedded._ According to Bernhardt’s findings, “[r]eaders of screen-based text are not so much _readers_ as _doers_ or _seekers_ … it’s more like _using_ text than _reading_ it” (411). The
importance of context and audience is prevalent in relation to the success of the instructional guide because readers of this document are, by using this document, completing “a sub-task within the larger task environment,” which is actually using the online pedagogical platform (Bernhardt 411). Users who are reading this guide are simultaneously interacting with the platform, which is the user’s priority. The instructional user guide effectively conveys the importance of this idea of “using the text.” As shown through all the steps of the user guide, there are screenshots of the interface with embedded text boxes explaining the functions and uses of multiple features.

**Schedule a Session**

![Schedule a Session](image)

*Figure 1* This screenshot shows the specific features of the online pedagogical platform and the textbox that explains the function of said feature. *(From Class Connect Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5, slide 4.)*

The use of the screenshots of the actual platform alongside the textbox which describes and explains the settings and features allows the user to treat the document for what it is, “a second-level activity” guiding them through the actual use of the platform (Bernhardt 411). The target audience is considered in the creation of this document, being that it is created for the audience
of educators who need to use the platform in the context of delivering online instruction. As Johnson states, “After all, in technical communication, our audiences generally are ‘real.’ We often work with the actual people who will receive the products of our writing” (93). It is true that the audience is considered in the creation of this document, but the amount that the audience is included in the creation of the instructional guide is not apparent. Also, some assumptions are made about the culture of intended users. First, it is assumed that the users of this document are speakers of English. Second, it is also assumed that the audience has basic prior knowledge of online pedagogical platforms. If a user of the instructional guide does not fall into this culture, the document's purpose (creating a productive online pedagogical platform for the user and students) cannot be achieved.

Interactive. Bernhardt stresses that, “readers become participants, control outcomes, and shape of the text itself” (412). The lack of available interaction the user has with this document is a major downside. Because the instructional user guide opens to a 60-page pdf converted from a PowerPoint, there is no access for the user to interact with the document. Adding an option for an interactive glossary or table of contents to the content of this document would allow the user to seek out specific trouble shooting issues. However, there are no such interactive features of the instructional user guide, so the reader must rely on scrolling through all pages of the document until coming across the many headings and subheadings and arriving at the intended feature. Even an interactive feature to take the user to the three different sections of the document would be more beneficial and effective than none, which is how the instructional user guide is currently published.

Functionally Mapped. The navigation cues and informational language in the instructional guide are appropriate and extremely effective for a user who needs or wants start to finish access to the
platform. Bernhardt explains, “When language is on-screen, readers must be able to distinguish different functions” (414). The document is mapped in a chronological order that takes the user from setting up a class session to managing students on the platform. However, one feature the document lacks is an explanation of the multiple options for ending a session.

**Interface**

*Figure 2: The “Click here to leave a session or end for all participants” textbox does not explain the implications of such actions. (From Class Connect Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5, slide 16.)*

As seen in Figure 2, not explaining the implications of the two options for ending a session will leave the user not knowing what the difference is between simply leaving a session or ending the session for all participants.

Instead, when users click the red door icon to end a session, they are then prompted with a pop-up asking, “Do you want to end the class?” with three options to choose from: “End For Everyone,” “Leave Class” or “No.”
Figure 3: The “End The Class” options users must choose from to end the session. (Source: Newrow).

By clicking “End For Everyone” the user will completely end the session closing out all participants from the live class connect. This is best practice so that students are not left in an unattended session. However, if the user clicks “Leave Class” only the user will exit from the session leaving all other participants in the live class connect. If the session is for a class, this means the teacher exits the session leaving the students in the live session unattended. By clicking “No” the user will remain in the session.

Modular. While the mapping of the document is functional in its entirety, the user spends a lot of time scrolling through the 60-page document. The sections, headings, and many subheadings aid the user to skim through the document to find the needed section, but not without having to scroll through 60-pages of information each time. Bernhardt suggests, “And while a reader can quickly skim a stack of information if each card is completely contained within the window, it is time-consuming and ultimately wasteful to have to scroll to see if text should be read” (416). This document would benefit and be more effective if it allowed for an interactive glossary or table of contents which allows the user to click to the needed module instead of scrolling. The lack of this
feature affects the navigability of the user guide. This brings up the question of what the
writer/creator had in mind when publishing the instructional guide in this format. If the
writer/creator of this document knows that their audience will be referencing and using this guide
while simultaneously navigating the online platform, what is the reasoning for not making the
document navigable?

Navigable. Probably one of the least user-friendly features of this instructional guide is its lack of
interactivity available to the audience. Bernhardt notices, “readers come to expect the icons to be
active—to respond to a point-and-click” (421). Because this document is situationally embedded
and the audience is using it to navigate the actual teaching platform, being able to “point-and-
click” on exactly what the user needs would be ideal. As stated before, scrolling through a 60-
page document to find what the user needs “is time-consuming and ultimately wasteful”
(Bernhardt 416). Again, if the user were included in the creation of this document this lack of
interactivity to navigate the instructional guide may have been caught. Johnson points out,
“Missing from most discussions of collaborative writing is audience as an actual living,
breathing figure in the discourse production” (93). The audience needs to be able to use this
instructional guide while simultaneously using the platform, so including features to make this
more navigable would benefit the user-experience. Possible features to make the user guide more
 navigable and user-friendly include a table of contents or a list of figures.

Hierarchically Embedded. Even though the instructional guide does not have a glossary or table
of contents, which may be its biggest drawback, the document does have levels of explanations
and examples to aid the audience in using the platform. Bernhardt stresses the importance of this
feature: “Glossaries can exist behind words, levels of explanation and example can exist below
the surface of the text” (419). Even though there is no embedded glossary, the instructional user guide does off explanations on the surface of the visuals used.

**Device Activation**

![Device Activation Image](image)

*Figure 4: The instructional guide attempts to use layers of visuals and explanations to communicate with the intended audience how to most effectively use its features to get the most out of the instructional session. (From Class Connect Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5, slide 9.)*

As seen in Figure 4, to activate the platform for its most effective use there are multiple steps the audience must take when initially logging in to the session. This figure is effective in alerting the user to these settings.

**Spacious.** The visual layout of the instructional guide is spacious and aesthetically pleasing to the audience. Bernhardt addresses the differences between print and electronic text: “No similar physical constraint [to that of print text] shapes electronic text. The result is a spaciousness in both the amount of information that can be recorded and in the design of information display” (421). The creator/writer considers the chronological steps to use of the platform and designed
the user guide in an optimal way for the audience to get an effective beginning-to-end brief of the platform.

**Playlist**

![Playlist Interface](image)

*Figure 5:* Note the interface’s differentiated levels of visuals to aid the user in seeing multiple parts of the platform and their purpose at once. *(From Class Connect Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5, slide 27.)*

Figure 5 shows the normal backdrop of the platform with the participants and chat window clearly visible, while allowing the user to see what happens when clicking on the “Files” feature and creating a “Playlist”. Seeing the pop-up window atop the main surface of the platform gives the audience context to adding a file to a current session.

*Graphically Rich.* The surface of the instructional guide is rife with graphics and text. This is extremely beneficial for the user because the graphics are an exact replica of the interface they are using, and the text offers helpful descriptions and explanations to explain those features directly to the audience. Bernhardt explains the positives of a graphically rich text: “Electronic text extends visual composition by offering a surface with more graphic potential and greatly augmented options for text/graphic display and integration” (422). The instructional guide is
effective at alerting the user to key features of the online pedagogical platform by using a mixture of graphics and text.

Figure 6: The relationship between graphics and text is seen in this example which helps the user visualize the layers of the platform while simultaneously being able to read a description and explanation of an invaluable feature of the platform. (From Class Connect Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5, slide 41.)

As seen in Figure 6, not only does the instructional guide utilize realistic graphics to teach the audience how to effectively use the screenshare tool but, it also offers a helpful text note warning the user of a feature that this option of screen sharing will make audio obsolete. If the writer/creator did not specify this action in the instructional guide, the user would not be able to communicate with their audience.

Customizable and Publishable. Bernhardt explains, “[e]lectronic text … benefits from being infinitely more fluid, expansive, and adaptable to individual uses” (423). Unfortunately, as seen in the previous dimensions of interactivity, modularity, and navigability the instructional guide is lacking in the aspect of customizability. Because the format of the document is a PowerPoint turned pdf it lacks the “potential to adapt to individual users automatically” and doesn’t allow
“[r]eaders [to] own the text” or to “do what they want with it” or “make it their own” (Bernhardt 425). However, the instructional guide is effective in that it does flow naturally and does cover an extensive range of the platform.

Conclusion

Throughout the rhetorical analysis and evaluation of the visual practice of the Newrow Class Connect Instructional Guide v 1.5 it is apparent that the document fulfills its intended use effectively. However, the user guide could have been created in a more efficient manner, benefiting the audience. As Driskill writes, “a rhetorical situation, with its range of reader/audience roles, purposes, sets of proprieties, genres, individuals, and temporal and technological constraints, must be seen as embedded within a complex context that affects both writers and readers (59). The writer/creator seems to arrive at the intended purpose, making an effective instructional guide for the use of the intended online pedagogical platform, keeping the target audience in mind. However, as the analysis and evaluation of the instructional guide point out, the amount of audience involvement in the creation of the document is not apparent.

