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Anne Frances Wysocki, a scholar in the field of new media and composition studies, has published many articles, book chapters, a textbook, and is a major contributor to a multi-authored collection titled Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition. This thesis considers the five openings for new media and composition studies outlined in the first chapter of Writing New Media, titled “Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications,” openings which provide scholars and writing teachers opportunities to consider the material possibilities and constraints attached to all media, and the implications on the writing classroom. This thesis contributes to the scholarly conversation by situating Wysocki within a tradition of new media and composition studies and promoting sustainable practices for compositionists. In considering Wysocki’s five openings, and the ways in which writing teachers see Wysocki enacting these openings throughout her scholarship, this thesis encourages an approach to new media and composition studies that avoids technological determinism and promotes a deeper understanding of the material composition of texts we produce and exchange.
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A Material Approach: Anne Frances Wysocki and New Media

by
Travis Margoni

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Travis Margoni, Author
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Chapter 1

Introducing the Work of Anne Frances Wysocki: Openings and Contexts

Many theoretical and pedagogical opportunities and questions surround the growing field of new media and composition studies. My project serves as a way to locate how a leading researcher in the field, Anne Frances Wysocki, navigates the challenges and possibilities in composition and new media studies by merging theory and practice and developing a pedagogy that emphasizes materiality and advocacy for the composition classroom.

Wysocki’s attention to materiality and advocacy and her efforts to integrate theory and practice make her work especially attractive to me. Wysocki’s research reveals breadth and depth, and her writing aimed at composition teachers and scholars in new media is rich, incorporating design, technology, gender studies, and rhetorical theory. Wysocki brings to her scholarship a trained, artistic eye for design and new media aesthetics, having studied animation and film studies at the San Francisco Art Institute between the periods in which she earned a B.A. and an M.A. at the University of California at Berkeley, and a Ph. D. at Michigan Technological University. Her dissertation, Visibly Composed, or Seeing What We Make of Our Selves On Paper and On Screen, earned Wysocki the 1999 Computers and Composition Hugh Burns Best Dissertation Award. (Wysocki’s committee was chaired by Marilyn Cooper and included the well known scholars Diana George, Cynthia Selfe, and Jay David Bolter.) Wysocki is currently an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.
The Reach of Wysocki’s Research

In this thesis, I use Wysocki’s opening chapter in *Writing New Media*, a monograph she coauthored with Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia L. Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc, to call attention to some of Wysocki’s most important contributions to the field of new media and composition studies. This chapter, “Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications,” both builds upon an emerging scholarly consensus while also enacting several important calls for change.

It is not within the scope of my thesis to discuss all of Wysocki’s multi-faceted research, so I want to provide a brief overview of her many publications here. Wysocki works at the intersections of many areas of scholarship: the teaching of writing, new media and new literacies, and professional and technical communication, to name a few, and this is one reason I find myself attracted to her scholarly and pedagogical work.

Many of Wysocki’s articles raise questions about visual rhetoric, design, and digital media. Two such articles were published in *Kairos*, an online journal for scholars engaged in issues of rhetoric, technology, and pedagogy. “Monitoring Order: Visual Desire, the Organization of Web Pages, and Teaching the Rules of Design” was published in 1998, and “A Bookling Monument” in 2002. The latter article considers the ways that images in books online may evoke different values from those offline. Wysocki’s work with onscreen images is found in print as well. “Impossibly Distinct: On Form/Content and Word/Image in Two Pieces of Computer-Based Interactive Multimedia” was published in *Computers and Composition* in 2001, and “Interaction of Text and Graphics, Multimedia, and Electronic Forms of Writing” was

Wysocki’s interests are diverse. At times she is concerned with the creation of images and texts, as is the case with “Writing Images: Using the World Wide Web in a Digital Photography Class,” an essay included in *Weaving a Virtual Web: Practical Approaches to New Information Technologies* edited by Sibylle Gruber and published in 1999. Some of Wysocki’s scholarly work focuses on pedagogy. This is the case with “Using Design Approaches to Help Students Learn a Process for Developing Engaging and Effective Materials for Teaching Scientific and Technical Concepts,” an essay included in a 2007 collection edited by Cynthia Selfe, *Resources in Technical Communication: Outcomes and Approaches*. Her work includes instructive texts in animation and film, including three articles about texture and landscape in a guide for creating digital graphics included in *Photoshop 3.0 Special Effects How-To*, a 1995 collection edited by Sherry London. Wysocki’s interests reach even further, toward discussions of gender and children’s media, in “Learning from Fatty Bear: Calling Forth Gender in Children’s Interactive Multimedia,” an article included in *Multiliteracies for the Twenty-first Century* (2004), edited by Brian Huot, Bazerman, and Elizabeth Stroble.

In addition to her 2004 *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Writing*, the publication around which my project is shaped, Wysocki has published several additional texts, including *Compose, Design Advocate: A Rhetoric for Integrating the Written, Visual, and Oral*, a rhetoric for first-year writing classes published in 2007, coauthored by Dennis A. Lynch. In addition, she and Lynch have also coauthored *The DK Handbook*, which first appeared in 2008 and is now in its second edition. In Chapter 3 of my thesis, I’ll be
introducing activities included in *Compose, Design, Advocate* that are designed to help students create effective new media texts.

In this thesis, I focus primarily on scholarly works by Wysocki that address central theoretical and pedagogical issues in new media and composition studies. In addition to *Writing New Media*, I will consider three *Computers and Composition* articles: Wysocki’s 2001 “Impossibly Distinct: On Form/Content and Word/Image in Two Pieces of Computer-Based Interactive Multimedia,” her 2004 “What Should Be an Unforgettable Face,” and her 2005 “Awaywithwords: On the Possibilities in Unavailable Designs.” Additionally, “It Is Not Only Ours,” a 2007 *College Composition and Communication* Re-Visions article, is included in a Chapter 3 discussion of Wysocki’s call for strategies of generous reading. I expand upon these articles to better understand Wysocki’s vision for new media studies and to consider how composition classrooms might look to material awareness as a rhetorical strategy.

**Opening My Project**

As noted earlier, my project investigates the five openings for new media and composition studies developed by Wysocki in the first chapter of *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*, a collection of essays by Wysocki, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc. In the preface, the authors explain that the collection is not meant to serve as a comprehensive guide to new media and the composition classroom. Rather, the authors state that they see “no one correct way into new media,” and they hope that the various approaches offered in the collection provide openings for the reader, “that one of our approaches—or some mix—provides you with directions of thought and theoretic groundings that spark with how you work” (vii). The authors are clearly as
interested in practice as in theory: each individually-authored chapter in \textit{Writing New Media} is followed by activities instructors can adapt for classroom use.

The first chapter in the collection is Wysocki’s “Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications,” in which Wysocki introduces five key openings or needs that she sees for new media and composition studies:

1. The need, in writing about new media in general, for the material thinking of people who teach writing
2. A need to focus on the specific materiality of the texts we give each other
3. A need to define “new media texts” in terms of their materialities
4. A need for production of new media texts in writing classrooms
5. A need for strategies of generous reading (3)

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I unpack each of these openings to investigate the responsibilities and opportunities implicit in each area, and in Chapter 3 I locate these openings in other selected works by Wysocki.

Wysocki’s definition of new media texts—one of my entry points into her work—challenges some common assumptions about new media and new technology. In “Opening New Media to Writing,” Wysocki argues that new media texts do not have to be digital, and that we ought to call “new media texts” “those that have been made by composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who then highlight the materiality” in order to help the composers’ audiences see that texts do not “function independently of how [they are] made and in what contexts” (15). Also noteworthy among these openings is Wysocki’s call for “strategies of generous reading” (3).

Wysocki’s second chapter in \textit{Writing New Media} is “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty: On Some Formal Problems in Teaching about the Visual Aspects of Texts.” In this chapter, Wysocki investigates the nature of beauty and artistic pleasure and raises important ethical questions
about their potential consequences, particularly when considered from the context of graphic design. These two chapters from *Writing New Media*—which will be examined further throughout my thesis—are critical to my project because I believe they convey Wysocki’s rich theoretical and pedagogical insights and her commitment to raising important ethical and political questions. I believe examining Wysocki’s work is one way to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on emerging technologies and the teaching of writing.

**Where I’m Coming From: An Investment in The Teaching of Writing**

I enter into this project with a host of experiences that help to illuminate and enrich my interest in composition and new media studies in general, and the work of Anne Wysocki in particular. I developed an interest in curriculum design and the teaching of writing as an undergraduate majoring in English and secondary education at Northern Michigan University. During this time I worked as a student journalist and ultimately as editor in chief of the campus newspaper, familiarizing myself with many different design programs while earning minors in journalism and history at NMU. Later, I began freelancing for a local magazine and designing pages during the summer months before moving to Oregon for my first teaching position at Douglas High in Winston, Oregon.

There I was given the opportunity to re-shape curricula for ninth grade English, eleventh grade English, and journalism. While educators understandably fret over designing syllabi and lesson plans that align with the expectations for quantifiable test scores at the federal and state levels, I found that I was able to work within the Oregon standards for teaching and writing to create engaging, critical pedagogy that challenged students while opening discourses about language and the texts that we encounter daily. In particular, I think back to the lessons on page
design, visual fluency, photography, and audience that I shared with students in our journalism class. I drew lessons then, as I do today, from my time as a journalist and student on the NMU campus, where I first began studying education and writing. In my free time, I began blogging, I exchanged creative writing with college friends who had relocated around the country, and I began listening to podcasts—all of which engaged me with new media and new literacies.

After two years of teaching at the secondary level, I began my graduate studies at Oregon State University, a move that included the opportunity to work as the graduate assistant for OSU’s Writing Intensive Curriculum Program (WIC). During my time in this position, I have served often as the first reader for writing courses proposed across the disciplines, noting whether or not and in which ways courses meet high standards for a writing-infused curriculum that includes writing-to-learn exercises and multiple revisions. Working with instructors individually and through faculty seminars to provide support and guidance in the teaching of writing has informed and enriched my understanding of the composition classroom and the ways in which we prepare students for writing in and beyond the academy. In working with the OSU WIC newsletter, first in print and now online, I continued my engagement with emerging media, focusing on the transition from print to screen.

In addition to working for OSU’s WIC Program, I have taught first-year composition, WR 121, and business communication, WR 214, where I worked to enact a pedagogy that encourages students to write and think rhetorically as they transfer skills into various disciplines. I created classroom activities that helped develop students’ confidence in discussing visual rhetoric with careful attention to media, materiality, and audience.
This project has been informed by each of these experiences and the inspiring educators I have worked with along the way. Given my classroom and on-the-job training in journalistic page design, combined with the pedagogical insights I’ve gained as both a student and teacher, I’ve learned through my engagement with Wysocki’s research how to better identify opportunities for instructors to help students understand the relationships between texts, materials, media, and community. This is, I believe, a testament to the power and applicability of Wysocki’s approach to new media and composition studies.

**Looking Back, Looking Forward: Computers and Composition’s 20th Anniversary Issues**

In chapter two I will examine the five openings in Wysocki’s “Opening New Media to Writing.” In the remainder of this chapter, I want to situate Wysocki and her scholarly project. Wysocki can be considered a third generation scholar in the tradition of composition and new media studies, where, for example, Hugh Burns and Charles Moran would be of the first generation, Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher of the second generation, and Wysocki, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, and Geoffrey Sirc fall within the third generation of scholars.

The scope of my project does not permit a full discussion of the history of the field, which coalesced around the journal *Computers and Composition*. To get at least a preliminary sense of this history, however, I will focus on a special 20th anniversary issue of this journal, published in late 2003 and early 2004.

Those publishing in this issue looked both back and forward. They looked back at the spirit and goals of *Computers and Composition* when the journal began as a newsletter in 1983. While they stopped short of predicting the future, scholars looked forward to a future where new technologies will continue to enhance and challenge spaces for composing and learning.
Charles Moran was, as of 2003, the most published scholar in *Computers and Composition*, with ten articles to his credit. In his anniversary edition article “*Computers and Composition* 1983-2002: What We Have Hoped For,” Moran argues that what early issues of the journal hoped for was that “computers would eliminate the ‘drudgery’ of writing and of teaching writing,” and that “the computer used as a word processor would improve student writing” (345). In more recent years, however, Moran suggests that scholars have “looked less at and more through technology, looking toward a better, more egalitarian, more peaceful world [...]” (345, original emphasis). I find that Wysocki, whose emphasis on ethics, community, and advocacy in the classroom is indeed looking through technology—toward the material, toward the ethical, as are others researching and publishing today on new media and composition—definitely represents this trend.

