

Chapters 5 to 8 and Overall Critique (length 6:45)

Chapter five is very interesting, especially since this is the first time a lot of students have worked together in groups. And so making them think about the technology they are going to do, doing a technology review the book calls it. Also, working together as a group, collaborating, that is definitely important. Again, because students have a really hard time working together as a group, and then also working over long term, long deadlines, long, extended deadlines. And so from day one I tell students in the class, you're going to have long-term, overlapping deadlines that is part of the working world. You're not always going to get to work on one project and turn it all in before you leave and move to the next project. So that is an interesting thing that I think this chapter really helps approach. I would say that is probably a difficult chapter to think about theoretically for students, so you really need to be in the project process for them to get the content of this chapter. So that is something to consider as you go through.

Chapter six, on mock-ups and storyboards, that's a very solid chapter, I think it is very interesting. Again, really moving into – from four, five, six, to seven – that to me is kind of the core of the process of doing the project and walking students through the steps. So these chapters are better associated with the parts of the semester where you are actually doing the work, so that is very interesting. I got a lot of feedback from students that it is interesting, they never considered designing a file structure before. And they start applying it not only to this class but to other classes and that seems to help them so that is nice. I do like this chapter in that it has a lot of specifics without being prescriptive. I feel like some other textbooks in this genre are like “you must do this way, you must do that” – in the genre of multimodal, writing with multimodality. You know, you have to do this, you have to do that. And what I do like, especially about this chapter but about the book as a whole. It gives a lot of good guidance but allows for a lot of freedom and independence within the book.

Chapter seven is about drafting and revising and in my class we do this multiple times. I really, I think especially one of the stronger parts of this chapter is how to provide feedback as a stakeholder. I think this is the first time that students really have a stake in what they are looking at. So again, in my class they are all working on a similar type of project but they all have different topics. So it is interesting as they start to think about, “well what can I say to someone else, how can I help them improve it?” So we talk about in the real world, in the work world you find those people in your work group that become kind of your work partners and so they are going to give you the feedback that you need and so trying to practice that. This chapter of the book really helps give a structure for giving feedback. Which I seem to find that students a lot say they don't like peer review because they don't know what to say. This book kind of helps with that so I really like that. The section on creating a revision plan is good. This is they place, they have a lot of questions listed here, I think it can seem a little simplistic to students that making those decisions... what to listen to, what not to listen to, how to find patterns in the feedback. That is mentioned here but I think that there is just not enough emphasis on the fact that this section probably takes the most time in your project. It seems like that's something students would understand, I guess not students, but people, writers would understand, but that's difficult for them.

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Then chapter eight is about the lifecycle of your project. I think this is something that I have never really considered myself. I think this is a great chapter to have, but I do think it was probably one of the most difficult chapters for students to consider and understand. I think I want to work with it a bit more and see how they work in upcoming classes just because it is something new to me to think about as well.

Thinking about the book overall, I would say that I think the strongest positives of the text are this very core, essential content if you are interested in the rhetorical aspects of design and message delivery and tying those together. I do think that the authors do a great job of giving someone who is trying to make a case for this at their institution or in their own practices a really good core place to start from to say here's why multimodality is so important and how it is an interdisciplinary concern. I think that the author's say that it is intended for interdisciplinary use and I think in practice it really is as well. It is very clear that these practices aren't limited to **just** an English or a communications focused classroom. I think the other really big strength of the text is that there is that guidance but also a lot of freedom of choice. Topics are up to students and the way that the instructor wants to make the class go together.

Something that is kind of a positive and a critique at the same time are that some aspects of the organization of the text might not work in a linear fashion for you, but at the same time they are created in such a way that they can be used in chunks as well. When the authors were presenting their approach, they did think about maybe you just want to do one, one assignment. They did mention that if you want to dip a toe in, that this book does work in that way as well. Maybe you just want to practice storyboarding or you wanted to use an invention activity based on something out of this book. Or you want to use the genre analysis activity, it still works for the students as well.

So another critique is the actual use of the Write/Design assignments, they are bulleted instead of numbered. And just from my perspective it is easier to give a number and say "I'd like you to do number two on page whatever" instead of "the third bullet down from the top of the list" or something like that, just a usability type thing. And then pulling in the outside assignments, the xi: Visualizing exercises, those kinds of things. In some places they say they're optional and I think in some places they are not optional. That students really need that interaction, that specific example to get the ideas. Overall I am very pleased with the book, it's nice to have all of the information in one specific location. It allows me to use it in so many different types of classes and incorporate it in both undergraduate and graduate classes. It kind of just gets them to look at this process. It is a very process-based text and I think that's a big strength as well.