This document would benefit if the writer/creator conducted usability tests with the intended audience to remedy the flaws of the original document. See Appendix B for a plan to usability testing. However, the fact of whether usability tests were used in the creation of the instructional guide is not known. It seems a round of usability tests would have suggested the need for interactivity and a more navigable document to make the instructional guide more user-friendly. Many topics and much content of the online pedagogical platform are covered throughout the instructional user guide, but from the analysis, it is seen, that there are certain features whose implications are not thoroughly explained to the user. The lack of these explanations forces the audience to learn from trial-by-error while using the platform. However, keeping in mind
Harrison’s position that “the style of organizational documents may be idiosyncratic and may, in fact, be dictated by informal rules in the organization” the analysis and evaluation of this essay is not privy to know the constraints of the writer/creator during the creation process of this instructional guide (263).

**Implications**

The findings of this rhetorical analysis and evaluation of visual practices are:

- The instructional guide would benefit from audience usability surveying and/or testing to finalize any questions left after using this document to navigate the intended online pedagogical platform. See Appendix C for a sample participant consent form for usability testing.
- The need for an interactive glossary or table of contents is paramount to make this document more user-friendly.
- To make the instructional guide more inclusive, translated versions of the document would benefit a more diverse audience.

**Recommendations**

In the article “Using Multimedia for Instructor Presence in Purposeful Pedagogy Driven Online Technical Writing Courses,” Heidi Skurat Harris and Michael Greer state, “Many instructors would benefit from extended professional development workshops around the use and delivery of multimedia content and institutional support for developing and incorporating multimedia effectively” (126). It would benefit all educators, especially those using online pedagogical platforms to deliver meaningful, engaging, and inclusive instruction, to continue their own learning through professional development and continuing education opportunities. Educational environments that utilize Newrow are encouraged to provide professional development
opportunities for the staff who use the platform. Also, information about knowledge base resources including the location of this user guide and other troubleshooting features can be communicated to users by the product’s company.

As previously stated, the user guide would benefit from a form of usability testing. Recommendations for usability testing include, but are not limited to, a user participant survey (see Appendix D) and/or a usability test where users use a think-aloud protocol while using the instructional guide to complete one of the steps listed and defined in the guide.
Works Cited


“Newrow for Teachers.” Class Connect Powered by Newrow, K12, https://d2x3xhvgiqkx42.cloudfront.net/b803bfbb-78e1-49ca-b8b7-efbe9993cca2/274a9406-73b1-495f-977c-f55666730f80/2020/12/17/59ab75f1-83ca-4ddf-8df8-fba44c5c20cd/newrow_instructor_guide.pdf?response-content-disposition=attachment;filename*=UTF-8%27%27newrow_instructor_guide.pdf.


Appendix A – Instructional User Guide 1.5

Class Connect Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5
Appendix B – Plan for Usability Testing

Instructional User Guide 1.5

Usability Test Plan

Version 1

This document discusses the plan for usability testing for the Newrow for Teachers – Class Connect Instructional User Guide 1.5. The goal of the usability testing is to evaluate the clarity of information used in the User Guide, the efficiency of navigating the document to complete tasks, and determine areas of improvement.

Test Objectives

- Learn if a new user can locate and use the information and graphics in the Instructional User Guide to complete the following tasks:
  - Access the correct OMS or LMS website.
  - Create a new Class Connect session.
  - Locate the link to the created session.
  - Join the created session.
  - Give access to webcam and microphone to allow for participation in the live Class Connect session.
  - Upload a file to the Newrow platform to use in a live Class Connect session.
- The goal is for a new user to be able to complete these six tasks in approximately ten minutes; however, effectiveness of performing the tasks is valued over efficiency of time in this stage.

Test Methods

- Conduct a Field Test to study a new user in their natural working environment.
- Verification Testing can be completed to analyze the effectiveness of the user’s ability to use the documentation to complete the Test Objectives.
- The user should complete Think-Aloud Protocol for the duration of the test.

Equipment Needed

- Internet access
- A computer with Google Chrome and webcam and microphone capabilities
- A screen recording application
- The digital version of the proposed Newrow for Teachers-Class Connect Instructional User Guide 1.5

Participation Requirements

- Initial phase of usability testing can encompass participation of one new user with basic computer and technology skills
- If needed, future phases of usability testing can include more new users and current users
Consent Form
- The consent form shown in Appendix C can be printed, and the participant can review and sign a copy.

Session Requirements
- The initial phase of usability testing should require approximately two 10-minute sessions with one participant.
- Future phases of usability testing may require approximately two 1-hour sessions with two participants.

Evaluation Metrics
- Following a short introduction to the online pedagogical platform, Newrow, and the Instructional User Guide 1.5, the user will use the documentation to complete the six tasks to create, find, enter, and upload a file to the Class Connect session.
- Quantitative data to be collected during the testing session are the number of minutes it takes for the user to complete the six tasks and the number of errors the user makes completing the six tasks.
- Qualitative data to be collected after the testing session is a questionnaire on attitude toward the documentation and ease in completing the six tasks while using the documentation.

Testing
- After the user is given a brief introduction to the online pedagogical platform, Newrow, and the Instructional User Guide 1.5 the user should begin completing the six tasks.
- The session should be recorded using a screen recording application that will capture the user’s navigation of the platform and the documentation. Also, recorded should be the user’s think-aloud protocol of the entire process and completion of the six tasks.
- While the user is completing the six tasks, facilitator should be analyzing and writing notes of the process.
  - Does the user get stuck at certain tasks?
  - Does the user need to go back or start over at any of the steps?
  - Does the user skip any steps?
  - Does the user get frustrated completing any of the tasks? If so, which one(s)?
  - Was the user able to complete all six steps, in order, to complete the test objectives?
Appendix C – Sample Participant Consent Form

Understanding Your Participation

*Please read this page carefully.*

You have agreed to participate in a usability study that will evaluate the Newrow for Teachers Class Connect Instructional User Guide 1.5. By participating in this study, you will help K12 Stride improve the Newrow for Teachers Class Connect Instructional User Guide in future redesigns. Our team will observe you and record information about how you work with the Instructional User Guide. We may also ask you to complete follow-up questionnaires or surveys about your experience. We will record your comments and actions using written notes and recording devices.

Our team will use the data from your study session, including recordings, solely to evaluate the Instructional User Guide and share the results of these evaluations with [insert institution here]. Your full name will not be used during any presentation or in the results of this study.

By signing this form, you give permission to use:

- Your recorded voice
- Your verbal statements
- The recording of your session

If you need a break at any time, please notify the facilitator immediately. If you have questions about how the session will proceed, you may ask them at any time. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

If you agree with these terms, please indicate your agreement by signing below:

Signature: ________________________________

Print Name: ________________________________

Date: ____________
Appendix D – Sample Participant Survey Questionnaire

1. As a user of Newrow’s Class Connect platform, did you know of the user guide’s existence and the location to find it?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

2. Do you know of other versions of the Instructional Guide v 1.5 (accessible versions, translated versions, etc.)?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

3. Did you find the use of visuals throughout the user guide beneficial?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

4. Do you think the user guide is effectively mapped out in chronological order to effectively instruct the user in using the platform?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

5. Would the document benefit from the addition of a navigable glossary and/or table of contents?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure
NEWROW FOR TEACHERS

Instructional User Guide 2.0

Class Connect

Tersigni, Joy (OHVA Teacher)
Welcome to the new and improved Newrow for Teachers Instructional User Guide 2.0 for Class Connect!

Newrow is an online pedagogical platform used for online instruction through a Class Connect session. There are many features of Newrow meant to optimize the online learning experience for educator and student. This Instructional User Guide is intended for teachers to use as a beginning-to-end guide through all the steps of the platform, a refresher for veteran teachers to review the updates to Newrow features and settings, and a reference material for troubleshooting while using the Newrow platform.

**NOTE:** For the purpose of the Instructional User Guide, “Joy Tersigni” and “Joy Tersigni (TE)” is the example or demo teacher. As you view the screenshots within this document to use the Newrow platform, your name will appear in these instances.

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 1: Getting Started</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling a Class Connect Newrow Session</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launching a Newrow Session</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Device Permissions and Activation</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webcam and Microphone</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVE</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 2: Newrow Features and Settings</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mute – Webcam and Microphone</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playlist</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lock/Unlock Classroom</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Poll</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Screen</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave Classroom</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery View</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module 3: Setting up the Class Connect

Room Settings and Permissions

  Device Settings
  Access & Security
  Room Mode
  Default Permissions
  Quick Poll Settings
  Chat Settings
  Browser Focus

Files

Tools

  YouTube
  Whiteboard
  Desktop Share
  Quizzes
  Annotations
  Recordings
  Breakout Rooms

Module 4: Managing a Newrow Classroom

  Student Permissions
  Participant Window

Playlist

Chat Window

  Moderator Chat
  Room Chat
  Questions & Answers

Module 5: Ending a Class Connect Newrow Session

  End for Everyone
  Leave Classroom
  Clicking No

Module 6: Attendance and Recordings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posting Recording</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing Attendance</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 7: Appendix</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 8: List of Figures</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module 1: Getting Started

Begin by logging onto the K12 Online School (OMS) or the lms.k12.com platform (LMS). This can be done a few different ways:

From OMS, click **My Schedule > + SCHEDULE NEW**, a new tab will open to the LMS platform.

From the LMS platform, under **Quick Links** click **Class Connect Sessions**, a new tab will open to the “Class Connect Sessions” webpage. Click the **Create New Session** link.

OR

Also from OMS, click **CLASSES >** click into your listed class, then > **Go to Class Connect**, a new tab will open to the “Class Connect Sessions” webpage. Click the **Create New Session** link.

