This is a transcript of Video 1 in A Nicole Pfannenstiel's webtext "Critical Exploration of Learning Management Systems," published in Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy, 21.2, available at http://praxis.technorhetoric.net/tiki-index.php?page=PraxisWiki%3A_%3ACritical+Exploration+of+LMSs

Video 1: Group Project Training Video

…..music intro…..

Hello everyone! I just wanted to go through your final assignment. Since it's going to be a large group project worth a lot of points for these last five weeks I wanted to go through and give you guys some notes so that you had a better idea of what I'm expecting.

First the assignment sheet, which is loaded into BBLearn. Um, It goes through what I'm expecting, what we've done so far and what it is that you need to do in the future. The problem that you're dealing with specifically in this particular case is a learning management system.

So we use BBLearn here at NAU and it is designed to meet the needs of all courses and all possible courses that could be designed. So what I want you to do instead or what problem I want you to address is can you design a composition focused learning management system to meet the needs of composition focused courses as opposed to all courses.

Now, this is the tricky part. When I say design I don't mean you need to build a functioning website. What I mean instead is you need to have a mock-up designed that: shows tools, it describes how the tools could or would work and how they specifically support composition pedagogy as well as a composition course.

If you're not overly familiar composition pedagogy I'm more than happy to help supply some of the resources that you might need for that, which will then go into annotated bibliography. But for now what I really want you to focus on is how can we build a system that's going to be the most helpful for everything that's being dealt with. So like I say here, I'm not saying design a functioning website, instead to deal with a system that's going to deal specifically with composition pedagogy.

The last assigned reading for this class is the Writer/Designer textbook. You're not, obviously reading the entire thing you're just reading a few selections that will be most helpful for this particular project.

I wanted to point out just a couple things that'll be really helpful as you as a group move forward for this. The big thing that I want you to know is make sure, and I'm going to say this a couple times, make sure you write down and figure out and determine every single assignment that's due to me and what you as a group think you need to do to accomplish or complete that portion of the project. I don't expect everybody to create their own. I do expect each person in the group to submit a similar document except for the journal reflections.

So the first thing again is that your goal for this assignment is to submit and create a mock-up of a learning management system that's designed specifically to support composition theory, composition pedagogy and a freshman composition course. When you're dealing with composition courses and freshman composition courses here at NAU we teach ours in a one-semester four credit hour course and then we teach another composition at the junior level. I want you to deal with whatever version of one semester composition means.

So it can be a composition course similar to ours where we cover a lot. It can be a two-composition sequence for you deal with the first or the second semester or it can be a basic writing course any of those three should be fairly similar so I'm not picky with which one specifically you want to deal with.

In this particular document I've called learning management system LMS and freshman composition FYC or first-year composition. So first, genre. I've told you what the genre is - you're designing specifically for a college setting. So, what is it that you know about that genre? You guys as a group need to come up with you know, just kind of a brainstorm list so you can move forward with where all of your design and where all of your theory fit in with what you already know about the genre. The other thing you'll want to consider is what design conventions do you think are necessary for freshmen composition.

This question is going to be asked in several different ways throughout the rest of this document so we will come back to it.

Then next thing I want you to note and this is specifically in Writer/Designer what they point out – this is on page 44 of their text – how you present information is as important is what you present. So what you name the tool and then what the tool does have to be connected together.

How you present the tool what you name the tool and what it supports for composition pedagogy and composition teaching all need to be connected for this to actually work out. So those are connections that you want to build based on all that we've discussed with social media theory this particular semester.

You want to capitalize on that and design an LMS – obviously specifically first-year composition - so determine your basic composition pedagogy. What is it that you need to know about composition theory to support this in design and to design your mock-up? Then determine what tools you think are necessary in the actual learning management system and what it is that those tools can do can provide. What they foster for that particular course. Then just start listing ok lets, these are the things we need to accomplish.

Writer/Designer covers – and this starts on page seventy-seven – the idea of information. They ultimately raise several questions that are very important to you all as you work through your design.