Moran argues that, over the years, the composition scholars in *Computers and Composition* have looked toward “a quiet revolution that we hope to bring to pass through our teaching—with technology, to be sure, but chiefly through our teaching” (345). This is precisely the spirit of Wysocki’s larger project that I hope to convey in this thesis. Technology in general and new media in particular do not necessarily transform a writing classroom, hence Wysocki’s emphasis on the importance of materiality, advocacy, and ideological critique.

Moran highlights composition theorist Donna LeCourt’s hope that “by extending critical literacy’s project to include student interrogations of the writing space, technology offers a way to provide students with the means to critique how their textual practice participates in ideological reproduction” (354). Moran and LeCourt stress, however, that technology will not do this on its own. Wysocki’s work encourages composition instructors to adopt methods that
ask students to approach texts critically and to engage in ideological analysis. But Wysocki also encourages students to approach texts—whether these texts are digital or not.

Hugh Burns, who in 1983 wrote one of the first two articles that appeared in *Computers and Composition*, asks key questions in his anniversary-issue article “Four Dimensions of Significance: Tradition, Method, Theory, Originality.” He suggests that the work being done in the field of composition and new media involves not only originality, but a passion for opening possibilities in the composition classroom. As we look ahead and try to continue researching and teaching as “visionaries,” he asks of work being done in new media and composition studies, “Does this research define more ways and better ways of knowing? Does this research begin something new? Does this research demonstrate the continued tension of pathos and ethos?” (11). When looking at Wysocki’s work, the answers to these questions are, emphatically, yes. I hope to establish this throughout the thesis, as Wysocki’s work, for me, reflects a unique, powerful balance of passion and ethics.

In introducing the anniversary issue of *Computers and Composition*, Heidi McKee and Danielle DeVoss articulate the tenor of the collection in “Letter From the Guest Editors.” While there is no reliable way to predict the future, McKee and DeVoss argue that we can, however, “anticipate that, over the next 20 years, technologies will emerge, evolve, and disappear, and with them our practices of literacy will likewise evolve, accumulate, and change shape” (330). This is, in a sense, an argument in favor of Wysocki’s approach to new media texts, an approach that emphasizes materiality over digitality. In the future, texts will continue to be constructed with a wide range of materials, but it is, of course, impossible to determine what these materials will look like, and the extent to which they will be digital. Indeed, McKee and DeVoss suggest
that “*New media* will soon describe media we haven’t yet imagined,” and, therefore scholars
will need to continue “continue to expand what ‘computers’ encompass and what ‘writing’
means” (330, original emphasis). It is my belief that Wysocki’s work is playing an important
role in achieving this goal.

**The New London Group**

As I noted earlier, Wysocki is working at the intersections of a number of related fields.
In this section I want briefly to mention a scholarly project to which Wysocki and her colleagues
in composition and new media studies are—sometimes directly, and sometimes indirectly—
indebted. This is The New London Group, a group of scholars working largely in education who
united in the 1990s to expand the understanding of literacies and embrace the notion of
“multiliteracies.” Perhaps this group’s most important publication is a 1996 article titled “A
Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures.”

The term multiliteracies, The New London Group writes, describes “the multiplicity of
communications channels and media, and the increasing saliency of culture and linguistic
diversity” for writers today (The New London Group). That one word—multiliteracies—
encapsulates the goals of The New London Group’s discussions. The New London Group article
also aims to further develop the concept of pedagogy as design, but the authors—including
Courtney Cazden, James Gee, and Gunther Kress, among others—call the article practical only
in a general way, and rather “more in the nature of a programmatic manifesto” (The New
London Group).

The New London Group argues that the notion of pedagogical design “recognizes the
iterative nature of meaning-making,” and draws on available designs to create patterns of
meaning (The New London Group). Wysocki’s five openings build upon The New London Group’s work, nearly a decade later, as she calls for an emphasis on materiality and the production of new media texts (both digital and non-digital) in the classroom. With the New London Group, Wysocki also shares the goal of helping writers to design new and innovative social futures.

**The Design of a Thesis: The Pages that Follow**

In Chapter 2, “Writing New Media: Wysocki’s Openings for Composition Classrooms,” I introduce and develop an understanding of Wysocki’s five openings for new media, presented earlier in this chapter, and I consider the advantages of her definition of new media texts, her belief that a new media text does not need to be a digital composition, but rather a text composed with rhetorical and material sensitivity. I identify the theoretical justifications and classroom opportunities found within Wysocki’s five openings for new media and locate these openings in the chapters written by her coauthors in *Writing New Media.*

In Chapter 3, “Situating Wysocki’s Work Within the Openings,” I examine Wysocki’s theory beyond her five openings for new media as identified in selected works in order to develop a deeper understanding of Wysocki’s theoretical and pedagogical commitments. The chapter is organized around the five openings for new media and composition, and it includes a consideration of “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty,” a *Computers and Composition* essay titled “Awaywithwords: On the Possibilities in Unavailable Designs,” a Re-Visions article published in *College Composition and Communication* titled “It Is Not Only Ours,” and sections and activities in Wysocki and Lynch’s first-year writing textbook, *Compose, Design, Advocate.*
In Chapter 4, “Conclusions and Final Considerations,” I summarize my findings and consider the contexts in which I came to my topic. I re-establish how Wysocki contributes to ongoing work on new media and composition and consider how, moving forward, her work raises important questions for theorists and composition teachers.
Chapter 2

Writing New Media: Wysocki’s Openings for Composition Classrooms

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the opportunities and openings for new media and composition studies that Wysocki outlines in her introduction to Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition. I also look at her colleagues’ work in the collection to consider the ways in which Wysocki’s work is manifested elsewhere, where other works corroborate Wysocki’s openings, and the ways in which Wysocki’s work differs from that of her contemporaries. Wysocki says that what she and her co-authors offer in this book are active possibilities “that allow and encourage us to shift what we do in our thinking and classes so that we do not forget, so that we make actively present in our practices, how writing is a continually changing material activity that shapes just who we can be and what we can do” (2-3). Wysocki’s first of two chapters, “Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications,” begins the six-chapter collection. I aim to develop a deeper understanding of Wysocki’s vision for new media studies and composition by considering the openings and subsequent classroom activities. Finally, I demonstrate how Wysocki’s five openings contribute to the field of new media and composition studies.

One way to look at Wysocki’s “Opening New Media to Writing” is to view it as a manifesto in the vein of The New London Group’s “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures.” Wysocki explains that, for new media and composition studies, what “has changed the warp and woof that used to seem so steady underneath us is precisely that we are now aware of the warp and woof, that we are aware of the complex weaves of writing as a material practice” (2). Wysocki asserts that teachers of writing are often alert to how changes in
the articulation of literate practices take place, and how “a change in any articulation of [a long list] of webs of practice and institution sends waves of change shimmering elsewhere, including—necessarily—through our experiences of self and world […]” (2). Educators like Wysocki and co-contributors Selfe, Sirc, and Johnson-Eilola are able to see changes occurring and are prepared to shape change “actively and with care, in accord with what we know to be effective and just and necessary in our classroom practices and theories” (2).

In “Opening New Media to Writing,” Wysocki lists five openings that she sees for teachers of composition and rhetoric:

1. The need, in writing about new media in general, for the material thinking of people who teach writing
2. A need to focus on the specific materiality of the texts we give each other
3. A need to define “new media texts” in terms of their materialities
4. A need for production of new media texts in writing classrooms
5. A need for strategies of generous reading (3)

Wysocki argues that the kind of thinking, action, and advocacy that focuses “specifically on texts and how situated people use them to make things happen in all kinds of contexts” needs to expand to work within the field of new media, that the material thinking of writing teachers can and should inform scholars’ work on new media and new technologies (5). She says what we know about writing “can usefully affect how we approach new media” (5). I cannot, and Wysocki does not, dedicate equal amounts of scholarship to each opening; however, each opening is critical to Wysocki’s work and to new media studies.

Important to my project is that two of these five openings are unique contributions to composition studies, while three openings represent a consensus among scholars in the field. Wysocki’s call to define “new media texts” in terms of their materialities (opening 3) and her call for strategies of generous reading (opening 5) distinguish her work from the work of others
in composition studies. In the following section I will discuss all of Wysocki’s five openings, while devoting particular attention to the two openings that I believe represent especially valuable contributions.

**Opening Wysocki’s Five Openings**

In order to understand the ways in which Wysocki’s work in “Opening New Media to Writing” reflects contemporary research in new media and composition studies, contributes to and advances the efforts of others in the field, and broadly applies to the work of her colleagues in *Writing New Media*, I look more carefully here at each of the five openings. To varying extents, scholars in new media and composition studies have built upon Wysocki’s openings since the publication of Wysocki’s chapter in 2004, and I will address this later in the chapter. My purpose in this section is to provide a deeper understanding of Wysocki’s five openings. After summarizing each opening, I will discuss its significance and contributions to the discussion of new media and composition studies.

**Opening 1: The need, in writing about new media in general, for the material thinking of people who teach writing**

Wysocki argues that there already exist plenty of well-articulated arguments on why teachers should incorporate new media into the classroom, and many educators are doing this today. In this sense, then, writing classrooms do not need to be opened to new media. Rather, Wysocki argues that “new media needs to be opened to writing,” that new media ought “to be informed by what writing teachers know, precisely because writing teachers focus specifically on texts and how situated people (learn how to) use them to make things happen” (5). According to Wysocki, “such consideration is mostly lacking from existing writing about new media” (5).
Wysocki says that much research on new media falls into one of two broad categories: some research creates and analyzes isolated, individual texts, and other research focuses on the broad ways in which media function and the contexts in which they exist. What’s lacking, according to Wysocki, is a bridge between these two categories that helps “composers of texts think usefully about effects of their particular decisions as they compose a new media text, to help composers see how agency and materiality are entwined as they compose” (6). While Wysocki is quick to point out that what has been written so far about new media is far from useless, that there is a good deal of important work that has been done in the field, she asserts that there is not enough “concrete encouragement for the kinds of embedded and embodied practices writing teachers […] know are necessary to help students—and teachers, and others—have any kind of alert agency with and within the structures of their composing lives” (6). That is to say, while many people know how to create new media texts, there is a need for people to learn how to create these texts with rhetorical principles in mind, a need for students to consider materiality, audience, and the elements of argument as they apply to new media compositions. Ideological analysis and critique are, Wysocki argues, an important part of this process.

Wysocki argues for more strategies that encourage someone producing a Web page to consider how or why choices of color, typeface, words, photographs, spatial arrangement, and so on, shape the way she or he is constructing an audience. Although these issues are addressed in first-year and professional writing classes to varying degrees, Wysocki calls for a deeper ideological analysis. Particularly central to Wysocki’s argument is her recognition that different texts may construct an audience, for example, as active citizens or passive consumers. What’s needed is support for understanding how “with new media we make visible positions that engage
others” (6). What this also means, Wysocki says, is that there is little work being done that asks people, as an audience for visual design choices, what behaviors and attitudes they are encouraged to take, and little that asks audiences to consider how the defense- and commercial-tied history of computers has shaped the logic of computer and software structures (6).

Wysocki argues that a fundamental focus on materiality that takes part in the construction of readers “occurs in all texts we consume, whether print or digital,” and this “material functioning occurs when we produce any text as well, and needs to be supplemented with [a] broader understanding of materiality…” (7). Wysocki believes that writing teachers can fill this gap in current scholarship on new media because they already help others understand how writing is “embedded among the relations of agency and extensive material practices and structures that are our lives” (7).

As part of her discussion of her first opening, Wysocki refers to Cynthia Selfe and Richard Selfe’s work on computer desktops and folder icons. She notes that this is an example of how compositions are a part of other preexisting cultural practices and structures, and she argues that we are effective when teaching how these structures are situated. Standard desktop icons seemed intuitive to people familiar with Western business practices, organizations, and structures; Selfe and Selfe’s work shows how what is intuitive to some may require others to abandon cultural or gender identities while acknowledging other dominant groups (8). Work like this reveals “that new technologies do not automatically erase or overthrow or change old practices,” and there needs to be more work of this nature in the field by teachers of writing, “precisely because of how they see texts as completely situated practice embedded in the past but opening up possible futures” (8). Wysocki concludes her discussion by explaining that each of
the book’s chapters first make visible “how larger material structures are woven into the practices of new media as we compose texts,” and “how we can work with those structures as we compose” (9). The call for material thinking of people who teach writing is a clear and powerful plea to educators, arguing that the skills composition teachers bring to their classrooms should inform theory and practice in new media studies.