Scheduling a Class Connect Newrow Session

Fill in the required information as communicated from your lead teacher and schedule. After filling out the information in **Session Details**, click **Continue** to continue through **Date and Time > Participants > Schedule a Session**, where you will the click **Create Session**.
Figure 1: Scheduling a Class Connect Newrow Session

Launching a Newrow Session

To launch your created Class Connect session, log into the LMS platform. On this page you will see all your scheduled Class Connect sessions for the date listed in the green bar at the top of the page.

To enter the Class Connect session, click the link in the “Session Name” column. A new tab will open to the LIVE Class Connect session.

To share the link click View URL and a pop-up window will open. Copy the URL and paste as needed to share the link. Sharing this link will give the participant “Guest” privileges in the LIVE Class Connect session.

Clicking the View/Edit green box will reopen the “Manage Class Connect Session” for you to review or edit information entered during Module I Part A.

Clicking Delete will delete the Class Connect Session. You will have the option to delete only the current session or multiple sessions.

NOTE: Be sure to delete only the Class Connect Sessions intended. Review the confirmation dialogue box carefully before clicking Delete.
Figure 2: Launching a Newrow Session

Once you click the link under “Session Name” a new tab will open for you to enter the LIVE Class Connect Session, see Module 1 Part C.
Device Permissions and Activation

Once the Newrow Session is launched, activation of webcam and microphone will need to be granted.

Webcam and Microphone

Choose the correct devices to enable camera and audio use. These settings can be changed through the settings of the Class Connect, see Module 2 Part A.

**NOTE:** The default webcam and microphone will most likely be the computer’s, if you wish to use an external webcam, microphone, headset, etc. be sure they are installed on the computer and grant permission for the device activation at this step.

![Choose Your Devices](image)

*Figure 3: Device Permissions and Activation of Webcam and Microphone*

Once the correct device for webcam and microphone have been chosen, click **Confirm** to enter the LIVE Class Connect session.
LIVE

The LIVE button has two settings: gray and red. If the LIVE button is grayed out, access and activation has NOT been granted to webcam or microphone. This means the participant will not be able to use their webcam or microphone during the live Class Connect session. Access and activation of webcam can be granted through the settings of the Class Connect, see Module 2 Part A.

Once permissions to webcam and microphone have been activated, the LIVE button will be red, and the participant will be able to use their webcam and microphone during the live Class Connect session.

Figure 4: Device Permissions and Activation of LIVE Button

A red LIVE button encourages participation and engagement throughout the live Class Connect session.
Module 2: Newrow Features and Settings

The features and settings of Newrow are available in the ribbon at the top of the screen. Settings can be changed before, during, or after a live Class Connect session.

**Mute – Webcam and Microphone**

The webcam and microphone icons in the upper-left corner of the screen control the user’s devices. Click on the icons to mute the webcam and/or microphone. Muted devices will show a line through the icon.

**Files**

Upload files to the Class Connect to present during live Class Connect sessions. These files can be PowerPoint (PPT), PDF or Word documents.

**Tools**

Click on **Tools** to have access to YouTube (see Module 3, Part C, number 1), Whiteboard (see Module 3, Part C, number 2), Desktop Share (see Module 3, Part C, number 3), Quizzes (see Module 3, Part C, number 4), Recording (see Module 3, Part C, number 6), and Breakout Rooms (see Module 3, Part C, number 7).

**Chat**

Click on **Chat** to remove the Chat Window from the lower-right side of the screen. Click on **Chat** to return the Chat Window to the lower-right side of the screen. For specific information about that Chat Window, see Module 4 Part C.
Participants
Click on Participants to remove the Participants Window from the upper-right side of the screen. Click on Participants to return the Participants Window to the upper-right side of the screen. For specific information about students in the Participants Window, Module 4, Part A, number 1.

Playlist
Click on Playlist to remove the Playlist Window from the middle-right side of the screen. Click on Playlist to return the Playlist Window to the middle-right side of the screen. For specific information about using the Playlist, see Module 4 Part B.

Notes
Click on Notes to open a notepad in the upper-right side of the screen. Click on Notes to remove the notepad from the upper-right side of the screen. Notes can be used during a Class Connect Session and are viewable to all Participants by clicking Broadcast Note.

Lock/Unlock Classroom
Unlock the Class Connect Session to allow entry of participants. If Class Connect is locked participants be sent to a waiting room until the teacher (TE) allows admittance. Click the lock icon at any time to lock or unlock the Class Connect Session. If participants are in the waiting room and you click to unlock, a pop-up window will appear allowing entrance to individual or all participants.

Quick Poll
Click the bar graph icon to access the different types of polling you can use in the live Class Connect session. By clicking on the bar graph icon, a pop-up window will show four types of polls you can broadcast to students. After clicking on one of the four polling options another black pop-up window will appear with the live results of participants responses. Participants will also have a pop-up window on their screen, but with the poll type you, the teacher (TE) chose.

Figure 6: Quick Poll Feature
Settings
Click the settings icon to access room mode settings and student permissions. These settings can be edited during the live Class Connect session. For more information on student permissions, see Module 4 Part A.

Full Screen
Click on the full screen icon to enable full screen. Click on the full screen icon to disable full screen.

Options
The three vertical dots just to the right of the full screen icon allow user to “Select Language.”

Leave Classroom
There are a few options when clicking the leave classroom icon. After clicking the leave classroom icon, a confirmation dialogue box will appear and ask how the user wants to “End The Class.” First the dialogue box with confirm, “Do you want to end the class?” See Module 5 for more information on the “Leave Classroom” options.

Gallery View
By clicking Gallery View, the teacher (TE) can see more participant webcams in the Webcam Tray.

Webcam Tray
Click on Webcam Tray to open the Webcam Tray at the bottom of the screen. If participants reach more than the Webcam Tray can hold on one screen, use the toggle arrow (>) on the right-side of the Webcam Tray to view more participant’s webcams. Click on Webcam Tray to hide participant’s webcams from your view.
Module 3: Setting up the Class Connect

Settings and permissions, adding and removing Files, using or removing Tools permissions can be edited throughout the live Class Connect session.

Room Settings and Permissions

When clicking on the gear icon to open Room Settings you will have access to edit the settings of the live Class Connect session and permissions of the participants. Click the gear icon from the ribbon at the top of the screen and a pop-up window will open.

Device Settings

By clicking Device Settings, you have the option to select an alternate webcam, microphone, or audio output. You would need to allow this access if you were to switch to an external webcam, microphone, or headset during the live Class Connect session.

Access & Security

By clicking Access & Security, the “Room Lock” setting can be changed from locking the room for guests only or locking the room for everyone but instructors. The option to “Automatically lock the room” can also be enabled or disabled. Finally, you have the option to “Require a password” for participants to enter the live Class Connect session.

NOTE: Requiring a password is not recommended for live Class Connect sessions with students. This feature could be useful if holding a meeting to discuss individual education plans (IEPs) or other sensitive educational data with a team of members from inside and outside your organization.

Room Mode

By clicking Room Mode, you have the option to “Set your room configuration” to “Standard Room” (recommended for the virtual classroom setting), “Large Room” (recommended for webinar mode with a high-level of participants), or “Extra large event” for a meeting with up to 700 participants.

“Standard Mute,” “Strong Mute” (recommended for the live Class Connect sessions with students), and “Echo Cancellation” settings can be applied.

Finally, a “Room Capacity” for participants can be set.

Default Permissions

Default Permissions gives ALL students in the live Class Connect session the ability to use the following Tools:

- Draw on Whiteboard
- Play Shared Files
• Share their Screen
• Write Notes

The ability for ALL participants to “View Participants List” can be enabled or disabled. The Participant List can be set to sort “Alphabetical” or by “Time joined.” These permissions can be added or removed at any time during the live Class Connect session.

Quick Poll Settings

ALL participants in the live Class Connect session can see the individual responses in the Participants Window, unless you check “Anonymous Mode.”

The “Target Audience” can be changed from “Non Moderators Only,” meaning any teacher (TE) participant will NOT be able to respond to the poll, or “All Participants But The Triggering Host,” which allows all participants to participate in the poll except for the creator of the session, you.
Chat Settings

The Chat Settings controls the access that participants have to different chat features during the live Class Connect session. These settings can be changed at any time during the session.

By check-marking “Group Chat,” all participants have access to read and post to the comments in the Group Chat in the Chat Window.

By check-marking “Ask Questions,” all participants have access to the Q & A Chat in the Chat Window. The Q & A Chat is not viewable by all participants, only the participant who posted the comment and the moderator of the session. The moderator can click “Reply” or “Reply All” to respond. By clicking “Reply,” the response will only be viewable to the original commentator. By clicking “Reply All,” all participants can view the response and initial comment.

By check-marking “Start 1:1 Chats,” participants can start a private chat with another participant.

NOTE: This setting is not recommended during a live Class Connect session with students.

Finally, by check-marking “Clear Chat” you, the moderator of the session, have chosen that the chat be cleared at the end of every session. Any comments or Q & As will be permanently deleted.

NOTE: This setting is not recommended for live Class Connect sessions with students. Instead, you can manually delete the chats through the Chat Window (see Module 4 Part B).

Browser Focus

Using the Browser Focus feature allows you to see whether a participant is focusing on the live Class Connect session tab or if they have another web browser tab open and are focusing on that. When using this feature, an eyeball icon will appear by the participants name if they are not focused on the web browser tab logged into the live Class Connect session.

You can turn this feature off by un-checking “Show alerts on webcams” and “Show alerts in participants list.”

NOTE: This feature is recommended when hosting a live Class Connect session with students as you can track student focus during the session.
Files

By clicking Files in the top ribbon of the Class Connect session, a pop-up window will appear with the ability to upload a folder or file to play on the session’s Whiteboard and/or add to the session’s Playlist (see Module 3 Part B). After file is uploaded, click on the title of the file and then click Play or Add to playlist.

