Jody Shipka Conversation Cont. *Toward a Composition Made Whole—*whole book

Discussion Question:

Question 1: How do we incorporate an awareness of “failed choices” in the writing classroom, and what does it look like to embrace failure in a multimodal classroom? In what different ways does the multimodal classroom allow us to study and examine failure, not in a negative light, but with a positive spin?

Response to Shane:

Shane, you raise a really interesting and substantial point here: creating a dialogue with students about students’ “failed” design choices is crucial to designing, composing, and circulating multimodal projects and compositions. I think that a multimodal classroom needs to be equally as dedicated to understanding design choices as it is dedicated to revision processes and revision SOGCs (meaning they would write SOGCs for the original composition and they would then revise their composition and write a revisionist SOGC). I’m not really sure that students would fully grasp the weight of their design choices if revision is eschewed (like it seems to be at KU). Treating the composition as a finished product nullifies the need to reevaluate the rhetorical choices thus we would be reinforcing the notion that compositions are static things rather than flexible and dynamic. So then, in order to have students that are intensely cognizant of their audience- and rhetorically-based design choices for multimodal compositions, perhaps a multimodal pedagogy would be suitably coupled with a portfolio-assessments style. I think that the portfolio style multimodal pedagogical classroom could better allow for students to be constantly aware of their rhetorical choices and how they can be amended and improved by means of having authentic rhetorical situations (i.e. an authentic purpose, audience, and context) that our students’ projects respond to. This authentic rhetorical situation, then, allows for authentic feedback that I hazard our students might find more substantial. In other words, if they are receiving feedback from “real world” audiences, students might take feedback more seriously and heed their audience’s suggestions. However, this process too is far more complex than I have made it seem. In order to establish authentic rhetorical situations for our students we—as faculty and as institutional departments—would need to network and collaborate with other departments and even other audiences that are in the “extracurricular” world and workforce. This community engagement is a lot of intense work that comes with high stakes because as a discipline, we cannot simply utilize “authentic audiences,” there needs to be a reciprocal relationship that benefits the authentic audiences as much as it would be benefitting or students learning and uptake. The bottom line here is: we need to teach our students of the benefits of being invested in composition as a dynamic process and a not-so-easy way to accomplish that is through a heavily revisionist, extracurricular, portfolio classroom.