Opening 2: A need to focus on the specific materiality of the texts we give each other

Wysocki introduces this opening by explaining how printers for home computers, as they have developed in recent decades, have opened users to new ways of creating documents of various size, color, and gloss. The increasing number of digital technologies has created an even greater range of material choices for those composing texts, making it easy for almost anyone to construct a message tailored for a particular argument by modifying the size of an onscreen window through which audiences see a text, by using animation as a mode for conveying an argument, or by structuring texts that allow audiences to choose paths for moving through various parts of a document. Wysocki argues that “these results of digitality ought to encourage us to consider not only the potentialities of material choices for digital texts but for any text we make,” and that teachers, students, and all kinds of users “ought to use the range of choices digital technologies seem to give us to consider the range of choices that printing-press technologies (apparently) haven’t” (10). The material we use for communication is not a “blank carrier for our meanings,” Wysocki argues, and we have an opportunity right now, an opening, to be alert to how choices of material “articulate into the other structures that shape writing and our lives,” and being aware of these choices can help to “shape changes we might want” (10).
Wysocki refers to recent work done by Christina Haas, in her book *Writing Technology: Studies on the Materiality of Literacy*, analyzing the differences between students composing with pen and paper and those composing with computers. Haas found that when students were allowed to write only with a computer, the production of “intact prose” was privileged by the composer, but when pen and paper were used, those technologies allowed for note-taking and other forms of writing and learning. The conclusion Haas reached was that technologies can affect writers’ thinking processes in profound ways (11). While Wysocki acknowledges that writing teachers likely cannot change the design of computers or pens and paper, “we are in positions to encourage thoughtful decisions both about using computers or paper and pen in various stages of composing processes and—importantly—about the material designs of texts using those different technologies” (11).

Focusing on communication technologies is crucial, Wysocki says, because our work as teachers and writers is enmeshed in these technologies. Wysocki explains that she does not feel the particular materials used determine who writers are or what they do, because “the webs in which our texts circulate and have effect are complex and un-tease-apart-able articulations of the social, cultural, religious, economic, political, affective, intellectual” realms in which they are created, reside, and echo (11). However, she maintains that the “shapes and arrangements and materials” used in communicating do, in fact, contribute in important ways to “how we see ourselves in what we make and to how others take in what we give them” (12).

Imagine, Wysocki suggests, that the book before you, her book, were bound in leather, or plastic, or fish-like scales, or that you were reading it online; consider how it would look if the text were violet instead of black, or if this were a video of her speaking or signing the words—
and what if the text of the book were appearing paragraph by paragraph in an instant messenger window. “Each of these changes in the material instantiation of my words would change your attitude toward this text, certainly, but would also (I think) do more than that” (12). Wysocki believes the material presentations of texts do more than “simply create a mood or direct readers’ eyes through a text” (12). Visual presentation of texts can fit into and reinforce cultural practices of authority, standardization, and mass production. Material structures, Wysocki argues, help to determine “what to value and how to behave” when they are not considered with a critical eye (13).

Wysocki points out that “[the] technologies of the printing press were never static,” and she suggests that writers who published before digital texts existed could do so with layouts other than the standard linear lines of type associated with academic writing (13). Multimodality, it would seem by Wysocki’s definition of new media texts and her argument here, is hardly a new phenomenon—illuminated medieval manuscripts, for example, incorporated many materials. Wysocki says the materiality of our texts may sometimes seem not open to an individual’s choice, but that merely means that the decision has already been made for us, “in the accumulation of changes and decisions that have led us to using our material technologies as we do” (14). I might further add that the accompanying literacies each composer brings to a document also influence the materials used for composing.

Wysocki urges writers, educators, and students to recognize that recent developments in digital and online technologies give us a “position for questioning what had earlier seemed like a natural silence of media,” so that we may better understand the texts “we give each other and
hence ourselves” (14). Wysocki poses some questions to broaden readers’ understanding of texts:

- How might the straight lines of type we have inherited on page after page of books articulate to other kinds of lines, assembly lines and lines of canned produces in supermarkets and lines of desks in classrooms? How might these various lines work together to accustom us to standardization, repetition, and other processes that support industrial forms of production?

- How might the quiet emphasis on perspectival sight (over all other of our senses) of reading and books—and now computer screens…—shape us as sensual embodied beings?

- How might the visual appearance of most academic texts of the previous century—texts most often without photographs or illustrations or varied typography—have encouraged us to value (or devalue or repress) the visual in the circulation of academic and other “serious” writing? Is it because we have banished photographs and illustrations and typography from such texts that they have seemed appropriate for…texts for children and advertising and other commercial work?

- What potentials for thinking and argument and position do we lose when we most often think that attention to the layout of words on the page is appropriate for only functional (instructions and manuals) or aesthetic/poetic texts (15)?

Being alert to this opening for attending in specific and concrete ways to the materiality of text opens possibilities for new and unique compositional arrangements and articulations. “How would a text look,” Wysocki asks, “that embodied the values of generosity, or slow rumination, or full-hearted justice—and what might we learn about ourselves in the processes of making and learning to read such texts?” (15).
Opening 3: A need to define “new media texts” in terms of their materialities

Wysocki’s definition of “new media texts” is unusual in that she does not believe new media texts have to be digital, and that “any text that has been designed so that its materiality is not effaced can count as new media” (15). She explains:

I think we should call “new media texts” those that have been made by composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who then highlight the materiality: such composers design texts that help readers/consumers/viewers stay alert to how any text—like its composers and readers—doesn’t function independently of how it is made and in what contexts. Such composers design texts that make as overtly visible as possible the values they embody (15).

By considering new media texts in this way, Wysocki believes we can “see where openings for agency are within the new media texts we compose” (15). It is important, Wysocki says, that whoever produces the text and whoever consumes it is able to understand (because the texts allow and require them to) that various materialities of a text contribute to how it is read and understood; this, Wysocki argues, is essential in determining what is or is not a new media text.

Wysocki argues that if we see the growing emphasis on the visual in our culture as not the automatic result of new technologies, but as a historically situated process, “then we can situate that emphasis within ongoing vacillations in our understandings of how words and visual representations function and relate” (16). She goes on to explain that traditional definitions of “interactivity” have been limited to what happens when someone clicks a link on a Web page or sends instant messages, but what is more productive is “to consider the various and complex relations we can construct with readers through the ways readers are asked to move through texts we build, whether that is by turning pages, clicking links…or solving a puzzle that opens the gate to the next level of a gametext” (17). Doing so, again, allows us to see openings for exploration
of the self and the relations we can build with others through the materialities of the texts we build.

Being aware of how agency and materiality are entwined can also help us see how definitions may obscure our agency, but what can result from viewing this as an opening is that, if we understand the texts we make and give to others in terms of materiality, we can see ourselves within these texts, and see ourselves connected through our various material relations (18).

Wysocki is careful to note that defining new media texts in terms of materiality, rather than digitality, helps both writers and readers understand that looking at texts merely through their technological origin reduces what can be achieved. She argues that we must remain mindful that textual practices are “always broader than the technological” (19). A document that incorporates text, sound, graphics, photos, etc., does not make for a new media text for Wysocki; rather, she is “trying to get at a definition that encourages us to stay alert to how and why we make these combinations of materials, not simply that we do it” (19).

For me, the importance of Wysocki’s call to define “new media texts” in terms of materiality cannot be overstated. This call reminds both scholars and teachers, for instance, that they can and should build upon the rhetorical sensitivity that students develop as communicators in all kinds of media. Wysocki’s emphasis on the materiality of all texts encourages teachers to be creative in activities related to both print and digital media. (Later in this chapter I will discuss a number of activities that Wysocki developed in support of her discussion of the five openings; many do not involve digital or online media.) Wysocki’s definition of new media texts is a reminder that teachers and students whose institutions are under-funded and thus offer
limited access to new media can nevertheless explore important issues related to the materiality of all texts. And, finally, Wysocki’s definition of new media texts resists deterministic views that place more value on technology than on pedagogy.

Opening 4: A need for production of new media texts in writing classrooms

When we consider that Wysocki’s definition of new media texts encourages the use of any and all media for production, her call for new media text production in writing classrooms looks much more like an opportunity for producing a wide range of new texts than a mandate to ask students to produce digital texts using technologies that may be quite new and unfamiliar. Like many other composition scholars, Wysocki believes that, whether or not one defines “new media texts” in terms of materiality or digitality, these texts should be produced in the composition classroom. If students are to see themselves as “positioned, as building positions in what they produce,” Wysocki argues, they ought to be producing a variety of texts using a well-informed, “alertly chosen range of materials” (20).

Wysocki’s approaches to material constructions invite classroom analysis of the materials most often associated with academic writing. Wysocki challenges the unexamined use of traditional materials by employing Andrew Frenenberg’s term “system-congruent design” to describe the ways in which standard, unvisually marked 8 ½ inch by 11 inch pages fit into “systems that work counter to their ends” (21). Once students begin to see such systems, they are opened to experimenting and constructing other, differing connections. Wysocki advocates for an emphasis on craft in the classroom, essentially a rhetorical and material awareness of craft “in order to work against the standardization of our industrial corporatized world” (21). The material crafting of an object fosters a sense of relationship between the maker, the object, the
users of the object, and the social context, Wysocki explains. Wysocki argues that, “if we do want to understand compositions as allowing us to see our positions, then it would be useful to think about—and teach—composition of page and screen as a material craft […]” (21-2).

Viewing writing as an object to be seen and manipulated allows both writers and readers to consider the embodied, temporal positions that Wysocki believes need to be seen and critiqued.

As I have already noted, Wysocki is not arguing specifically for the production of digital texts, but for the material and rhetorical knowledge required to compose texts thoughtfully and critically in any medium. The skills required to craft a composition with an awareness of audience and materiality are certainly transferable, which is why, I believe, Wysocki—and other scholars, to varying extents—argue for the production of new media texts in the composition classroom. The process of choosing materials and media, the consideration of audience and the relationship between composer and text, not only advances one’s ability to create new media texts, but texts that function more traditionally, like those contained in an 8½ by 11 inch page. When students understand the range of materials available as they compose, the use of all media becomes more effective in a wide range of discourse communities.

Opening 5: A need for strategies of generous reading

The final opening is the second of two unique calls for change in the composition classroom that Wysocki makes in “Openings and Justifications.” In order for writers and readers to see and critique positions in the texts they make for each other, Wysocki argues that both need “strategies that include but also help us look beyond the naturalized rules and guidelines for how we present selves in print” (22). The seeds for these practices already exist in classrooms, Wysocki explains, in how teachers ask students to consider why and how they’ve chosen
particular strategies to position themselves in their writing. But this needs to be extended to questioning productions that include other materials; both teachers and students need to be generous in acknowledging that texts created by others can look and function differently from those they are accustomed to seeing. It’s important, too, that readers avoid thinking that a text that deviates from expected conventions does not necessarily represent a “mistake.” Instead, Wysocki suggests that both readers and writers benefit if they are given to seeing choices are being explored, choices that may change and grow as the text or object meets a wider audience or a more specific audience (22-3).

Wysocki argues that if we truly want something new to come out of new media, that is, “if we want to achieve abilities to see and hear voices that we traditionally haven’t, and to open composition even more to those whose ways with words and pictures don’t look like what we know and expect,” then approaches to generous reading are necessary explorations (23).

The word “generous” appears frequently throughout Wysocki’s work, and I think it is especially important to point out that generous approaches to texts—as readers—are not exclusive from generous strategies for composing. In order for students to compose freely, using a wide range of materials and media, they need an audience that they can trust will be accepting, patient, and generous with their texts as they explore composition strategies. It is clear to me that Wysocki sees generosity as important to fostering learning communities in which the other four openings can be explored.

In introducing Wysocki’s essay, I noted that to some extent her work reflects shared understandings with other scholars in the field. Her essay has value as a succinct but also passionate expression of this shared consensus. However, Wysocki’s emphasis on materiality
and her articulation of a need for strategies of generous reading make her work particularly compelling and important, as she has identified powerful ways of opening the writing classroom and opening new media to writing in these calls to action.

In addition to her calls for new media texts to be defined in terms of materiality and generous approaches to texts, I find Wysocki’s attention to ethics, materiality, and rhetoric engaging and valuable, as I will discuss further in Chapter 3. All rhetorical analysis, for me, implies that an understanding of how the ways in which arguments are constructed can help us, and our students, become informed participants of discourse communities so that we might better ourselves, our lives, and the people and communities around us. Wysocki builds on the work of scholars like Selfe and Selfe in that she makes explicit the ways in which visual rhetoric and material thinking are, essentially, ideological critique. In this regard, her work represents a powerful form of advocacy.