The uploaded files will be saved by the Files feature even if the session is ended. Files uploaded to the Newrow platform will be available for future sessions.

If you want to use a file that was uploaded to Newrow through a different Class Connect session, click Courses in the upper-left corner of the pop-up window to access all files uploaded to different sessions.

You can upload files in advance of the session, so they are ready to use during the live Class Connect session with students. Types of files compatible with the Newrow platform include:

- PPT, PPTX – Presentations
- MP4, MOV, AVI, WMV – Video
- PDF, PNG, JPG – Image
- DOC, DOCX – Document
- XLS, XLSX – Spreadsheet
- MP3 – Audio

For YouTube links see Module 3 Part C number 1.

NOTE: When files are uploaded to the Newrow platform they are converted and links and animations on original documents become inactive.

Figure 8: Files Pop-Up Window
Tools

By clicking **Tools** in the top ribbon of the live Class Connect session, a pop-up window will open with access to the “Course Tools.”

![Tools Pop-Up Window](image)

**Figure 9: Tools Pop-Up Window**

YouTube

By clicking **YouTube**, you can copy and paste the URL from any YouTube video to add to the Playlist of the live Class Connect session. This video will then play on the Whiteboard when you click on the YouTube video loaded to the Playlist Window (**Module 4 Part B**).

**NOTE:** If you are recording the live Class Connect session, the YouTube video you are presenting during the session will not be viewable or audible to those watching the recording. Instead, the title of the video will be presented to those who are watching the recording so they will have the ability to look the video up on YouTube themselves.
Whiteboard

By clicking **Whiteboard**, a margin will open on the left-hand side of the screen that allows for different Whiteboard features.

To add a board, click “ADD BOARD.” On this board you can use the Annotation Tools to add shapes, use the pen tool, and use the text tool. For more information on Annotation Tools see Module 3, Part C, number 5.

*Figure 10: Whiteboard Features and Use*
Desktop Share

By clicking Desktop Share, you have the option to share a “Chrome Tab,” “Window,” or “Entire Screen.”

Choosing Chrome Tab will allow you to share a specific tab of a Chrome web page that is currently open. Make sure “Chrome Tab” is highlighted in blue in the pop-up window and click on the web page tab you wish to broadcast to ALL participants in the live Class Connect session.

Choosing Window will allow you to share any window you have open on your desktop. Make sure “Window” is highlighted in blue in the pop-up window and click on the window you wish to broadcast to ALL participants in the live Class Connect session.

Choosing Entire Screen will allow you to share your entire screen with the ability to switch between any web pages and windows that are currently open or that you open during the live Class Connect session. Make sure “Entire Screen” is highlighted in blue in the pop-up window. If you have multiple monitors or multiple screens, you will need to click on the screen you wish to broadcast to all participants of the live Class Connect session.

![Figure 11: Desktop Share Options](image)

Make sure this is check-marked if sharing audio is required

A preview of the tab, window, or screen will appear here
Quizzes

If you are planning to use the Quizzes feature, the best method is to create and set up the quiz you wish to present BEFORE the live Class Connect session. Click Quizzes and a pop-up window will open, and you are able to create a multiple-choice quiz to present during the live Class Connect session. You can view and broadcast quiz results during the live Class Connect session to all participants by clicking "Results."

Figure 12: Using the Quizzes Feature
Annotations

Annotations can be made to the Whiteboard at any time using the Annotation Tools located in the top ribbon of the live Class Connect session.

If you do not see all the different Annotation Tools in the top ribbon, you need to activate them by clicking on the pencil icon in the lower-right corner of the Class Connect session. Once there is a green circle around the pencil icon, the Annotation Tools will be available to use.

Hover the mouse over the different icons to know their use.

By clicking the three dots in the upper-right hand corner of the live Class Connect session, you have the option to clear the Whiteboard.

Figure 13: Accessing the Tools for Annotations
Recordings

NOTE: Recordings of live Class Connect sessions may be required by your school or organization. Check the specific policy of your institution for specific information regarding the recording of live Class Connect sessions.

To begin recording, click Tools from the ribbon at the top of the screen > click Recording > click the timing you want to set the recording > click Start.

To know you are recording, you will see at the top of the live Class Connect session, just below the top ribbon, “Recording” with the time and a blinking red light.

This Recording only records the main rooms, to record Breakout Rooms see Module 3, Part C, number 7.

NOTE: If you click “Record until manually stopped” the recording will automatically end when you leave the live Class Connect session by clicking “End for Everyone.” See Module 5 for more information on Ending a Class Connect Session.

Figure 14: Recording the Class Connect Session
Breakout Rooms

To set up Breakout Rooms, click Tools > Breakout Rooms, and a pop-up window will open with the ability to open Breakout Rooms. You can create up to 30 Breakout Rooms.

By clicking Settings in the upper-right corner of the Breakout Room pop-up window, you will have access to the “Settings” and “Permissions.” These Settings and Permissions apply to ALL Breakout Rooms that are open or that will be opened from this main live Class Connect session.

The Permissions listed, if check-marked, allow the participants access to the features within the Breakout Room.

NOTE: It is best practice to continually check on all Breakout Rooms. Even if webcams are disabled in the main room, participants can enable webcams once they enter a Breakout Room. If you do NOT want participants to have webcams enabled in the Breakout Rooms, you need to enter EACH Breakout Room and disable webcams. For more information on disabling webcams, see Module 2 Part A.

Figure 15: Create and Manage Breakout Rooms

REMEMBER: If any of these permissions are check-marked, it applies to ALL participants & ALL Breakout Rooms.
Module 4: Managing a Newrow Classroom

Student Permissions

To enable or disable individual student permissions, refer to the Participant Window > click on the down arrow to the right of their name (¨) and a pop-up window will open.

You can give access to specific features and permissions to individual students by check-marking the box to the left of that feature. To disable access to this feature, uncheck the box.

![Individual Student Permissions](image)

Figure 16: Individual Student Permissions
Participant Window

Clear Raised Hands
Students have a feature to raise their hand at any time of the live Class Connect session. By raising their hand, the student’s name will appear at the top of the Participants List with the hand raised icon. To **Clear Raised Hands**, click on the three dots in the upper-right corner and the option to “Clear Raised Hands” will appear.

Disable Permissions
Use the Whiteboard, Chat, Webcam, and Microphone icons at the top of the Participants Window to **Disable Permissions**. By clicking on any of the icons, a line through the icon disables that permission for ALL students. By clicking the icon again, if there is no line through the icon, that icon is enabled for ALL students.

![Figure 17: Participants Window](image-url)
Playlist

If you clicked “Add to playlist” when uploading Files (Module 3 Part B) and/or YouTube links (Module 3, Part C, number 1), they will appear in the Playlist Window.

You can rearrange the order of the items in the Playlist and add or remove items at any time of the live Class Connect session.

Chat Window

Moderator Chat

The Moderator Chat is a chat exclusively between any participant marked as Moderator. Only participants with Moderator Permissions can view and post comments in the Moderator Chat.

Room Chat

The Room Chat allows all participants access to read and post to the comments in the Room Chat in the Chat Window.

Questions & Answers

The Questions & Answers allows all participants access to the Q & A Chat in the Chat Window. The Q & A Chat is not viewable by all participants, only the participant who posted the comment and the moderator of the session. The moderator can click “Reply” or “Reply All” to respond. By clicking “Reply,” the response will only be viewable to the original commentator. By clicking “Reply All,” all participants can view the initial comment and the response.

Figure 18: Playlist Window and Chat Window
Module 5: Ending a Class Connect Newrow Session

End for Everyone
By clicking **End For Everyone** the live Class Connect session will end for all participants and the recording (see Module 3, Part C, number 6) and attendance will begin processing. See Module 6 for posting recordings and viewing attendance.

Leave Classroom
By clicking **Leave Class**, the live Class Connect session will stay open and only the user who clicked “Leave Class” will leave the class.

**NOTE**: Clicking **Leave Class** as the teacher (TE) will remove only the teacher from the live Class Connect session and leave other participants, including students, in the live Class Connect session unattended. This is NOT recommended.

Clicking No
By clicking **No**, you will be brought back to the live Class Connect session with no change in the session.

![Figure 19: Ending the Live Class Connect Session](image)

Different options to end the Class Connect session

To open the “End The Class” pop-up window, click the red door

---

58
Module 6: Attendance and Recordings

After ending a live Class Connect session, you will be able to view and post recordings for Participants to view.

Posting Recording

Begin by logging onto the K12 Online School (OMS) or the lms.k12.com platform (LMS). This can be done a few different ways.

From OMS, click **My Schedule > + SCHEDULE NEW**, a new tab will open to the LMS platform.

From the LMS platform, under **Quick Links** click **Class Connect Sessions**, a new tab will open to the “Class Connect Sessions” webpage. Click on the “Session Name” of the Class Connect that you want to post the recording. After clicking on the link of the “Session Name” a pop-up window will open with the option to “Show Recording” or “Delete.”

**OR**

Also from OMS, click **CLASSES >** click into your listed class, then > **Go to Class Connect**, a new tab will open to the “Class Connect Sessions” webpage. Click on the “Session Name” of the Class Connect that you want to post the recording. After clicking on the link of the “Session Name” a pop-up window will open with the option to “Show Recording” or “Delete.”

---

**Figure 20: Posting Recordings and Viewing Attendance**

To view & post recording, click on the name of the session

To view & export attendance, click on “View Attendance”
Viewing Attendance

Begin by logging onto the K12 Online School (OMS) or the lms.k12.com platform (LMS). This can be done a few different ways.