The first is what do students need spelled out for them. So a lot of what we talked about with social media theory for this particular semester is obviously that we mediate identities through media. So if we provide learning management system to students they're mediating their student identity through that learning management system. So what is it that they need to gather information to mediate their student identity, to influence their student identity, to possibly develop agency surrounding their student identity, or specifically surrounding composition.

Most students who take composition courses aren't interested unless they're English majors, and even if they are English majors the assumption is that they'll be bored. And they think that they're bad writers and nothing can fix that. We still have this awful romantic ideal, or romantic

notion sticking to the idea of writing. Either you're born a writer and you just regurgitate – literally regurgitate - amazing poetry or you can't write.

These are the two extremes that a lot of students come to the writing situation with the impression of. So if they're not regurgitating beautiful poetry they are a bad writer, which means 99.9 percent of students assume that they're bad writers. So for mediating identities as we talked about with all of the texts we read for the semester – how can we foster that?

How can we make that better? What is it that we need to tell them in this space so that they understand how to do that? What needs to be spelled out for them and also what has to be intuitive?

If you spell out too much - and I'm sure most of you have had this situation – if you spell out too much then the students feel like you're treating them like they're dumb. So they're not going to feel the same positive agency they're going to actually feel a negative agency because you haven't treated them with respect or with the respect that they know how to do these things by themselves. So really play with that balance between what needs to what needs to be spelled out and what needs to be intuitive. And then consider student agency, composition agency, and then obviously composition pedagogy, composition theory, and the actual teaching of the composition course.

Then what is the relationship between these elements and obviously, like we've said, remember that the language indicates the relationship so your tools need to match what they do and your tools need to match what composition is accomplishing. What tools are necessary – I told you I was going to ask this question a bunch of different times. What tools are necessary to teach a composition of course? What tools are

necessary for assignments in a composition course? What tools are necessary for students to interact with? Which are necessary for instructors to deliver information? Really consider the entire thing as you go through these particular questions.

Finally, you'll come up with a list of tasks that are not specifically assignment related but they can influence some of the assignments that you go through and these don't need to be submitted to me unless you want me to look them over. So obviously you need to make a plan. You guys as a group need to come to a consensus - how is this all going to happen? Um, if you need help from me, if you need information or ideas on space where you can share information just ask. You need to determine what you need to design, and that's going to be an ongoing process throughout this entire five-week project. You need to determine what tools you would love to have. So if I put you in a composition classroom tomorrow what would you absolutely want to have even if it's not currently feasible? What would be super beneficial to you in a learning management system? Determine the purpose of those tools. What is it that you want them to do?

So what we saw, especially with the Facebook and Twitter articles that we read in the Mediated Communities, is that Twitter existed and people who used it in very specific ways for very specific purpose. So when you come up with a purpose for a tool you have an idea that this is what we think the tools going to do. Consider what you think students might do you with it, so you can push them in the direction that you want them to go or so that they basically don't create mass anarchy in your particular learning management system because that would be terrible for that particular instructor. So really consider both sides of the tool purpose.

What is it designed to be used for and what could it be used for? Because people play with technology - the first five weeks of theory were dedicated to: people play with technology to suit their needs to make the connections they want to. What tools in this particular case are your students going to play with, are they going to try to break so that they can get the communication or the interaction or the agency that they want in relation to student identity or composition identity?

Finally, you need to determine all the pieces that you need to complete. Obviously, it's part of your timeline. Figure out the timeline based on the due date so you guys can get this all accomplished by those final due dates. Some of the mock-ups are due fairly early, like the week before the semester ends to make sure that your peers can look it over and that it makes sense to everybody.

Remember, the ultimate goal is a mock up and the write-up. If you have any questions at all, obviously send me an email or send me a tweet. I'll continue to talk to you guys every single week through Twitter because you do still have tweets due every week. So make sure you read through all of the assignments, make sure you as a group make a plan and let me know if you as a group have any questions. I'm really excited to see what you do with this.