The openings for new media and composition become perhaps even more powerful as Wysocki extends her arguments into classroom activities. In the following section, I introduce the activities Wysocki includes at the end of “Openings and Justifications” and consider the ways in which these activities promote the necessary skills for composing with material awareness and rhetorical sensitivity.

**Classroom Activities and Openings for New Media**

Each chapter in *Writing New Media* includes classroom activities that the authors encourage instructors to use and adapt for their classrooms. Wysocki includes six classroom activities, each with multiple parts, at the end of “Openings and Justifications.” I find it significant that many of these activities involve little or no interaction with digital media,
emphasizing, instead, a focus on seeing, on observation, and on the materials used to create
documents for various audiences. This again underscores Wysocki’s definition of “new media
texts,” texts that, Wysocki believes, are produced with an understanding of how the materials
used help to construct meaning between composer, audience, and text. It is not necessary,
Wysocki argues, to limit our understanding of “new media texts” to those composed in digital
environments.

The first activity in the chapter is “Materialities of Seeing,” which includes exercises
titled “Eye-Witnessing,” “The Attentions of a Visual World,” and “Expectations of Seeing.” I
want to stress that the classroom activities included at the end of “Openings and Justifications”
reveal Wysocki’s dedication to expanding and developing the two most unique openings, the
need to define “new media texts” in terms of materialities, and the need for strategies of
generous reading. Implicit in the inclusion of these activities is the understanding that any
number of activities could be created for and included in the collection, so, that materiality and
generous approaches to texts are dominant themes certainly underscores Wysocki’s emphasis on
these two openings.

In the “Goals” section of “Materialities of Seeing,” Wysocki says the purpose of these
three exercises is to show how “seeing is not immediate,” and how the larger contexts in which
we live and operate are essential to how we receive and interpret the world in which we live (24).
Clearly extending the arguments set forth in her first and second openings—the need for the
material thinking of people who teach writing, and the need to focus on specific materiality of
texts—Wysocki notes that these are ways “of becoming alert to the material results of our
perceptual practices” (24).
Wysocki says that the exercises require 15-30 minutes of discussion, and can be woven into longer assignments and readings about literacy and sight. She explains that the assignments can be used as quick activities to “vary a class routine and raise questions that help give broader contexts to the day-to-day work of a writing class,” and they can be adjusted to all levels of instruction (24).

One exercise simply requires that students organize into groups and record assumptions and fictional narratives that align with postcards provided by the instructor. Wysocki suggests having students write for five minutes after sharing their discussions about the postcards with the class, focusing on how they might use photographs to supplement their compositions in the future.

In the “Eye-Witnessing” exercise, instructors arrange ahead of time for a person to interrupt the class in some unexpected way--perhaps entering the room and rudely asking a question, or walking up to a window and shouting to someone outside. Just as quickly, the person should leave, and the instructor should let the interruption pass and return to the initial lesson plan. After 10-15 minutes, students should write what they saw during the brief interruption. Wysocki notes that the responses her students provide are always wide-ranging and surprising, with people disagreeing over the gender, age, and race of the person involved, and over what was said or done. Students often insist on what they saw, despite these differences in opinions. The instructor then facilitates a discussion about why these differences exist, and about why eyewitness accounts often carry great weight. The purpose, Wysocki writes, is not to achieve conclusions about sight, but to help show that sight is not fixed, and how, “just as with
written texts, an audience’s responses to the visual aspects of texts cannot be predicated with
great certainty” (25).

The “Eye-Witnessing” exercise is an example of how Wysocki’s second opening, the
need to focus on materiality of texts, and third opening, the need to define texts in terms of
materiality, provide an opportunity in the classroom to focus on materiality in a way that goes
beyond text and language. Where Wysocki notes that visual presentations of texts fit into and
reinforce cultural practices of authority and standardization, what and how a person receives a
text or any visual element is shaped by unique cultural histories and experiences (12-13).
Additionally, the exercise promotes generous reading by drawing attention to the fact that people
bring unique, particular ways of seeing to any object. If we, as readers, can come to appreciate
the diverse ways we approach texts, we are more likely to accept a wider variety of texts, which,
in turn, could lead to a greater willingness to experiment with materials in composing processes.

Other classroom activities focus exclusively on text and materiality, as in Activity 2,
“Materialities of Writing.” In one exercise, Wysocki suggests giving students a one- to two-page
writing assignment and then asking them to write the assignment in crayon, on any size or kind
of paper. Once finished, the instructor encourages students to discuss what felt different as they
composed, whether or not they thought differently, and whether or not they dropped out (or
added) ideas because the actual writing was tedious (or enjoyable). Wysocki asks students to
share their documents with the class and attribute adjectives to the page qualities in groups, and
she asks why and how they may have learned to respond to the texts in such a way (27). The
emphasis on Wysocki’s second opening, the need to focus on the materiality of texts, is clear in
this activity. Wysocki argues earlier in the chapter that being aware of the material choices we
make when composing documents can help to shape the changes people want to promote when constructing an argument (10). But I also see a move toward strategies of generous reading in this activity, as Wysocki encourages instructors to lead a discussion about a hypothetical culture that had only crayons with which to write. Wysocki asks, “What do [students] think that culture would be most proud of, or would consider to be signs of intellectual prowess” (28)? In asking these kinds of questions and leading students through this activity, instructors are asking students to generously approach unfamiliar ways of communicating and composing texts—Wysocki’s fifth opening—and these skills are surely transferable, if and when instructors design curricula that require and highlight the skills being transferred.

Wysocki also provides an exercise in material reconstruction called “Redesigning Texts,” where students are asked to reformat a paper they had written earlier so that it is mean to be read simultaneously by more than one person, or so that the paper is easier to read aloud (29). Here the audience becomes reconsidered as the text is reshaped by the composer, making it evident for students that the design of any text profoundly impacts the ways in which an audience interacts with it. This activity is yet another example of how Wysocki enacts her second opening for new media, the need to focus on the specific materiality of the texts we give each other.

Wysocki includes activities that align with her fourth and fifth openings simultaneously—the need for writing students to produce new media texts, and the need for strategies of generous reading. She provides lessons for classes in which students will be developing Web pages or other "digital texts in which they have different resources than with print for developing relations with their audiences" (32). One exercise, an interactivity scavenger hunt, asks students to organize a list of Web sites (Wysocki provides a link to her own
list) and choose four different sites from four different categories. Students should then list everything on the four sites that might be considered examples of “interactivity,” and why. After students, in groups of two or three, categorize the interactivities according to the amount of engagement asked of the Web pages’ audiences, the instructor should ask about the kinds of relations with texts that different interactivities ask of audiences. For example, “did some of the interactivities lead [you] to feel more or less respected by the makers of the text? Did some leave [you] feeling unengaged, and did some suck [you] in completely” (33)? Students conclude by writing for five minutes about the kinds of interactivities they encountered, the contexts, and how this might help them build relations with their own audiences. Of course, these may not be the type of texts students are creating in composition courses.

While many writing classrooms may not be able to incorporate Web design, Wysocki notes that the principles of interactivity inherent in her assignment can and do transfer to print. What may seem secondary at a glance in this lesson is actually quite powerful, the development of students’ generous reading approaches. By asking students to focus specifically on the interactive elements of a Web site, Wysocki asks students to understand that texts are not fixed, that materiality is important in understanding audience, and that digital texts are indeed rhetorical.

Throughout the activities included at the end of “Openings and Justifications,” Wysocki provides strategies for helping students become “alert to the material results of our perceptual practices,” and to see how “the designs of writing technologies not only encourage certain kinds of writing but that they also enfranchise some while disenfranchising others” (24, 27). These strike me as powerful moves both in scholarship and in the classroom because of the emphasis
on perceptual practices of the everyday and a concern for what empowers or disenfranchises others.

**The Openings Situated Throughout Writing New Media**

Wysocki’s five openings can be located throughout *Writing New Media* in the works of her colleagues, and the diversity of this collection is significant in that sense. In this section I highlight the diversity of these chapters and these scholars while providing an overview of their chapters. In her first chapter, Cynthia Selfe provides a case study of a student who struggles to write for the academy but succeeds in writing in digital environments, and, in a second chapter, addresses the challenges of teaching visual literacy in the composition classroom. Geoffrey Sirc considers the institutional limitations of the linear argument and proposes alternative methods for composing that he employs in his writing courses. Johndan Johnson-Eilola considers the separation created between “writing” and “compilation,” intellectual property, and new responsibilities in composition. The range of these works and the ways in which we can locate Wysocki’s calls for reconsidering new media and the writing classroom shows that the openings she has articulated are flexible, dynamic, and applicable in broad ways to teaching writing and new media in the composition classroom. While there are many ways one might consider the impact of Wysocki’s openings, here I choose to look at the remaining chapters in this collection to identify the manifestations of Wysocki’s works in the publications of others in order to better understand the many ways in which Wysocki’s openings encourage generous, creative scholarly inquiry.

Two chapters by Selfe follow Wysocki’s “Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications,” beginning with, “Students Who Teach Us: A Case Study of A New Media Text
Designer.” Almost immediately, in the second paragraph of this chapter, Selfe articulates a different understanding of “new media texts” from that of Wysocki, saying that in referring to new media she “[means] to refer to texts created primarily in digital environments, composed in multiple media (e.g., film, video, audio, among others), and designed for presentation in digital venues” (43, emphasis mine). This is in stark contrast to Wysocki’s argument that new media texts do not necessarily need to be digital, that new media texts might better be identified as “those that have been made by composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who then highlight the materiality” (15). Where Selfe looks to limit “new media texts” to digital environments, Wysocki is, as promised in the title of her article, further opening new media to more types of texts, more composing environments, and more materials for composition. I find this to be one of the strengths of Wysocki’s chapter, and a reason to embrace Wysocki’s inclusive definition of “new media texts.”

In spite of their differences in defining new media texts, Wysocki and Selfe share similar beliefs about the functionality, aesthetics, and innovative potential for texts. Selfe notes that, “new media texts often resist conventions of traditional fiction or non-fiction genres” (43). Selfe argues that composition teachers should “not only be interested in new media texts,” but should incorporate them “systematically in their classrooms to teach about new literacies” (44). Wysocki’s definition certainly intersects with Selfe’s charge to incorporate new (in her case, digital) media, but Wysocki’s approach opens opportunities for new literacies to incorporate and expand beyond new technologies, digital or otherwise.

The second lesson that Selfe identifies is that these new media literacies can influence “identity formation, the exercise of power, and the negotiation of new social codes,” common
themes that are often evident in the work of Wysocki, too (51). The third and final lesson identified in “Students Who Teach Us” is a call to action much like the call made by Wysocki in the first chapter of Writing New Media, “Opening New Media to Writing.” Selfe argues that composition instructors must “expand their own understanding of composing beyond conventional bounds of the alphabetic” in order to make possible opportunities for students to deeply understand, value, and practice a wide range of literacies (54). Certainly this aligns with Wysocki’s fourth opening, the need for students to produce new media texts, but Selfe’s digital definition for new media texts makes their calls for new media text production quite different, and the ways in which these approaches to developing new media literacies in the classroom may be quite different. For Wysocki, a focus solely on digital technologies in new media literacies is limiting. For Selfe, developing digital literacies, specifically, is critical. Where Wysocki’s definition of new media texts—those composed with material awareness—suggests a need to define new media in broader terms, Selfe, whose definition emphasizes digital texts, sees the relatively recent increase in digital texts as an increase in new discourse communities that need specific, focused pedagogical attention.

Selfe’s second chapter in Writing New Media, “Toward New Media Texts: Taking Up the Challenge of Visual Literacy,” is the third chapter in the collection, and here Selfe pushes composition instructors to move beyond traditional understandings of alphabetic literacy toward a broader embrace of visual literacy. Selfe considers visual literacy to include the following:

[The] ability to read, understand, value, and learn from visual materials (still photographs, videos, films, animations, still images, pictures, drawings, graphics)—especially as these are combined to create a text—as well as the ability to create, combine, and use visual elements (e.g., colors, forms, lines, images) and messages for the purposes of communicating. (69)
Here Selfe’s definition is generous, certainly in line with Wysocki’s emphasis on materiality, but additionally, I believe, aligning with Wysocki’s fifth opening, the need for strategies of generous reading. If composition instructors are to adopt a definition of new media texts in terms of materialities, as Wysocki suggests, and when visual literacy is defined as broadly as it is by Selfe in “Toward New Media Texts,” the need for strategies of generous reading is even more apparent. Alphabetic literacies may fail to acknowledge new media texts as texts, as compositions designed by composers who focus on the materiality of the texts we exchange (Wysocki’s second opening for new media and composition studies). Selfe concludes by emphasizing that, if instructors focus on visual literacy in addition to our existing focus on the alphabetic, we not only extend the “usefulness of composition studies in a changing world,” we learn to pay more attention to production and consumption of visual images and “the ways in which students are now ordering and making sense of the world” through these visual images (72).