From OMS, click **My Schedule > + SCHEDULE NEW**, a new tab will open to the LMS platform. Click on **View Attendance** of the Class Connect for which you want to view the attendance. After clicking on “View Attendance” you will be directed to a tab titled “Class connect attendance” where you can view the attendance on the web page or have the option to **Export** to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to save for your records.

From the LMS platform, under **Quick Links** click **Class Connect Sessions**, a new tab will open to the “Class Connect Sessions” webpage. Click on **View Attendance** of the Class Connect for which you want to view the attendance. After clicking on “View Attendance” you will be directed to a tab titled “Class connect attendance” where you can view the attendance on the web page or have the option to **Export** to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to save for your records.

OR

Also from OMS, click **CLASSES > click into your listed class, then > Go to Class Connect**, a new tab will open to the “Class Connect Sessions” webpage. Click on **View Attendance** of the Class Connect for which you want to view the attendance. After clicking on “View Attendance” you will be directed to a tab titled “Class connect attendance” where you can view the attendance on the web page or have the option to **Export** to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to save for your records.

![Figure 21: Viewing and Exporting Attendance](image)
Module 7: Appendix

Newrow for Teachers Instructional Guide v 1.5

Module 8: List of Figures

Figure 1: Scheduling a Class Connect Newrow Session .................................................. 37
Figure 2: Launching a Newrow Session ........................................................................ 38
Figure 3: Device Permissions and Activation of Webcam and Microphone .................. 39
Figure 4: Device Permissions and Activation of LIVE Button .................................... 40
Figure 5: Newrow Features and Settings ...................................................................... 41
Figure 6: Quick Poll Feature ........................................................................................ 42
Figure 7: Room Settings and Permissions .................................................................... 45
Figure 8: Files Pop-Up Window .................................................................................... 47
Figure 9: Tools Pop-Up Window ................................................................................... 48
Figure 10: Whiteboard Features and Use ..................................................................... 49
Figure 11: Desktop Share Options ................................................................................ 50
Figure 12: Using the Quizzes Feature .......................................................................... 51
Figure 13: Accessing the Tools for Annotations ........................................................... 52
Figure 14: Recording the Class Connect Session ......................................................... 53
Figure 15: Create and Manage Breakout Rooms ............................................................. 54
Figure 16: Individual Student Permissions .................................................................... 55
Figure 17: Participants Window ..................................................................................... 56
Figure 18: Playlist Window and Chat Window ............................................................... 57
Figure 19: Ending the Live Class Connect Session ....................................................... 58
Figure 20: Posting Recordings and Viewing Attendance .............................................. 59
Figure 21: Viewing and Exporting Attendance ............................................................... 60
The Toxicity and the Power of Destruction White Heteronormativity Plays in the Lives of James Baldwin’s Characters within Giovanni’s Room and Another Country

INTRODUCTION

James Baldwin is an essayist, novelist, poet, and playwright whose writing focuses on the empathetic themes of race and sexuality. His two works, Giovanni’s Room, published the year following his first published book of essays, Notes of a Native Son (1955), and Another Country, published a year after his second book of essays, Nobody Knows My Name (1961), are centered around race and sexuality and explore how race and sexuality influence and affect the characters who come to life with Baldwin’s words. Giovanni’s Room is Baldwin’s second novel, after Go Tell It on the Mountain (1953), published in 1956 which was written and takes place mostly in France. Another Country, Baldwin’s third novel, was published in 1962 and mostly takes place in New York City, but was finalized in Istanbul, Turkey. As Magdalena J. Zaborowska explains in the chapter “Queer Orientalisms in Another Country,” the settings where Baldwin’s writing of the novels takes place, and the fictional setting of the novels are significant in both regards due to the topics Baldwin explores throughout these works and what those spaces represent. Zaborowska explains, “Another Country articulates most fully Baldwin’s insistence on the indivisibility of race and sex and their dependence on location and migration, themes that would remain central for the rest of his career” (93-95). In both texts, Baldwin speaks to the social constructs and limitations placed on race and sexuality by society. He offers a critique of white heteronormativity and speaks to the fluidity of human desires. The impacts of white heteronormativity and the fluidity of sexuality are seen in the narrator and main protagonist, David from Giovanni’s Room, and the protagonist from Another Country, Rufus Scott. These two very different protagonists, David a white man in his 20s with roots in Manhattan now living
in Paris, and Rufus a Black man in his 30s from Harlem and now living in Greenwich Village both suffer from the toxicity and the destructive powers of white heteronormativity. As Marc Dudley explains in *Understanding James Baldwin*, “Baldwin protagonists often harbor secrets that threaten to consume them and most certainly alienate them” (6). I argue that Baldwin’s characters, specifically David and Rufus, cannot deny their desires or their positions in life. This is significant because, for David, it is his non-heteronormative desires in a heteronormative society that shame him to self-destruction, and for Rufus, it is his Blackness in a society that values whiteness that alienates him from his world. In “Masculinities in Black and White: Manliness and Whiteness in (African) American Literature” Esther Pujolràs Noguer defines “whiteness is identified as an inherent component of the heteropatriarchal model that has traditionally defined manhood in American literature” (235). Ultimately, their striving for and judging themselves against the socially constructed measures of white heteronormativity leads to their destruction. In David’s case, the unacceptance of his queerness and striving for the lie of white heteronormativity leads to his self-destruction. On the other hand, as a Black man in 1950s America, it is Rufus’s disposability in the white patriarchal society that dooms his life. I argue that the toxicity of the unattainable white heteronormative lifestyle and the unaccepted relationships of David and Rufus lead to David’s self-destruction and Rufus’s death. This is significant because the alienation of an individual in a society which does not accept them due to the value placed on toxic ideologies has the power to destroy one’s humanity. Baldwin's portrayal of these two tragic lives is a commentary on the unattainable standards that are expected of others. Much of these unattainable standards spread from the spaces where affluent white heteronormative characters live. In *Giovanni’s Room* this is realized in the spaces David inhabits when he is attempting to embody the heteronormative façade he feels pressure to
conform to. In *Another Country* this is realized through the spaces in which the characters Cass and Richard live.

As with most writers, Baldwin’s personal experiences infiltrate his writings. As one reads Baldwin’s novels the reader takes notice that “Baldwin’s voice and personal experience was David’s in *Giovanni’s Room*, Rufus’s in *Another Country*” (Dudley 14-15). As a Black queer man, Baldwin wrote about topics that impacted his life and others around him. Baldwin was born in 1924 and lived in Harlem, New York through the 1940s. He was raised in a devout Pentecostal upbringing with a large family and was a youth minister in a Black Pentecostal church. James Baldwin felt immense pressure from a society that never fully accepted or embraced him. His writing became an outlet for his many life experiences and in time Baldwin felt the need to leave the United States to process all that happened to and around him to be able to put it into writing. Baldwin needed distance from the society that oppressed and demeaned him throughout his life thus far, so he migrated to France and produced *Giovanni’s Room*. Zaborowska explains the need for Baldwin to escape the Western notions of race and sex to showcase “the erotic and racial experience of his American characters and thus provide a broader context for regarding whiteness, blackness, and sexuality in the mid-twentieth-century United States” (95).

James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room* was met with heavy criticism from both the African American and white communities alike. Whereas Baldwin’s first novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* was well received by scholars, *Giovanni’s Room*, with its white main character and heavy themes of homosexuality, received some disapproval from critics. The 1950s America receiving the publication of *Giovanni’s Room* is steeped in “Cold War discourse” which denounces homosexuality, as Josep M. Armengol explains when discussing critics of Baldwin’s second novel: “In addition to criticizing its overt homosexual content, some scholars complained
that the novel, centered on a white homosexual couple, was not sufficiently focused on the black experience” (“In the Dark Room” 671). One of the most predominant critics of Baldwin’s writing is Eldridge Cleaver, a Black Panther Party leader, who critiques Baldwin’s inclusion of homosexuality and equates homosexuality as negating blackness (Walsh). In response to his novel focusing predominantly on homosexuality and not enough on “the black experience,” Baldwin explains “in a later interview on Giovanni’s Room that including homosexuality, the ‘Negro problem,’ and a Paris setting in the same novel in 1950s America ‘would have been quite beyond my powers’” (Armengol 673). However, in 1962 James Baldwin published Another Country which includes all three of the above themes. The publication of this novel led to mixed reviews with positive feedback over the inclusion of a black perspective through the characters of Rufus Scott and his sister, Ida. However, Cleaver, continuing to be a critic of Baldwin’s works, critiqued the character of Rufus Scott in his 1968 memoir Soul on Ice stating that Rufus is “a pathetic wretch … who has completely submitted to the white man” (132). What choices did Rufus Scott have in the world he was born into? Baldwin explains in his 1963 book of essays The Fire Next Time “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation” that, “You [a young, Black man] were born where you were born and faced the future that you faced because you were black and for no other reason” (7, emphasis Baldwin’s). Rufus Scott suffers an intense feeling of alienation from his world because of the anti-Black racism that consumes the society he lives in. This does not make Rufus “pathetic,” nor does it convey the message that he has “submitted” to anything. Instead, the life of Rufus Scott speaks to the toxicity of white heteronormativity so prevalent in society.
Giovanni’s Room opens with David alone in southern France reflecting on his life. The reader immediately senses that David is not content with his current situation and has regrets about the decisions that have led him to this point in his life, which opens the novel. David mentions his two lovers, Hella and Giovanni, and tells the reader, “I am too various to be trusted. If this were not so I would not be alone in this house tonight. Hella would not be on the high seas. And Giovanni would not be about to perish, sometime between this night and this morning, on the guillotine” (Baldwin 5). So, with his fiancé leaving him and his lover doomed to die, David thinks of his teenage years in Brooklyn with Joey. Harry Thomas explains David’s feelings in Sissy!: The Effeminate Paradox in Postwar US Literature and Culture, “Most importantly, what David feels on that first same-sex morning after is fear for his masculinity, which for David, is fear for his very self” (86). David explains the confusing feelings and desires that Joey awakens in him the night they spend together, “the desire which was rising in me seemed monstrous. But, above all, I was suddenly afraid. It was borne in on me: But Joey is a boy … That body suddenly seemed the black opening of a cavern in which I would be tortured till madness came, in which I would lose my manhood” (9, emphasis Baldwin’s). The reader learns that David leaves America in an attempt to “drown out our [David and Joey] shame and terror” and “as we say in America, I wanted to find myself” (Baldwin 6, 21). Only David cannot find himself, no matter where he flees, because of the shame he feels when he no longer denies his true desires. Because David feels his desires threaten his manhood, he feels shame and the need to flee. It is seen through the character of David that “the standard was clear. Manhood was strength, independence, courage, virility, progeny, and hetero-normativity” (Dudley, 33). This shame and concern over losing his manhood by being true to himself and acting on his desires...
have been instilled in him by society. David is extremely concerned with appearing as a heterosexual man. He is constantly trying to prove to himself and those around him that he can and will have the heteronormative life he so longs for. David explains it best when he says, “People who believe that they are strong-willed and the masters of their destiny can only continue to believe this by becoming specialists in self-deception” (Baldwin 20). David certainly does attempt to become the master of a white heteronormative destiny through self-deception and the attempt to ignore his desire for men, as if he has a choice. Because of the white heteronormative life, David knows to be standard he “attempts to have it both ways: he wants to play the role of the cosmopolitan straight man who is worldly enough not to mind gay men and gay bars but who certainly isn’t gay himself” (Thomas 87). This mirrors Giovanni’s and David’s conversation about choice the night they meet. David says, “‘Oh, please,’ I said. ‘I don’t believe that. Time’s hot water and we’re not fish and you can choose to be eaten and also not to eat—not to eat,’ I added quickly, turning a little red before his delighted and sardonic smile, ‘the little fish, of course’” (Baldwin 35). Then Giovanni responds, “‘To choose! To choose! Ah, you are really an American. J’adore votre enthousiasme!’” (Baldwin 35). We see David lying to himself and those around him the night he meets Giovanni. Jacques, a middle-aged gay man, and acquaintance of David, who frequents gay bars in Paris, immediately sees the connection between Giovanni and David. But with a threat to his manhood, David resists when Jacques encourages him to offer Giovanni a drink. David responds, “‘Why don’t I? Well. you may find this hard to believe, but, actually, I’m sort of queer for girls myself. If that was his sister looking so good, I’d invite her to have a drink with us. I don’t spend my money on men’” (30, emphasis Baldwin’s). To this Jacques plays along with David’s façade, “‘I was not suggesting that you jeopardize, even for a moment, that’—he paused—‘that immaculate manhood which is your
pride and joy’” (30, emphasis Baldwin’s). Eventually, when David and Giovanni do meet and converse that night David feels as if he is on display while actively losing his manhood while people watch. David explains, “And then I was afraid. I knew that they were watching, had been watching both of us. They knew that they had witnessed a beginning and now they would not cease to watch until they saw the end” (Baldwin 38). David and Giovanni embark on a doomed relationship together, doomed because David left America to flee from his same-sex desires only to make it to Paris and fall in love with Giovanni. David who will not give up his desires for men, nor his desire for the white heteronormative life continues his journey of self-deception even when he moves into Giovanni’s room. Here is where David seems to struggle most with his manhood. It is in this confined space that David expresses his confusion and inability to let go of the white heteronormative life:

In the beginning, because the motives which led me to Giovanni’s room were so mixed, had so little to do with his hopes and desires, and were so deeply a part of my own desperation, I invented in myself a kind of pleasure in playing the housewife after Giovanni had gone to work … But I am not a housewife—men never can be housewives … I was in a terrible confusion. Sometimes I thought, but this is your life. Stop fighting it. Stop fighting. (88, emphasis Baldwin’s)

The confusion David feels in this moment because of his pleasure in his same-sex relationship is connected to what he “knows” about what society has “taught” him. David has always struggled with what others would think of him if he allowed himself to be in a nonbinary relationship. We see this insecurity the first time David meets Giovanni through a conversation with Jacques. David attempts to overcompensate for his masculinity after Jacques recommends David invite Giovanni to have a drink with them. David states, “Why don’t I? Well, you may find this hard
to believe, but, actually, I’m sort of queer for girls myself. If that was his sister looking so good, I’d invite her to have a drink with us. I don’t spend money on men”’ (30). In this moment it is important to David to prove himself a man. Men can’t be housewives; this relationship with Giovanni is unnatural and he must fight it, flee if he must, and “find a girl, any girl at all” (Baldwin 95). Dudley remarks, “To prepare for Hella’s return, David feels compelled to remind himself that he is still very much a man in accordance with acceptable American prescriptions: he is virile, he is decisive, he is heterosexual” (36). He finds Sue, whom he approached “as though she were a job of work, a job which it was necessary to do in an unforgettable manner” (Baldwin 100). Sue’s “job” was to reinforce David’s manhood, but instead this interaction left David feeling as if “this was perhaps the first time in my life that death occurred to me as a reality” (Baldwin 103). After David attempts to prove his manhood in his interaction with Sue, his shame is worsened for he realizes “what I did with Giovanni could not possibly be more immoral than what I was about to do with Sue” (Baldwin 99). Still, David is unable to let go of the conditioning that society has instilled in him of the importance of a white heteronormative life. Armengol explains the effect of this conditioning, “While Baldwin’s protagonist thus remains the main sacrificial victim of the novel, the American ideal of masculinity and sexuality seems to have a (self-)destructive effect on David, too” (690). David reflects,

Yet it was true, I recalled, turning away from the river down the long street home, I wanted children. I wanted to be inside again, with the light and safety, with my manhood unquestioned, watching my woman put my children to bed … I wanted a woman to be for me a steady ground, like the earth itself, where I could always be renewed. It had been so once; it had almost been so once. I could make it so again, I could make it real. It only demanded a short, hard strength for me to become myself again. (Baldwin 104)
What David does not realize is that he does not need the nuclear family to make his “manhood unquestioned.” David must stop the self-deception and begin to repair the damage ingrained in him from the toxicity of white heteronormativity to live a life “with the light and safety.”

Unfortunately, the society David was born and raised in, in which he flees, is what feeds his shame regarding his desires. Thomas explains, “David does love Giovanni, but being with Giovanni means being expelled from ‘the web of safety’ afforded by white middle-class heteronormative masculinity; it means being out amongst the ‘darkness’” (93). The self-destruction of David continues throughout the novel when he is compelled to break up with Giovanni for the chance at a white heteronormative life with Hella because,

‘I—I cannot have a life with you,’ … ‘Yes,’ I said, wearily, ‘I can have a life with her’ … ‘What kind of life can two men have together, anyway? All this love you talk about—isn't it just that you want to be made to feel strong? You want to go out and be the big laborer and bring home the money, and you want me to stay here and wash the dishes and cook the food and clean this miserable closet of a room and kiss you when you come in through that door and lie with you at night and be your little girl.’ (141-142, emphasis Baldwin’s)

It is not that David cannot have a life with Giovanni, with a man, but that David has suffered from the toxicity of white heteronormativity that has been ingrained in him by society that makes him long for the white suburban life complete with woman and child. This fear of a nonbinary relationship is seen in the first time David meets Giovanni when he attempts to prove his heteronormativity to Jacques through his apprehension to invite Giovanni for a drink. It is this fear of the possibility of a nonbinary relationship that dooms any possible future for David and Giovanni. Armengol speaks to David’s motivations, “[A]s his self-perception begins to fail, he
ultimately edges toward self-destruction. In order to avoid his own death and disappearance, then, he will attempt to retain that illusory, fictive, body as the source of his identity, using both Hella and Giovanni to try to reaffirm his whiteness and heterosexuality” (686). However, this white heteronormative life will not happen for David because he is only deceiving himself and hurting those around him by denying his desires and longing for this life. Dudley points out, “Moreover, much of David’s life seems to have been predicated on (self-)deception, and his deceit now ruins lives other than his own” (31). After the dissolution of David’s and Giovanni’s relationship Giovanni is forced to succumb to the manipulatory and predatory advances of Guillaume. This disastrous encounter leaves Guillaume dead at Giovanni’s hand and Giovanni “at large nearly a week” (Baldwin 152). Ultimately Giovanni is charged for the robbing and murder of Guillaume and is executed. All of this is due to the fact that David is unable to accept his life with Giovanni. When the opportunity arises for David to attempt the white heteronormative life, so important to him, with Hella he is unable to commit to it because he knows it is a lie. David admits, “I must have hoped that there would be something Hella could do for me” but instead “it was that evening, or an evening very soon thereafter, that I left her sleeping in the bedroom and went, alone, to Nice” (Baldwin 157, 162). Here Hella catches David in a gay bar with a sailor where, for maybe the first time, David is honest with himself and with Hella.

“Well,” I said to Hella, “now you know.”

“I think I’ve known it for a long time,” she said.