In “Box-Logic,” the fourth chapter in Writing New Media, Geoffrey Sirc considers that if composition instructors move away from linear, essayist prose, as various discipline-specific texts (science, engineering, art, etc.) and other texts situated in communities outside academia implore writers to do, where do composition classrooms go? For Sirc, the specific medium is not important in the composition classroom; rather, the “expressive or conceptual uses afforded by them” are what students ought to work to emphasize, by any media necessary (113). Sirc, whose areas of research in composition studies include visual arts and art theory, hip hop music, and new media, asks, “What sorts of formal and material concerns guide a newly-mediated pedagogical practice” (114)? The questions seem to fit within the ongoing discussion—the
opening—established by Wysocki’s call for attention to materiality and the production of new media texts in the classroom (echoed previously in this collection by Selfe). Sirc declares a bold new primary goal in his writing classes: “to show [his] students how their compositional future is assured if they can take an art stance to the everyday, suffusing the materiality of daily life with an aesthetic” (117). For example, Sirc’s pedagogy asks that students see something familiar, perhaps rap music, as “strange-d, made curious, something interesting to consider, an object of intellectual fascination as much as emotional possession” (117). Sirc focuses courses around search strategies and the process of annotating material, and he argues that “arrangement of materials and notational jottings is a desperately important compositional skill” (123). The emphasis on materiality and strategies of generous reading (and writing) that Wysocki outlines are critical for instructors working toward Sirc’s goal of “ending the long reign of the strictly analytic” (124). Like Wysocki, Sirc looks to identify technologies and strategies that help students to compose with confidence in multiple writing communities, and he argues that opening writing to new media affords and demands us “the opportunity to wipe the slate of classroom writing clean and ask, in true modernist fashion, ‘What is essential to composition’” (126)?

Wysocki’s second chapter, “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty,” follows Sirc’s chapter, “Box-Logic,” and I will develop Wysocki’s argument that it is a mistake to separate form from content—in such a way that content, people, can be disembodied—in the following chapter as it further clarifies the significance of her contribution to new media and composition studies.

Johndan Johnson-Eilola’s “The Database and The Essay: Understanding Composition as Articulation” is the final chapter in Writing New Media. Johnson-Eilola’s diverse body of
publications includes *Datacloud: Toward a New Theory of Online Work* (2005), which won the 2006 NCTE award for Best Book in Technical Communication, and many publications on hypertext theory. He explores the contradictions in how composition instructors see “writing” versus “compilation” in order to “get at an understanding of writing more properly suited to the role writing plays in our culture” (205). He looks at specific cases where “originality” has been called to question by publishers over copyrighted texts, noting legal and ethical issues surrounding the linking of websites and other digital materials as an attempt to “work productively with our students in contemporary cultures” (205). Ultimately, Johnson-Eilola believes that student articulation and their symbolic-analytic work “moves through fragmentation,” as writers (designers) “actively map fragments back into contexts recursively” (226). In line with Wysocki’s call for educators to bring writing to new media, Johnson-Eilola urges composition instructors to see connection as a form of writing. He pedagogically embraces material thinking, Wysocki’s first opening for new media and composition studies, and in doing so demands strategies of generous reading in order for students and educators to receive these texts. Perhaps most importantly, I believe, Johnson-Eilola, like Wysocki, makes explicit the relationships between writing, new media, and cultural understanding, arguing that as writing changes with new technologies, “we are all finding ourselves responsible for making connections, for finding ways to learn and to teach new forms of making cultural meanings” (226).

That we can identify Wysocki’s openings in the works of colleagues found in the same collection as “Openings and Justifications” is perhaps not a surprise. However, while the range of her colleagues work is, in itself, impressive, the reach of Wysocki’s five openings is
exceptional in that we can identify ways in which her colleagues’ work has and is responding to her five openings.

**Situating Wysocki’s Openings in Yancey’s Keynote Address, and in *Multimodal Composition***

As noted earlier in this chapter, in some respects Wysocki’s “Openings and Justifications” represents a scholarly consensus in new media and composition studies at the time in which it was written. However, while other scholars certainly align with Wysocki’s positions on the openings for new media and composition studies, Wysocki’s definition of new media texts provides a unique contribution to the ongoing discussions of new media, new technology, and the writing classroom. In the remainder of this chapter, I want to look at the extent to which Wysocki’s openings resonate with other important studies in new media and composition studies.

I will first consider Wysocki’s openings in the context of Kathleen Blake Yancey’s 2004 CCCC Chair’s Address. This address, “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key,” clearly and strongly calls for changes in teaching writing and new media. In her address, Yancey argues that literacy today is in the midst of a tectonic change”( ). Yancey discusses how the growth of writing outside the academy seemingly counters the writing done within, often challenging its relevance, and how perhaps never before have “the technologies of writing contributed so quickly to the creation of new genres” (298). While Yancey does not refer to Wysocki’s call for generous reading, her discussion of the rapid development of new genres clearly supports its significance.

Yancey goes on to consider the rapid development new media texts beyond the classroom, as writers voluntarily engage in such self-sponsored literacy practices as creating and
posting to blogs and participating in social network sites, such as Facebook. Yancey observes pointedly that "no one is forcing this public to write" (300, original emphasis). This is significant in that new, evolving writing and reading publics are being established. Writing teachers need to acknowledge this and respond by bringing rhetorical knowledge and strategies to a public that is showing a willingness to write in new media. In this sense, Yancey supports Wysocki’s assertion that writing teachers have much to contribute to new media studies.

Wysocki’s call for new media texts to be produced in the writing classroom is echoed in 2007 by Cynthia Selfe in Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers. Considering Wysocki’s definition of “new media texts,” I believe Wysocki would agree that multimodal texts have become a part of many writing classes across the curriculum, and should continue to be produced. Selfe edited Multimodal Composition, a collection in which Bronwyn Williams, in the Forward, declares, “Yes, multimodal texts belong in writing and composition courses” (xi). Like others working in composition and new media studies, Williams argues that composition instructors must move away from the “dominance of print literacy to teaching the use of multiliteracies and the creation of multimodal texts for different purposes” (xii). In pointing out the dominant literacies, print literacies, I find Williams making an argument similar to Wysocki in Writing New Media, an argument for texts that challenge the traditional 8 ½ by 11 inch, multi-page, single medium form of academic writing as the sole or primary means of communication in the academy. For Wysocki, multimodal texts might include digital texts, nondigital texts, or a combination of both.

In the first chapter of Multimodal Composition, “Thinking about Multimodality,” Selfe and Pamela Takayoshi cite Wysocki and her coauthors in Writing New Media. Selfe and
Takayoshi argue for multimodal composition, and here they define multimodal texts as “texts that exceed the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound” (1). In line with Wysocki’s call for strategies of generous reading and the production of new media texts, Sefte and Takayoshi argue that students need to be skilled and experienced in reading and composing multiple modalities in order to communicate within digital networks “in workplaces, schools, civic life” and reach across “traditional cultural, national, and geopolitical borders” (3). Sefte and Takayoshi argue that “[audio] and visual composing requires attention to rhetorical principles of communication,” and they note that Wysocki, Johnson-Eilola, Sefte, and Sirc are among the group of contemporary scholars working to develop rhetorical pedagogies that use “a full range of visual and aural modalities” (5).

Important for this discussion is Sefte and Takayoshi’s argument that “[if] composition instruction is to remain relevant, the definition of ‘composition’ and ‘texts’ needs to grow and change to reflect people’s literacy practices in new digital communication environments” (3). They argue that the more resources writers have to choose from when composing and exchanging compositions, the more opportunities they have to succeed in effectively exchanging meaning. Wysocki’s work suggests the same: that more available materials mean more opportunities for students as they compose and share texts with audiences., However, where much of Multimodal Composition focuses on digital texts, Wysocki’s work stands out, again, because of her attention to the materiality of texts being exchanged and the transferable skills being developed within a pedagogy that opens the notion of “new media texts” to texts that are not digital or digitally composed. This definition of new media texts not only makes room for
traditional print texts but also for media yet to be imagined and developed, thus representing a particularly sustainable approach to new media.

In this chapter, I hope to have established the breadth of Wysocki’s calls to action for those working in new media and composition studies. Wysocki’s “Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications” is an empowering discussion of theory and practice that is manifested in her own classroom activities, the work of her colleagues in Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition, and in more recent work by scholars like Selfe, Williams, and Takayoshi. Considering Wysocki’s five openings for new media and composition and locating them in the works of others makes it possible to envision, I believe, the ways in which changes in the composition classroom can help expand students’ understanding of materiality, audience, and new media texts. Wysocki’s attention to ethical concerns resonates throughout the five openings and it is considered further in the following chapters.

In the next chapter, I continue to discuss Wysocki’s five openings by locating several ways in which I see her work outside “Openings and Justifications” operating within the openings. My purpose in the next chapter is to provide additional perspective on the five openings while considering the reach of Wysocki’s scholarship and the implications therein.
Chapter 3

Situating Wysocki’s Work Within the Openings

I turn now to selected works of Anne Wysocki and frame them within the five openings introduced in “Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications.” These works show the reach of Wysocki’s scholarship, and they highlight the many ways in which her work addresses powerful theoretical and pedagogical issues. I align selected works from Wysocki with the five openings for new media and composition studies as a way to frame a discussion around Wysocki’s larger scholarly project. I’ve chosen these publications because I believe they effectively represent Wysocki’s long-term research interests and, accordingly, demonstrate the ways in which she enacts the openings by addressing them in her own work.

Methodologically, I chose articles and book chapters to discuss that best addressed each opening. Where material thinking represents a primary goal for one article, for example, I discuss that article through that opening, and where a primary goal of an article is to promote generous approaches to texts, I discuss that article through that opening. This approach enriches my project in that the openings help to organize my analysis, and the selected articles extend my discussion of the openings.

The need, in writing about new media in general, for the material thinking of people who teach writing

As noted in chapter 2, Wysocki strongly advocates for the contribution that writing teachers can and should make to new media studies, observing that “writing about new media needs to be informed by what writing teachers know, precisely because writing teachers focus specifically on texts and how situated people (learn how to) use them to make things happen”
(5). This opening, the need for the material thinking of people who teach writing, informs a great deal of Wysocki’s work, either explicitly or implicitly. Certainly all of Writing New Media is informed by the belief that people who teach writing must think in terms of materiality as it applies not only to common definitions of new media texts (digital texts), but all of the texts we compose and exchange, and the texts exchanged and composed by students in writing classrooms.

I want to point briefly to two of Wysocki’s articles published in the online journal Kairos as powerful examples of the material thinking of a writing teacher (in this case Wysocki); then, I consider at greater length how an article Wysocki coauthored with Julia I. Jasken is an example of the material thinking of writing teachers because of its articulate critique of interface development. In “A Bookling Monument” (2002), Wysocki looks at four new media pieces that use photos and drawings of books to represent human bodies in order to understand how the materials used for composing create or eliminate compositional opportunities. In these new media pieces, books “are shown performing functions that they couldn’t offline,” Wysocki explains, containing video clips and animations that change, move, and shift as readers interact with the media. Wysocki uses the online format of Kairos to highlight the different material opportunities in printed text and digital text and draws on her experience as a writing teacher to reflect thoughtfully about the opportunities that digital media afford.

In “Monitoring Order: Visual Desire, the Organization of Web Pages, and Teaching the Rules of Design” (1998), an online article in which she aims to help teachers prepare students to write effectively for the Web, Wysocki poses critical questions next to images of writings from other cultures:
What if Web browsers had been designed in a culture whose central religious text, in the 12th century, could be presented like this (with right-to-left writing)?

What if Web browsers had been designed by people whose writing system required readers continually to rotate a page (or, in this case, a piece of wood) in order to read? (“Monitoring Order”)

This type of reconsideration of the materials that have led people to the ways of reading and writing that we do today, and the types of interfaces with which students interact, strikes me as a necessary part of the discussions teachers hold with students about how and why they compose the types of texts that they do. In these two essays, Wysocki models the type of material thinking she calls for in her first opening.