And finally, David admits, “I mean,” I said, ‘I was lying to myself”’ (Baldwin 162-163). David, temporarily, stops fleeing, to be honest with himself and with Hella at this moment. However, as a product of the society he was born and raised which is “[h]eavily informed and influenced by a
hetero-normative model against which he constantly measures himself, David is a broken man and arguably remains one at story’s end” (Dudley 38). At the close of the novel, we see David still lost, trapped between his true desires and the longing for the white heteronormative life instilled in him: “And I do not know what moves in this body, what this body is searching. It is trapped in my mirror as it is trapped in time and it hurry toward a revelation” (Baldwin 168). The revelation David must have is that he does not need white heteronormativity to prove his manhood, he only needs to be honest and face his true self.

**THE ALIENATION OF RUFUS SCOTT THROUGH ANTI-BLACK RACISM**

Much like the standards of white heteronormativity which leads to David’s self-destruction, Rufus Scott is a victim of a society in which the anti-Black racism and the hyper-sexualization of Black men combined with the promotion of white heteronormativity leads to his untimely death. Brett Beemyn explains in the article “‘To Say Yes to Life’: Sexual and Gender Fluidity in James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room* and *Another Country*,” “While it is uncertain whether David will succeed in freeing himself from himself, Baldwin is much less ambiguous in *Another Country*, which even more thoroughly explores the cost of failing to love and the importance of maintaining meaningful connections within and across categories of race, gender, and sexuality” (65). As previously analyzed, David will never live the white heteronormative life he longs for because of his queerness. However, Rufus will never be accepted into the white heteronormative society because of its deep anti-Black racist roots. Roderick A. Ferguson argues in Chapter 3 “Nightmares of the Heteronormative: *Go Tell It on the Mountain* versus *An American Dilemma*” of *Aberrations in Black Toward a Queer of Color Critique* that African Americans can be heterosexual “but never *heteronormative*” which makes Rufus’s chance for a content and fulfilled life in a white heteronormative world doomed from the very beginning (87,
emphasize Ferguson’s). Rufus lives in what is supposed to be a more accepting and liberal part of New York, Greenwich Village, surrounded by his white, liberal friends. *Another Country* opens with Rufus wandering the streets of New York City reflecting on two of the women most important to him, his southern, white ex-girlfriend Leona, and his younger sister Ida. Rufus’s story then dives right into the night he met Leona while playing a jazz gig in Harlem. Almost immediately the two have a public sexual encounter that is consensual but paints Rufus in an aggressive light. Baldwin writes, “Under his breath he cursed the milk-white bitch and groaned and rode his weapon between her thighs. She began to cry. *I told you*, he moaned, *I’d give you something to cry about* … A moan and a curse tore through him while he beat her with all the strength he had and felt the venom shoot out of him, enough for a hundred black-white babies” (22, emphasis Baldwin’s). Baldwin writing the inner thoughts of Rufus at this moment allows the reader to get a glimpse of his self-perception through the eyes of the racist society he lives in. Rufus has been conditioned by his society by being viewed as a “Black predator” which has now influenced his thinking about himself (“AnotherCountrySummer2023”). The morning after Leona and Rufus spend the night together it is as if Rufus feels the world knows what went on between them last night. Rufus feels “trapped by racial and sexual stereotypes. Because he cannot overcome the images that society has of him as a Black man” (Beemyn 66). The white heteronormative society will not allow Rufus to “overcome” those “stereotypes” in which they keep him “trapped.” As depicted by Baldwin in the reflections of Rufus and as Dr. Walsh states, “Rufus feels that they [Leona and Rufus] are under surveillance” in the eyes of others who take notice of them (“AnotherCountrySummer2023”). Rufus takes notice of “this world and its power to hate and destroy” as he and Leona walk down the street with his Irish-Italian friend, Vivaldo.
At first, Rufus perceives that onlookers are trying to decide if Leona is with him or Vivaldo, but when Vivaldo steps away Rufus notices,

> Without Vivaldo, there was a difference in the eyes which watched them. Villagers, both bound and free, looked them over as though where they stood were an auction block or a stud farm … Then he raised his eyes and met the eyes of an Italian adolescent … The boy looked at him with hatred; his glance flicked over Leona as though she were a whore; he dropped his eyes slowly and swaggered on—having registered his protest, his backside seemed to snarl, having made his point. (Baldwin 29-30)

Rufus feels as if he is under surveillance and being judged for not only being a Black man, but a Black man with a white woman. Rufus and Leona’s relationship is doomed from the start because it cannot sustain the unrelenting anti-Black racism of society. At the dissolution of the relationship, Rufus confides in Vivaldo about the toll living in this white heteronormative society has taken on him,

> ‘I think wouldn’t it be nice to get on a boat again and go someplace away from all these nowhere people, where a man could be treated like a man.’ He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and then suddenly brought his fist down on the windowsill. ‘You got to fight with the landlord because the landlord’s white! You got to fight with the elevator boy because the motherfucker’s white. Any bum on the Bowery can shit all over you because maybe he can’t hear, can’t see, can’t walk, can’t fuck—but he’s white!’ (68, emphasis Baldwin’s)

The world is constantly alienating Rufus for no other reason than because he is Black and living in the white heteronormative world that ranks him as lower. Ferguson explains, “Black subjects, on the other hand, have historically been located outside the idealized and normative properties
of rationality. Indeed, black nonheteronormative formations present histories in which black sexual and gender practices and identities refute the universalizing claims of Western rationalization” (85). Because Rufus is not “white” he is considered outside the heteronormative functions of his society, and this leads to his alienation. Not only is Rufus alienated in his world, but he is also labeled as sexually deviant through hyper-sexualization by society. Furthermore, the anti-Black racism his society is consumed with threatens his life.

Even in his relationship with a woman he loves, Rufus is still hyper-sexualized and seen as sexually deviant. Rufus explains to Vivaldo what this is like for him after Vivaldo tries to affirm Leona’s love for him: “‘She loves colored folks so much,’ said Rufus, ‘sometimes I just can’t stand it. You know all that chick knows about me? The only thing she knows?’ He put his hand on his sex, brutally, as though he would tear it out, and seemed pleased to see Vivaldo wince. He sat down on the bed again. ‘That’s all.’” (68, emphasis Baldwin’s). Ferguson describes the importance of Baldwin including Rufus’s struggles as a Black man in a white heteronormative society: “The novelist’s task, for Baldwin, was not to extinguish the sexual and its nonheteronormative expressions from African American representation, but to problematize its irrationalization and ensuing regulation” (Ferguson 100). Baldwin writing about Rufus’s struggles with hyper-sexualization focuses on the issues in society which lead to Rufus’s feeling as if under surveillance and alienated.

There is also a moment between Rufus, Vivaldo, and Leona where the realization that Rufus’s life is disposable in this society comes to light. During the break-up fight between Rufus and Leona, Vivaldo and Rufus argue:

‘You could be killed for this,’ said Vivaldo. ‘All she has to do is yell. All I have to do is walk down to the corner and get a cop.’
‘You trying to scare me? Go get a cop.’

‘You must be out of your mind. They’d take one look at this situation and put you under the jailhouse.’ (55, emphasis Baldwin’s)

This brutal truth is common knowledge in the white heteronormative society they live in. It is a fact in their world that Rufus’s life is worth less than Vivaldo’s and Leona’s because they are white, and he is Black. Not only is Rufus’s life considered as less, but Rufus is also considered a threat that needs to be contained due to his Black masculinity. It is this truth, this world that destroys Rufus and leads him to take his own life by jumping from the George Washington Bridge as a means to escape this ugly truth, this ugly world. This is seen in “Rufus’s final reflections” which “reveal a man burned by systemic hatred” (Dudley 50). On the way to Rufus’s funeral in Harlem, Cass explains part of this ugly truth to Vivaldo when he confides in her his white privilege, innocence, and guilt surrounding Rufus’s death. “‘But they didn’t,’ she said, ‘happen to you because you were white. They just happened. But what happens up here’—and the cab came out of the park; she stretched her hands inviting him to look—‘happens because they are colored. And that makes a difference’” (113-114, emphasis Baldwin’s). The difference that Cass mentions is what rules the lives of Rufus and Ida and what makes their world so different from the world of Vivaldo, Cass, and all their other white liberal friends.

Rufus’s sister, Ida knows that the only reason her brother died was because he was a Black man in a white man’s world. Because Rufus is a Black man born into the white heteronormative society, he was forced to live a life where “he must negotiate the ways in which heterosexism, poverty, racism, and patriarchy converge in African American urban communities and are then rationalized within a liberal capitalist order that justifies racial segregation in formal and informal ways” (Ferguson 82). She attempts numerous times to reveal this in a way that
Rufus’s white friends can understand. Ida tries by explaining how they are and were oblivious to what Rufus was going through and truly what life was like for him as a Black man in their society. Ida tries to explain this oblivion, which stems from their white innocence to Vivaldo, “‘What I don’t understand.’ she said, slowly, ‘is how you can talk about love when you don’t want to know what’s happening. And that’s not my fault. How can you say you ever loved Rufus when there was so much about him you didn’t want to know?’” (324-325, emphasis Baldwin’s). Vivaldo has never had to be witness to this world before as he was born into the world of white privilege. Baldwin writes, “He [Vivaldo] had refused to see it, for he had insisted that he and Rufus were equals. They were friends, far beyond the reach of anything so banal and corny as color” (133). However, for Ida and Rufus, this is not something they can ignore or be oblivious to, as it is what they were born into and is their reality every day. Ida attempts to explain what it is like for her and how it was for Rufus to Cass after Cass accuses her of hating all white people. Ida says,

‘[W]ouldn’t you hate all white people if they kept you in a prison here? … Kept you here, and stunted you and starved you, and made you watch your mother and father and sister and lover and brother and son and daughter die or go mad or go under, before your very eyes? And not in a hurry, like from one day to the next, but, every day, every day, for years, for generations?’ (Baldwin 350-351)