While the Kairos articles represent models for reconsidering material constraints and historical contexts, Wysocki and Jasken’s essay “What Should Be an Unforgettable Face. . .”, included in the important 20th anniversary issue of Computers and Composition, is a sharp critique of interface development that represents the material thinking of two writing teachers—Wysocki and Jasken. The authors argue that, unfortunately, arguments in Computers and Composition have changed since the 1980s and early 1990s to promote more efficient designs, and these efficient designs often serve to separate form from content. While arguments by scholars published in the journal in the 1980s and early 1990s “tried to broaden our views so that we could see how interfaces are thoroughly rhetorical,” students are now, Wysocki and Jasken argue, “asked to think of interfaces—and hence audiences—only in terms of technical function and ease of use” (29). What may be lost in such a shift is deeper engagement with designs, and potentially, as Wysocki argues in “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty,” an audience’s willingness or
ability to consider the relationships between form and content as audience members engage with a piece of communication.

Wysocki and Jasken identify a primary concern for the study of materiality as seen in interfaces by people in rhetoric and composition: “What do interfaces—and our teachings about how we and people in our classes should both shape and read them—encourage or allow us to see, and then, just as often, to forget to see?” (31). Wysocki and Jasken cite a definition of the word “Interface” from the website computeruser.com:

Interface: A shared boundary where two or more systems meet; or the means by which communication is achieved at this boundary. An interface can be between hardware and hardware (such as sockets and plugs, or electrical signals), hardware and software, software and software, human and computer (such as mouse or keyboard and display screen). (32)

This definition, the authors argue, does three things: it captures the history and development of “the layered sense of interface in the computer world” from early 1940s computer hardware to humans; next, it focuses on the boundaries between systems and gives humans equal weight as software and hardware; finally, and importantly, the definition “locates the place within interface work where we writing teachers generally believe we have some effect, in the subset of the human-computer interface that is the screen” (32). The authors argue that “[we] can certainly bring our knowledge about ordering words to achieve particular ends with particular audiences, but we can also bring our understanding about how composition practices entwine with so much else” (32). To put this another way, Wysocki and Jasken argue that writing teachers need to (and can, and should) bring their expertise to a medium, and might discourage, through teaching practices, interaction with an interface in the way that the computeruser.com definition suggests
because the authors “prefer to see humans perceived as more complex, messy, and diverse than computers” (32).

Wysocki and Jasken argue that writing teachers in the 1980s and early 1990s brought to interface development a knowledge about ordering words for particular ends for particular audiences and emphasized that interfaces are thoroughly rhetorical: “Interfaces are about the relations we construct with each other—how we perceive and try to shape each other—through the artifacts we make for each other” (32-3). They cite Thomas Barker’s 1986 *Computers and Composition* article, “Issues in Software Development in Composition,” and Paul LeBlanc’s 1990 article, “Competing Ideologies in Software Design for Computer-Aided Instruction,” as works that consider broader contexts for software functions, “such as the pedagogical theories that informed their development work” (33).

Unfortunately, this has, at times, been forgotten over the years, according to Wysocki and Jasken, and they cite Marcia Peoples Halio’s 1990 article from *Academic Computing*, “Student Writing: Can the Machine Maim the Message?” as one well-known case in point. Halio claimed that people who wrote with PCs “produce more serious and thoughtful writing than people who wrote with Macintoshes,” and that the nature of the Macintosh screen was “too easy, too playful,” keeping writers “at a less mature stage of development” (35). Fortunately, many scholars responded to Halio’s article, arguing that the instruction students received at a given school “would shape their comfort with computers and hence their comfort and fluency in writing on the computers” (35). Wysocki and Jasken, too, are wary of claims that fail to acknowledge the contexts around which we (and our students) compose, and the subjectivities
that audiences naturally bring to any text. Not everyone will approach an interface, or a text, in the same ways—a point that Wysocki emphasizes throughout her work.

Wysocki and Jasken go on to explain that’s at stake here is a separation of form from content. Wysocki and Jasken argue that instruction involving digital texts often projects “the technical as neutrally rhetorical; emphasizes getting work done—the values of efficiency, ease of use, and transparency—over other possible human activities and relations; and separates content from form, as though form contributes nothing to how other respond to and are shaped by the texts we make for each other” (38). Wysocki and Jasken examine 14 textbooks in the article. Eight of the books they examine are handbooks that aim to give students inclusive views of the writing process as a whole, from spelling and grammar to research, argumentation and web design. The remaining six books are composed specifically to guide students as they begin to do online research and writing. The textbooks are largely introductory, some aimed toward first-year writing, others used more frequently to introduce students to digital discourses. They consider the values placed on the construction of interfaces in these handbooks and suggest that we ought not to desire interfaces that shape us as people who value getting things done simply, quickly. Rather, perhaps “we want interfaces to look at us as people who value generosity or patience or careful critical and interpretative thinking […]” (40). Wysocki and Jasken look to tease out the values and ethical practices behind the texts writers create by thinking about materiality and visual rhetoric in constructing interfaces.

Wysocki and Jasken provide suggestions on how both writers and teachers of writing can remain alert to the interweaving of text, creator, audience, and interface. First, ask students (and ourselves) to consider the ways in which we might redesign some of the interfaces we use
everyday. Next, see “all texts as having interfaces, both printed and online” (46). And finally, calling forth another of Wysocki’s five openings, “If we want interfaces that encourage us toward relations of, say, generosity toward each other, or more patience, then we have to learn to read such interfaces” (46).

The authors conclude their article by posing a question for designers of interfaces as well as those who teach the designers of interfaces: “Is it possible to design […] reflexive interfaces, interfaces that themselves encourage the wider kinds of seeing we have discussed here, interfaces that encourage their audiences to question how the interfaces construct and shape those who engage with them?” (46). his move, again addressing the teachers of writing (technical writing, first-year composition, or graduate courses), underscores the ethical significance of the material thinking of people who teach writing. For Wysocki and Jasken, it is the interface, on screen or in print, “where we make ourselves visible to each other using the strategies available to us” (45). In their criticism of interface development and some of the discussions surrounding these designs, Wysocki and Jasken are drawing upon their materially grounded experience as writing teachers.

I will continue to develop Wysocki’s belief that an emphasis on materiality can help overcome the separation of form and content in the next section. This discussion will emphasize that Wysocki’s concern about the dehumanizing effects of designing solely for efficiency is an ongoing concern in her scholarship.

A need to focus on the specific materiality of the texts we give each other and A need to define “new media texts” in terms of their materialities

I’ve combined two openings here because I find they work together in particularly synergistic ways when looking at Wysocki’s second chapter in Writing New Media, “The Sticky
Embrace of Beauty: On Some Formal Problems in Teaching about the Visual Aspects of Texts.” The chapter works within several of Wysocki’s five openings for new media and composition studies, but I find it most powerful when considered through the lens of her call for a focus on the specific materiality of texts.

Wysocki begins the chapter by introducing readers to a page from The New Yorker that she finds beautiful, but disturbing. Wysocki draws attention to an advertisement for a book of photographs from The Kinsey Institute titled Peek, and the ad features a naked woman standing sideways in high leather boots. Wysocki then argues that “approaches many of us now use for teaching the visual aspects of texts are incomplete and, in fact, may work against helping students acquire critical and thoughtful agency with the visual, precisely because these approaches cannot account for a lot of what’s going on in the Peak composition” (149). Wysocki’s article describes these shortcomings, turns to eighteenth-century definitions of beauty and aesthetics, and attempts to “see grounds for shaping how we teach visual composition so that form does not override content, so that form is, in fact, understood as itself part of content, so that, finally, I better understand how to support students (and myself) be generously and questioningly reciprocal in our designings” (149). Her use of the word “generous” is noteworthy too, as it represents the approach she employs across the body of her scholarly work as well as one of her five openings for new media.

The focus on the material embeddeness of form and content in “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty” becomes especially significant as Wysocki argue that it is a mistake to emphasize form in such a way that content can be disembodied—this is “a very bad thing” when the content is a human body (149). Document design (including document design in digital environments),
Wysocki explains, is too often “shaped to be an efficient process for disseminating entwined information and desire,” and the goal of too many designers is that visual arrangement will allow for the easiest access to the most important part of the layout, marginalizing what is not essential “and will instead streamline the direction and speed of one’s sight […]” (151). The streamlining of the audience’s sight in the Kinsey Institute ad is toward a nude woman. Wysocki believes that teaching many of the basic graphic design principles alone (she uses a textbook by graphic designer Robin Williams as an example) “can quietly encourage us to forget—they certainly do not ask us to see—that there is someone’s body in this layout” (152).

Treating form as though it is abstract and unconnected to time and place means that bodies and history and not called into sight or to question, and what is most valued, then, is form. “We are not encouraged to ask about the woman in the ad as a woman, only as a shape” (152). What’s at stake—as with “Awaywithwords,” which I will address next—is the ability to be seen and treated as humans, and Wysocki argues that an emphasis on materiality, the visual, and aesthetics in the classroom is crucial toward these ends. Wysocki turns, then, to Immanuel Kant, whose work “has been the ground for understanding how our material bodily sensations entwine with our conceptual abilities” (159). She sees Kant’s work as the point in western academic history when we began to see how the “separation of form from content can be, has been, gendered and abstracted” (159, original emphasis). Through the work of Kant, Wysocki “grumbles” about the separation of form and content, but she also believes Kant’s analysis of judgments of beauty “could give rise to alternative, less abstract and more socially-tied, understandings of the pleasures and complexities of visual compositions” (159). Here, Wysocki speaks powerfully and elegantly on what I believe is the spirit of her work as it stretches from
article to article, year to year, classroom to classroom: she maintains that, if we want to change how we see women, how we see people, it’s not enough to push for magazine covers and ads and commercials that show real, aged, fleshy skin—we have to become critical and rethink “formal categories we have inherited for making the visual arrangements that we do” (169).

The materials used in these visual arrangements are absolutely important, as the routine separation of form and content in the texts we interact with daily can lead to the separation becoming normalized. Wysocki argues that we need to create new, different formal relations in our layouts and “we need to learn to appreciate formal arrangements and practices that do not abstract and universalize” (169). She concludes that our designs, and our students’ designs, ought to bring to light day-to-day images “against the background of the larger realm of steady social practices” (172). In the next section I develop the ways in which writing teachers can work with students to achieve such designs. I find it refreshing that Wysocki admits her emotional commitment to this subject: once our designs value day-to-day realities and acknowledge the relationships between form and content, rather than valuing efficiency, “then we can develop not only strategies for teaching about it but also for how we might go about making change in the formal approaches to lives and detached bodies about which I have been—am—angry” (172).

“The Sticky Embrace of Beauty” is perhaps Wysocki’s most passionate scholarly work, and it is extremely powerful in that it exemplifies and articulates four of the five openings for new media and composition—the lone exception, perhaps, is the need for production of new media texts in writing classrooms. The connections between form and content in the texts we compose and the way we see the human body is emphasized in various ways throughout
Wysocki’s work, and her anger over the Kinsey Institute ad resonates as I approach her other scholarly publications.

I would now like to discuss another text by Wysocki that also emphasizes the two openings that call attention to materiality. In her *Computers and Composition* article “Awaywithwords: On the Possibilities in Unavailable Designs” (2005), Wysocki argues that the constraints of our communication materials “are often socially and historically produced,” and she considers the constraints applied to “word” and “image” by Gunther Kress, “questioning their temporal and spatial structures” (55). In arguing these points, Wysocki is focusing on the specific materiality of the texts we exchange, looking to “push at the edges of where Gunther Kress directs our attentions in many of his writings” (56). She quotes Kress from his presentation at the 2005 Conference on College Composition and Communication:

> In this social and cultural environment, with these demands for communication of these materials, for that audience, with these resources, and given these interests of mine, what is the design which best meets these requirements? (56)

Wysocki writes that, like Kress, she, too, wants to encourage a rhetorical focus in teaching, one that underscores design and the materials used in composing. However, she wants greater consideration of the results of material decisions. Wysocki argues that it “is always worth asking how our materials have acquired the constraints they have and hence why, often, certain materials and designs are not considered available for certain uses” (56). Further, Wysocki aims to understand the possibilities beyond what appear to be constraints, and she argues that we need to be asking what our audiences expect to see and what they might not expect to see. Drawing from the work of The New London Group, Wysocki argues that it is “in the apparently unavailable designs […] that we can see what beliefs and constraints are held within readily
available, conventionalized design” (59). Wysocki’s desire to “push at the edges” of Kress’s approach is a way of presenting opportunities for more rhetorical strategies by focusing on the materials with which we communicate (56).

Wysocki explains how typography and paper do not have the many constraints some people may think. For example, water or stones have natural properties that seem to constrain how we may use them. Wysocki uses water “and its varied applications as an analogy for the materials we use in building communications” in the beginning of “Awaywithwords,” arguing that when police used hoses on 1969s Civil Rights marchers in the southern United States, we may “question what in the context and purposes of the police allowed them to use water in such a way” (56). Wysocki suggests that “[we] might develop an intriguing study into contemporary relations among technologies of water use, law enforcement, and White imaginations about Black bodies” in order to learn how materials “encourage change in relations among people” (56). It is precisely this kind of material thinking—the extension of classroom materials into the community, and community events into classrooms and scholarships—that Wysocki is calling for among colleagues in composition.