The conversation seems to turn into an agree-to-disagree situation as Cass realizes she will never know Ida’s or Rufus’s truth in this world. Later, Ida again tries to make Vivaldo realize that he cannot and will never be able to understand the alienation and objectification Black people suffer at the hands of the white heteronormative world. “‘I know more about what happened to my brother than you can ever know. I watched it happen—from the beginning. I was there. He
shouldn’t have ended up the way he did’’ (Baldwin 415). This comment from Ida connects deeply to what she spoke of to Cass about the “prison” which “stunted and starved” Rufus. Vivaldo will never understand this stuntedness and starvation because he does not live in this prison. Beemyn argues Ida is successful in her attempt to make Vivaldo see, “She forces Vivaldo to recognize that Rufus would still be alive if he had not been born Black, thereby ‘stroking his innocence out of him’ (431)” (Beemyn 69). Ida is trying to make them (Vivaldo and Cass) recognize that even if they were friends with Rufus, even if they loved Rufus, they still were oblivious to his suffering which in the end manifests the truth that Ida imparts when she says, “‘Vivaldo didn’t want to know my brother was dying because he doesn’t want to know that my brother would still be alive if he hadn’t been born black’” (Baldwin 351). Because they all live in a society that bestows power to the white heteronormative and alienation and objectification to people of color, and because Vivaldo and Cass will never be Black, they will never truly understand the world that Rufus and Ida live in.

To live in this white heteronormative world that alienates and objectifies people of color, Ida and Rufus must figure out how to survive. In an attempt to explain the sexual objectification Black people suffer at the hands of the white heteronormative society, Ida reflects on what it is like trying to live her dream of becoming a jazz singer. She knows that she will only be looked at a certain way by the white society. Therefore, Ida attempts to use this hyper-sexualization that is placed on her by society to her advantage. “‘I knew there wasn’t any hope uptown … I’m too dark for them, they see girls like me on Seventh Avenue every day. I knew what they would do to me’” (Baldwin 418). Ida’s explanation of her daily life adds another example of oblivion to the white heteronormative privilege of others. Then Ida remembers something her brother once told her about surviving in a white man’s world, “‘There was only one thing for me to do, as
Rufus used to say, and that was to hit the A train. So I hit it’” (418). Because she was sick of “always waiting for the veiled insult or the lewd suggestion. And she had good reason for it, she was not being fantastical or perverse. It was the way the world treated girls with bad reputations and every colored girl had been born with one” (Baldwin 144). Ida needed to take her brother’s advice and “hit the A train.” To survive in this world Ida states, “But I wasn’t going to let what happened to Rufus, and what was happening all around me, happen to me I was going to get through the world, and get what I needed out of it, no matter how” (Baldwin 417). Ida is determined to ride the A train, just as everyone else is, to survive in the face of the anti-Black racism and white heteronormative ideologies which are doing everything in their power to thwart her efforts, like they did to Rufus. In “Resisting the Temptation to Give Up: James Baldwin, Robert Adams, and the Disavowal of the American Way of Life” Leah Mirakhor comments, “Recognizing the ways in which whiteness robs people of their personhood, Baldwin does not buy into the delusions of a standard of living and a standard of life that annihilates people” (663). Through the lives of his characters, Baldwin speaks to the true toxicity of whiteness and the idealized heteronormative life. His characters attempt to make it in this world any way they can, and that is what Rufus means when he speaks of “the A Train.” As Rufus tried to point out to Vivaldo during the break-up with Leona, “‘If you don’t see it, I can’t tell you,’ Rufus said. He had stopped laughing, was very sober and still. ‘Everybody’s on the A train—you take it uptown, I take it downtown—it’s crazy’” (Baldwin 70). Everyone is just trying to live their life, for some, it is easier to do so.

The one character that seems to be able to rebel against the structures of white heteronormativity is Eric. Beemyn explains that “Rufus is the book’s spiritual center” so “Eric is its physical center, not simply because he has sex with most of the other characters, but because
he ultimately does what Rufus (and David before him) is unable to do; he breaks through the racial, gender, and sexual dichotomies that prevent him from clearly seeing himself and reaching out to others” (66). I argue it is Eric’s privilege that allows him to break through these “dichotomies.” Eric is a past lover of Rufus, a current lover of Cass and Vivaldo, while also in a same-sex relationship with his lover Yves who will be arriving in New York from France. Eric is comfortable in his sexuality and seems to embrace the most contentment out of all Baldwin’s characters in *Another Country*. Eric, a wealthy, white, southerner can overcome much of the toxicity of white heteronormativity because of his wealth and whiteness. Eric’s wealth and whiteness have awarded him the privilege and the space to accept his queerness instead of being menaced by many of the strictures of white heteronormativity as Rufus was. Ferguson explains how African Americans were viewed during this period, “In the 1940s African Americans were racialized as wholly sexual beings whose sexuality deviated from the model of rational heterosexual expressions and domestic forms” (93). We first see Eric’s inclination toward Black male lovers when he reflects on his younger years in Alabama by hyper-sexualizing and fantasizing about the men he now remembers:

> Was it the body of Rufus to which he clung, or the bodies of dark men, seen briefly, somewhere, in a garden or a clearing, long ago, sweat running down their chocolate chests and shoulders, their voices ringing out, the white of their jock-straps beautiful against their skin, one with his head tilted back before a dipper—and the water splashing, sparkling, singing down!—one with his arm raised, laying an axe to the base of a tree? Certainly he had never succeeded in making Rufus believe he loved him. Perhaps Rufus had looked into his eyes and seen those dark men Eric saw, and hated him for it.

*(Baldwin 194)*
Rufus, no stranger to the “construction of Blackness as sexually deviant” in the anti-Black racist world of white heteronormativity could not appreciate his lover fetishizing Black men as Eric appears to be doing (Walsh). Rufus was unable to let Eric love him for fear of another strike against him, another factor to make his life even harder. Rufus, a Black man already hyper-sexualized and labeled as a sexual deviant was not willing to add homosexuality to the marks against him. Baldwin writes, “Rufus had despised him [Eric] because he came from Alabama; perhaps he had allowed Eric to make love to him in order to despise him more completely … And when Eric was gone, Rufus forgot their battles … He remembered only that Eric had loved him” (Baldwin 45-46). Sabotaging a chance at true love because it is a same-sex relationship is another way Rufus is thwarted by the discourses of anti-black racism and white heteronormativity.

CONCLUSION

It is through the lives of James Baldwin’s characters which he portrays his criticisms of the promotion of white heteronormativity as a way to keep non-white and non-heteronormative people unaccepted and alienated from their society. Living in a society, a nation, a world that promotes anti-Black racist and white heteronormative ideologies has a toxic effect on humanity with the power to destroy. Baldwin critiques the societal value placed on the standards of whiteness and heteronormativity. This can specifically be seen through the self-destruction of David in Giovanni’s Room and by Rufus taking his own life in Another Country. Regarding Giovanni’s Room Armengol explains, “Through the love story between David and Giovanni, Baldwin illustrates how dominant models of (white, heterosexual) masculinity both produce and are produced by a kind of aberrant racialized homosexuality” (691). When reading Baldwin’s texts as a social commentary on the injustice to non-heteronormative people’s humanity it can
open the eyes to ongoing inequities prevalent today. Mirakhor elucidates Baldwin’s position throughout his body of work, “Baldwin’s visions converge in clear and surprising ways, casting near prophetic lenses on a white American ideology rooted in amnesia, disregard, and artificial and illusory demarcations between safe and unsafe, white and nonwhite, private and public” (658). Baldwin’s writing is often thought of as prophetic; this is significant because by reading his texts, the dastardly effects of promoting the value of whiteness and heteronormativity in society can be seen through the lives of David, Giovanni, Rufus, Ida, and many more. Along with Baldwin’s writings being seen as prophetic, he also comments on the history of the American nation and uses his writings in an attempt to inspire change and growth in a society that deeply needs it. Without a doubt, there needs to be a change in the values and priorities of white heteronormativity seen as standard in our current world. Baldwin’s texts need to be continually visited and sourced in current discourses surrounding anti-Black racism, whiteness, and heteronormativity. Mirakhor describes this importance, “Baldwin extends his critique of American notions of freedom and democracy by explicitly connecting them to a growing American commitment to the corrupt and immoral notions of whiteness …” (662). We need to progress as a nation by promoting true notions of freedom by acknowledging the past and current “amnesia” surrounding our nation’s history and present. In so doing, American society has a chance to evolve from the brutal world we are still stuck in today, which Baldwin describes in his texts from the 1950s-1980s.
Works Cited

Armengol, Josep M. “In the Dark Room: Homosexuality and/as Blackness in James Baldwin’s
Giovanni’s Room.” Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, vol. 37, no. 3, 2012,


Beemyn, Brett. “‘To Say Yes to Life’: Sexual and Gender Fluidity in James Baldwin’s
Giovanni’s Room and Another Country.” Bisexual Men in Culture and Society, edited by
Brett Beemyn and Erich Steinman, Harrington Park Press, 2002, pp. 55–72. EBSCOhost,


EBSCOhost,

Mirakhor, Leah. “Resisting the Temptation to Give Up: James Baldwin, Robert Adams, and the
Disavowal of the American Way of Life.” African American Review, vol. 46, no. 4, 2013,
pp. 653–70. EBSCOhost,

Thomas, Harry. *Sissy!: The Effeminate Paradox in Postwar US Literature and Culture*. University Alabama Press, 2017. EBSCOhost,