Wysocki challenges the view that what is left out—unavailable designs—due to material constraints creates a rhetorical void, an absence. To highlight this, she asks, “Did you read my title as ‘a way with words’ or ‘away with words’?” (56). What has been left out, spaces between letters, allows for interpretation and multiple ways of seeing. Wysocki argues that composition instructors must work to understand what is gained and lost through any communication practices, “especially as computer technologies heighten our awareness of the visuality of texts” (59). She maintains that, “it is possible that trying new spaces on pages or exploring the
visuality of alphabetic text can be seeds for changes in [various counterproductive] practices and beliefs” (59).

This can only be done, though, if we are able to look beyond what appear to be material constraints and limitations. Thinking about unavailable designs is equally important as we analyze and produce communications, asking an audience not only what is expected but what they may not be prepared to see. “By focusing on the human shaping of material, and on the ties of material to human practices, we might be in better positions to ask after the consequences...how we use paper, ink, and pixels to shape—for better or worse—the actions of others” (59).

Wysocki’s attention to the human shape and the designing of texts is a powerful current throughout her work, and the need to focus on the materiality of exchanged texts and to define “new media texts” in terms of materiality are manifested in the activities Wysocki provides writing teachers and students in her publications.

A need for production of new media texts in writing classrooms

Wysocki’s belief that new media texts should be produced in writing classrooms is evident in all of her work, but we must consider her definition of “new media texts” within this opening. For Wysocki, what this opening suggests is that students should be composing texts in all writing classrooms with material awareness, and that these texts may or may not be digital. In this section, I want to outline some of the assignments found in Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch’s first-year composition textbook, Compose, Design, Advocate: A Rhetoric for Integrating Written, Visual, and Oral Communication (2007), highlighting one chapter in particular, in order to better understand how Wysocki’s call for new media text production in the classroom may be
enacted. From there, I’ll introduce some of the informal analysis assignments found at the end of “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty” to highlight the ways that classroom activities supplement and prepare students for more formal writing assignments of all kinds, print and digital.

*Compose, Design, Advocate* is organized into three sections: “Designing Compositions Rhetorically;” “Producing Compositions;” “Analyzing the Arguments of Others.” I’ll first focus on the last chapter in Section 2, Chapter 9, “About Visual Modes of Communication,” because I find this to be the chapter that most prominently features extended classroom production of new media texts. I summarize some of the more common elements of first-year composition textbooks here to help provide context and make meaningful the assignments presented within it. The chapter discusses at length visual and material considerations for students as they compose texts. Most texts, write Wysocki and Lynch, require visual decision-making to some extent, whether the text is composed for an 8 ½ by 11 inch piece of paper or a computer screen.

Wysocki and Lynch guide students to see the ways in which designs often are composed for efficiency in order to help students design more generous compositions. They organize the chapter into three sections: “Seeing Ethos;” “Seeing Pathos;” “Seeing Logos.” The authors explain that, in a section on the logos of arrangement in visual communication, we must work to understand how “order supports the efficient communication of information,” and they point out that ethos and pathos “can also be visually shaped into efficiency” (270). As is the case in “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty,” Wysocki (and Lynch here) argue that people can visually compose an ethos “that shows you to be singularly focused on efficiency—or you can compose an ethos that shows you to value generosity as well” (270). Importantly, Wysocki and Lynch challenge students as composers and audience members “to look for designings of ethos, logos, and pathos
that advocate values such as compassion, respect for complex thinking, diversity, simplicity, and self-awareness” (270).

One analysis assignment for visual ethos asks students to observe and then write about ten visual texts—brochures, fliers, business cards, PowerPoint slides, or resumes. Students should write down any adjectives they can attach to the ethos of the composers, and note which texts look most professional in order to discuss audience and the values inherent in “professional” designs. I find Wysocki’s commitments to design and generous approaches to text in many of the assignments in this chapter, as Wysocki and Lynch prepare students for composing new, unfamiliar texts, arguing that it is useful for students to collect and analyze a wide range of similar texts before composing their own (273).

As part of their discussion of “Seeing Pathos,” Wysocki and Lynch ask students to consider and write about the effects and qualities of colors, and they ask students to analyze color in photography. One writing prompt reads:

Write: Choose any poster in this chapter or in the chapter of poster examples, and write a short rhetorical analysis in which you explain how its overall colors (be sure to address hue, saturation, and brightness) support (or not) the purpose of the poster. (278)

Considering this assignment, it’s important to note the material thinking of Wysocki and Lynch, and to hold in mind the definition of “new media texts” that Wysocki provides in Writing New Media, that new media texts are those “that have been made by composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who then highlight the materiality […]” and may or may not be digital (15). This type of assignment asks students to think in terms of materiality and the visual elements of compositions in order to help them see the range of available materials and available designs as they compose their own texts.
Wysocki and Lynch introduce the elements of typography in their section on “Seeing Pathos,” guiding students to understand how type evokes feeling and emotion (279). Over four pages, the authors present a vocabulary for discussing type and provide samples of various kinds of type. This is, I believe, an important move in preparing students to compose new media texts (by any definition). Wysocki and Lynch offer a writing prompt wherein students use a computer to assign fonts to adjectives, later giving each word a typeface that students think is the opposite of the adjective (284).

Finally, Wysocki and Lynch move to “Seeing Logos,” where they focus on the arrangement of elements, the actual layout and composition of a text. They argue that when composing “visual layouts, you are building an ordered set of elements (alphabetic symbols, photographs, drawings, shapes, and so on) that your audience follows visually—and hence conceptually—to arrive at the points you want to make” (285). Wysocki and Lynch outline three necessary processes for students as they compose: “consider how much to include, create a visual hierarchy through using contrast and sameness, and create visual unity through repetition and alignment” (285). They apply logos, ethos, and pathos as they were previously introduced to the students in order to position students to create effective texts in any medium, which is the spirit of Wysocki’s definition of new media texts.

In developing heightened awareness of materiality in students as they compose rhetorically, as described in this chapter, Wysocki and Lynch are underscoring their belief that material awareness and rhetorical awareness are mutually reinforcing and interwoven, and that by thinking in terms of materiality, students are preparing themselves to engage in all sorts of
media, digital and non-digital. The assignments discussed here are, in this sense, helping to prepare students to write in multiple media, genres, and disciplines.

I would now like to turn from focusing on a specific chapter in their textbook to a section called “Thinking Through Production” that appears throughout Compose, Design, Advocate. In these sections, Wysocki and Lynch provide exercises designed to sharpen students’ awareness of materiality and audience. In one exercise, Wysocki and Lynch ask students to imagine they are on a membership committee for any community organization—a church, skatingboarding club, Greek organization, etc. The organization is trying to increase its membership and they are considering a variety of ways of reaching this goal, such as creating a brochure, making “cold calls,” participating in an open house with an information table, or creating an ad for a local newspaper. The authors ask students to consider, using rhetorical steps outlined in the chapter, the purposes of the organization and how to recruit members who will be interested in helping achieve shared goals. In asking students to consider the audience and the medium that best fits an audience, Wysocki and Lynch are inviting students to consider any and all materials to most effectively communicate and recruit members for an organization. The media could be digital, like an e-mail to a listserv or a Facebook event invitation, the media could involve ragged pieces of paper written on with Sharpies and distributed at a skate park, or the communicative act could include posters and pamphlets at a booth.

Wysocki and Lynch encourage students to reconsider the constraints of academic discourse in a later “Thinking Through Production” activity. They ask students to choose a paper they’ve written—any kind of paper—for a class, in high school or college, “and use the rhetorical process to develop a design plan for the assignment as though there were no
restrictions on the media or the arrangements you could use” (55). Students should write a
description of what changes they would make for the original assignment and why, then describe
how new media and arrangements would create a different relationship between the author and
the audience. This activity is effective in several ways: my experience is that students are eager
to reconsider the assignments they’ve been given in school at any level, but they often need to be
couraged to do so. In this sense, students will be engaged and thinking critically about the
materials used in compositions they’ve created in the past. Wysocki and Lynch are again asking
students to reconsider audience and media in their compositions, and the invitation here to use
any and all media to reconstruct an argument likely leads, naturally, to incorporating both digital
and non-digital media in the classroom.

Many of the skill-building activities found in Compose, Design, Advocate are similar to
the activities Wysocki includes in Writing New Media in that they are designed to prepare
students, over time, to develop and draw upon rhetorical sensitivity and take materiality into
consideration when students produce texts. “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty” includes activities
on rhetorical observations that ask students, like the previously-mentioned writing prompt, to
collect visual designs “so that you can start making decisions about the kinds of designs you
want to make” (178). In one assignment at the end of “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty,” for
instance, students are asked to collect 25 design samples that include both images and
photographs over the course of one day (178). Next, students are asked to put into words the
elements of design that they can identify, as they’ve been practicing through activities in class
over several days, by choosing one design category (such as typeface, photographic images,
tables and charts, colors and hues, etc.) and recording the design strategies noticeable in selected
design samples. Students should record any similarities between designs, from the use or placement of photographs, to typography, to white space, and so on (179). Then, students are asked to type what they have done, “being attentive to your own layout,” formatting their layout in any way that may help a reader understand the writer’s observations (180). Finally, students are asked to “speculate why this category of design has these particular set of design strategies in common” (180, my emphasis). What essentially has been done now, Wysocki notes, is that students have created “a preliminary set of design guidelines for someone who would want to make a layout that fit into this category” (180). Moreover, students have created a new media text about creating new media texts—a truly profound move.

In other activities located at the end of “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty,” Wysocki asks students to write a 750-word analysis of their own recently-created mixed-media compositions. This assignment serves as a stage in the traditional writing and revising process, but it also asks students to extend their critical consciousness and establishes the importance of considering and reconsidering one’s own designs:

I want you, in this writing, to aim at describing as fully as possible how your set of chosen design strategies asks your particular audience to respond to your composition. You’ll need to describe your audience and your compositional strategies in as much detail as possible. What kinds of looking or acting does your composition encourage in your audience, do you think? (189)

This assignment asks students to hold themselves responsible for their rhetorical, visual decisions, and no doubt, in the process, students will want to return to their original compositions to revise and improve their documents.

Wysocki’s call for new media text production in writing classrooms may on the surface, for some instructors, seem like a response to the increasing number of digital media, a call for
composition classrooms to move into, perhaps, software designing, website creation, the creation of wikis, and so on. But this is not necessarily the case. The arguments made throughout Wysocki’s work regarding the production of new media texts is consistent: students need to compose with material awareness and rhetorical sensitivity, and writing teachers must help to develop the skills necessary to consciously, ethically create texts for all media.

A need for strategies of generous reading

While strategies of generous reading are found throughout Wysocki’s work, I want to look here at her approach in “It Is Not Only Ours,” one portion of a Re-Visions conversation published in *College Composition and Communication* in 2007. Re-Visions is an ongoing series wherein an influential article from the past is addressed in a new light by several composition theorists. “It Is Not Only Ours” reconsiders Joseph Janangelo’s “Joseph Cornell and the Artistry of Composing Persuasive Hypertexts,” which was published originally in 1998. Janangelo proposes that compositionists may need to develop “a receptive, discerning, and anticipatory pedagogy so that, when our students do speak to us through new kinds of texts, we stand a reasonable chance of hearing and responding helpfully to whatever it is they have to say” (282). Wysocki argues that Janangelo’s discussion ought to include more than merely hypertexts, which is the primary focus of Janangelo’s article. Wysocki wants to include all types of animation software, social media websites, novels, iPhones, games, and more—all communication technologies. Wysocki believes that both composers of texts and audiences must come to texts generously and provide space, rhetorically, for many ways of seeing.

Wysocki takes issue with the typical hypertext maker, whose ethical lesson, she argues, seems to be that, “when we build texts, the relation toward others that the texts shape should not
go against what they expect […]” (283). Such limited audience reciprocity must be lifted if texts are to be approached generously and compositions created ethically; that is, hypertexts, and all texts, should be approached and constructed with an understanding that we may not see exactly what we expect. Wysocki credits artists for challenging this ethical position and cites Braque and Picasso as examples. According to Wysocki, Braque and Picasso cut up newspaper, chairs, advertisements, walls, and, essentially, faces so “that viewers could understand only by putting themselves into (unfamiliar and therefore uncomfortable) multiple viewing positions rather than the singular, fixed, proprietary viewing perspective of several centuries of preceding art” (286). Such reciprocated generosity is needed with texts today.

Wysocki explains, however, it is not only in texts and objects defined as art that such generous composition strategies work. Wysocki’s attention to the relationship between form and content resonates again. She cites comic strip creators Lynda Barry, Alison Bechdel, and Howard Cruse for making it “impossible not to see either the effects of being in the closet or how personal lives mirror larger available cultural patterns—and vice versa” (286). If we accept that the institutions of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and bodily ability “are encrusted throughout all our practices—including the most quotidian features of writing—then it makes sense” that challenging and changing those structures requires challenging available designs of all kinds (286).

Ethical concerns, again, need to be discussed as writers take audience and audience expectation into account when composing, Wysocki argues. For example:

- If an audience expects an academic text, and one’s purpose suggest that strict academic structures hinder one’s purposes, how to design and compose a text that addresses those expectations and justifies not meeting them?
• What ethos, what arrangements and other logics, and what emotional connections will help a composer construct a text that anunexpected audience will not dismiss out of hand as stupid or incompetent simply because the do not get it? (287)

These ethical concerns “construct both how a composer understands and so treats the audience at hand as well as the positions into which an audience is asked to stand while reading,” and these, Wysocki says, must be discussed precisely as ethical concerns (287). And students, Wysocki’s larger body of work suggests, need to experiment with the composition of these texts in order to better understand the values they create, project, and invite.

An additional pedagogical concern returns us to readers, to strategies of generous reading, so that people can approach the texts of others that they are not used to. Wysocki argues that, “It is only when all of us do not expect texts only and ever to reproduce our values, only and ever to match our expectations, that we can learn from unexpected texts how to live together in changing times with people who are not like us” (287).

I would like to conclude this chapter with several related remarks. As someone who has engaged Wysocki’s research deeply, I remain impressed with the ways in which her work encourages both scholars and student writers to see beyond the latest technologies to larger issues and questions. In my mind, Wysocki advocates for sustainable practices—practices in research and in teaching that emphasize a rhetorical approach to materiality that can and should be maintained as new media and new technologies continue to emerge. Rather than focusing on how to teach students to use flash in a multimedia creation, for example, Wysocki is arguing that we need to focus on the bigger picture, practices in theory and in pedagogy that are flexible enough to remain applicable with media not yet developed.
In this chapter, and throughout my thesis, I’ve worked to do more than simply represent the passions of one scholar. Wysocki’s work, as discussed throughout this chapter, suggests that the materials we use to form our communications have implications that reach far beyond our classrooms, in ways we and our students must work hard to understand. I hope that we continue to see Wysocki’s openings as providing fundamental insights into both our contemporary moment and future moments. In the introduction to “Opening New Media to Writing,” Wysocki, speaking for her coauthors, observes that their goal is to offer “openings that allow and encourage us to shift what we do in our thinking and classes so that we do not forget, so that we make actively present in our practices, how writing is a continually changing material activity that shapes just who we can be and what we can do” (2-3). We should embrace and practice scholarly and pedagogical strategies with an understanding that new media, new materials, new compositions and spaces for discourse are have been and are always evolving, and both theory and practice in new media and composition scholarship and pedagogy should reflect this understanding.
Chapter 4

Conclusions and Final Considerations

I came to Anne Wysocki’s work, initially, because of her unique definition of new media texts, a definition I found liberating and stimulating amid a sea of often deterministic views on the impact of new technologies on writing and education, which often fell into dystopian stories. I often—not always, but frequently—heard how our students can’t write like they used to, how text messaging and instant messaging are ruining writing, how student e-mails reflect a lack of understanding about writing in the academy. Throughout my time teaching high school language arts, among my fellow graduate students, and in working with professors across the university as the Writing Intensive Curriculum program graduate assistant, it became clear that the ways many educators approach new technologies—and, by extension, the students who use them—needed to be informed by scholarship that promotes inquiry and context, and Wysocki’s work represents thoughtful, generous approaches to new media and the teaching of writing. Like Wysocki, I was, and I remain, confident that our students do and can create texts appropriate for a wide range of discourse communities using a wide range of available technologies.

Wysocki’s definition of new media texts—wherein she argues that we might think of new media texts as those composed with material awareness, rather than those composed digitally—brought to light for me the fact that new technologies need to be viewed in a larger context. The United States public has a history of self-proclaimed literacy crises, dating back to the late-1800s, when Harvard College instituted literacy examinations that revealed that many incoming boys had difficulty writing “correctly.” The result was the creation of English A, a basic writing course that emphasized correctness and was modeled by institutions around the country (Connors
48). Newsweek’s 1975 article “Why Johnny Can’t Write” is perhaps now the most well-known public declaration of a literacy crisis. The response to the proliferation of digital texts is not unlike these previous declarations of literacy crises, and I believe writing teachers are wise to expect waves of literary crises in the future. It is important that our scholarship and pedagogies avoid overreaction and technological determinism, and I hope that this thesis serves to enact and support sustainable approaches to new media and new literacies.

Text messaging isn’t ruining writing in the academy. Facebook isn’t necessarily causing students to write essays the night before they’re due. Technology alone does not have this kind of power, but the ways in which we discuss new technologies as they emerge can help our students and colleagues understand how new technologies can create new discourse communities and new ways of communicating. Does Twitter negatively affect our prose by teaching us to write in short, choppy sentences of 140 characters or less, or, rather, does Twitter help to develop the ability to choose precise language to exchange information with clarity? Twitter haiku contests abound, and more and more text is being exchange in new ways, which suggests, to me, that people are exploring language and writing perhaps more than they have in the past—certainly in new ways. I believe it is the work of people in rhetoric and composition to help guide students in understanding the range of discourses and materials for communicating, and Wysocki’s definition of new media texts treats digital texts as some of the many media available to us and to our students in our composition classrooms.

In emphasizing materiality both pedagogically and in her scholarship, I find Wysocki, and several of her contemporaries, considering carefully how the materials we use in constructing our communication help to construct meaning. Wysocki’s work on materiality
challenges the standard academic essay by suggesting that there may be more effective ways of communicating than in the 8 ½ by 11 inch, double-spaced, linear writing in Times New Roman that you see here. This isn’t to say that we can’t be effective in more traditional media, but Wysocki and other scholars are willing to open discussions and pedagogies that allow us to consider the wide range of materials that we have available to us—traditional print texts and texts produced using new technologies.

Wysocki’s pedagogy of advocacy, evident perhaps most explicitly in her coauthored textbook *Compose, Design, Advocate*, but also implicit in all her work, resonates for me and has helped to shape my future plans in the classroom and my scholarly interests. I first conceived of a larger project here that outlined Wysocki’s advocacy and her commitment to social justice, and I hope that these elements of her work are evident in the ways I have considered Wysocki’s work in this thesis. By necessity, I’ve chosen to explore the range of possibilities within Wysocki’s five openings for new media and composition studies. I’ll summarize briefly here the ways in which I’ve opened Wysocki’s scholarship for consideration through my project.

Revisiting the Chapters

In the first chapter of my thesis, I introduce Wysocki and discuss the range of her work. I situate Wysocki within a tradition of scholarship located in the pages of *Computers and Composition* by considering the works included in the journal’s 20th anniversary double issue, published in 2003 and 2004. I argue that Wysocki’s call for material thinking promotes a focus on the wide range of texts we exchange and how their media help to shape arguments. The work of The New London Group has helped shape the work of Wysocki and her colleagues by defining the concept of “multiliteracies” and by calling for composition scholars to begin seeing
pedagogy as design (The New London Group). Finally, the 20th anniversary double-issue of Computers and Composition completes my work on introducing and situating Wysocki in the first chapter. Charles Moran looks back to 1983 at the initial issues of the publication and explains a shift from looking at technology to looking through technology, the latter being a move I believe is exemplified by Wysocki throughout her work. Looking forward, Heidi McKee and Danielle DeVoss validate, for me, Wysocki’s moves toward emphasizing materiality and medium in the composing process as they suggest that technologies will continue to emerge and disappear as they always have (330). This is especially important as writing teachers and scholars in new media and composition studies work toward preparing student writers, and scholars, for the inevitable changes in composing environments and materials in the future.

In my second chapter, I look more closely at each of Wysocki’s five openings with a consideration of how her definition of new media texts provides opportunities for composition instructors. I locate the five openings for new media and composition in the works of Wysocki’s colleagues in Writing New Media in order to develop a more complete picture of how the openings are enacted—whether consciously or not. In addition, I consider the classroom activities that Wysocki provides at the end of “Openings and Justifications,” the first chapter in Writing New Media, so that instructors might envision the ways these five openings can influence the decisions we make in our own classrooms as we create activities and writing assignments for our students. In the final section of Chapter 2, I identify the ways Wysocki’s five openings parallel Kathleen Blake Yancey’s keynote address at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, also published in 2004, where Yancey, like Wysocki, calls for
writing teachers to bring their knowledge of rhetoric and writing to new media and new technologies while incorporating new media into the classroom.

I have organized Chapter 3 around the five openings for new media and composition studies in order to explore how selected works of Wysocki operate theoretically and pedagogically within these openings. Included in this chapter are Wysocki’s Computers and Composition articles “Awaywithwords: On the Possibilities in Unavailable Designs” (2005) and “What Should Be An Unforgettable Face…,” co-authored by Julia I. Jasken and published in the 2004 20th anniversary double issue. For the purpose of my project, I’ve aimed to show how these articles highlight the material thinking of a writing teacher—Wysocki. In doing so, I hope to have provided a richer understanding of Wysocki’s first opening and these articles. I introduce Wysocki’s second chapter in Writing New Media, “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty: On Some Formal Problems in Teaching about the Visual Aspects of Texts” as a powerful example of why and how Wysocki sees two openings as critical to the future of composition studies: the need to focus on the specific materiality of texts we give each other, and the need to define “new media texts” in terms of their materialities. What is at stake for writing teachers and students, Wysocki’s chapter suggests, is the ability to be recognized as human amid increasingly efficient visual designs. I’ve included Wysocki’s 2007 College Composition and Communication Re-Visions article, “It Is Not Only Ours,” in which she reconsiders the implications of Joseph Janangelo’s 1998 article “Joseph Cornell and the Artistry of Composing Persuasive Hypertexts” as an example of how Wysocki and other scholars can bring her fifth opening, the need for strategies of generous reading, to composition scholarship. I’ve included several classroom activities from “The Sticky Embrace of Beauty” and a chapter from Wysocki and Dennis
Lynch’s textbook *Compose, Design, Advocate* to provide examples of how new media texts, as defined by Wysocki, can be produced in writing classrooms, and how a rich understanding of materiality can contribute to students’ compositions. I hope that the shape of this chapter and the works I’ve chosen to include reveal the ways that Wysocki brings her five openings for new media into her scholarship and her classroom, and I hope that I have provided thought-provoking possibilities for others as they write about new media and work to include the production of new media texts in their classrooms.

**Considerations for My Work as a Teacher and Scholar**

Throughout the process of researching, composing, and revising this project, I have considered and reconsidered my own approaches to teaching writing. Where I began as a process-centered high school English teacher who was only vaguely familiar with the rhetorical tradition, I grew to believe wholly in a rhetorical approach to teaching writing that still, of course, appreciates the composing process and acknowledges the necessity of audience and genre awareness in order to prepare students to write in their respective disciplines. Wysocki’s work, and the experience of researching and composing this project, has challenged my understanding of writing once again, and I continue to see opportunities to enrich my pedagogical approaches. By emphasizing materiality in the courses I teach, I can help my students make connections between the digital texts they compose in online environments for friends and the texts they compose for the academy or the workplace.

In my time at Oregon State University, I’ve had the opportunity to teach two courses: one section of introductory composition, WR 121, and one section of writing in business, WR 214. While these experiences were invaluable and I was at times able to incorporate my research on
the work of Anne Wysocki, I look forward to continuing my teaching and working with students to engage a wide range of media in our courses. As the students in my courses come to understand rhetorical strategies, come to see the world rhetorically, no doubt I will continue to identify pedagogical approaches that at once challenge me and encourage my creativity and material thinking.

Beyond the classroom, I’ve opened myself to more ways of considering composition. I’ve entered into discussions at conferences in Portland and Minneapolis, feeling confident that, through my project and through the understanding I’ve gained of Wysocki’s work and the discourse surrounding her work, I am able to encourage others to see some of the opportunities to encourage our students’ rhetorical knowledge by incorporating an emphasis on materiality. This is, of course, all that I could hope for as I complete this project—the ability to see avenues for growth in my teaching, and the ability to share these opportunities with others.
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