PENS, PAPER AND FOOTBALL PLAYS: A CASE STUDY INVOLVING

STUDENT-ATHLETE LITERACY

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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STUDENT-ATHLETE LITERACY

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Football players, as their community of practice demands, perform a high level of complex literate practices. While the literate activity of football is closely parallel to that we require of students in first year composition, football players traditionally struggle in the writing classroom. At the core, this thesis explores the complexity of a football play, illustrates how it is learned and then suggests how these learning strategies can be better implemented into the writing classroom

Data is drawn from a semester long qualitative case study of three male, freshmen, football players, at Auburn University, graduates of Auburn's 2008 Summer Transition Enhancement Program (STEP), and currently enrolled in STEP English 1100. This data, combined with interviews, textual analysis and classroom observation, yields beneficial insight into the richly textual world of collegiate football.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APA used

Microsoft Office 2007

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INTRODUCTION

I don't remember the first time I met Andre[1], but I do remember the first thing I heard him say. I was co-teaching a summer success strategies class with Dr. Sterns, one of Auburn University's licensed psychologists who researches sports psychology. It was a sticky, hot June day, and we had a full class of incoming freshman. Our students were members of Auburn 2008 Summer Transitional Enhancement Program (STEP), an eight week program, originally designed for incoming student-athletes who needed additional academic support, but now open to all incoming Auburn freshman. STEP students live on campus, take three courses, and are required to attend daily study sessions. During the following fall semester, the STEP students then have the option of taking a handful of classes together; STEP is, in one sense, a learning community. The majority of the STEP students were student-athletes, with all but 5 of the 16 football players. Andre fell into the football bunch.[2]

Dr. Sterns was going over the upcoming homework assignment when Andre mumbled something to himself in the back corner.

"What's the problem?" Dr. Sterns asked in a genuine, and not condescendingly teacher fashion.

"Can't do this," Andre replied quickly and quietly.

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[1] All names are pseudonyms.
[2] For an more extended discussion of STEP see Appendix A.

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"Can't do what?"

"I can't read all this," Andre said holding up the four pages of assigned reading.

"You can read all those football plays," Dr. Sterns returned.

"Yea, but those are different. I understand them." Andre sat up straight in his chair. His square framed glasses clung lazily on his nose.

I don't remember Dr. Sterns's reply. I was too caught in Andre's statement.

Fast forward several weeks to a mandatory daily study session in the library. I am sitting in the corner as the students individually and diligently work on assignments for various classes. I notice Tré sitting at a table with Harry; neither of them have school work on their table. Instead both are fully immersed in their cell phones, their fingers dashing across the keypad poking out messages. As I walk over to the table, Harry looks up and greets me with his standard jocular smile and nod of the head: "What's up, man!" He tells me he has finished his work (which I silently doubt), and that he has nothing else to work on (which I also doubt). Not wanting to inquire further, I tell him to go ahead and leave; Tré seems troubled by something, and I want to focus my attention on him. Tré looks up from his phone. He has sunken cheeks and wide eyes. His hair is in messy braids that stick out amoeba-like from underneath his navy blue Atlanta Braves hat. He moves slow and talks even slower. One day, talking to him privately, I notice that he never breaks eye contact with you when he talks. And he enters the classroom with an aura of confidence none of the other football players have. He is quick to give his opinion in class when the conversation sways away from a strictly academic topic, but will become eerily taciturn when the subject moves back toward academics.

"What you working on?" I ask, knowing full well it is the 3 page essay for the success strategies class I co-teach.

"Nothin'." Tré slouches back in his chair, staring at the table.

I broach the topic of the essay, and we bat around ideas on how to start the paper. He expresses concern over finding a topic and then writing 3 pages: typical concerns for a freshman writer. All the while, I am thinking over my nascent research topic and I decide to steer the topic to football. I start in telling him about how football is a lot like writing essays, describing the reading and writing involved in both endeavors. A glimmer of understanding lights up his brown eyes.

"Follow me for a sec," I say to Tré.

We walk to a computer, and I pull up a typical football play through Google image.

"Do you understand this?" I ask.

"Yea."

"Tell me what you see."

For the next minute or two, Tré launched into a beautiful speech full of bizarre numbers representing spatial locations and players; he pulled from his high school and junior high days to make sense of the play; he inserted his limited experience on the Auburn practice field. He spoke with eloquence and enthusiasm; he spoke with the language and understanding of the literate activity of football.

The goal of this thesis is to explore Andre's comment and Tré's eloquent command of football literacy. On one level Andre is right, football plays *are* different

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than a four page reading assignment on the importance of setting good study habits; football plays employ lines, squares, x's and o's; there are squiggly lines jumping all over the page, a cryptic combinations of words and numbers compose the play name. But on another level they are not. Both are textual representations of thought; they are both abstract ideas captured in black ink on a white page and used for the dissemination of knowledge. Additionally, both require individuals to synthesize, analyze and interpret information. Yet how can these football players excel so well at reading and understanding one type of textual representation and struggle so mightily—ultimately declaring in one case that reading the homework is simply not possible—in a similar type of textual representation?

The purpose of this single bounded ethnographic case study will be to elaborate on the complex learning process for three freshman, male, student-athletes, enrolled in Auburn University's STEP English 1100 and graduates of 2008 STEP. At the core, this case study will explore the complexity of a football play, illustrate how it is learned and then suggest how these learning strategies can be better implemented into the writing classroom.

The first two chapters lay the groundwork for this case study. Chapter 1 introduces the basic theoretical framework. First, it works through how cognition has moved from being understood to be internally located, thus studied as an individual phenomenon, to being seen as internally and externally located, thus studied as a socially distributed phenomenon. With an understanding of distributed cognition, scholars are now studying how external factors are vital for cognitive activity, how cognitive activity

is distributed across time and space and how cognitive activity is a socially situated phenomenon. This understanding of distributed and situated cognitive has aided in studies of literate activity. After working through recent treatments of literate activity as distributed and situated, chapter 1 then examines learning as a situated activity. Working in tandem with burgeoning notions of cognitive, theories of learning began to embrace its situated nature. Chapter 2 lays out the methodological considerations which frame the data collection, paying special attention to sketching out an argument for a bounded case study methodology.

Chapter 3 uses distributed cognition to examine a collegiate football play as a heterogeneous text. Tracing the trajectory of a defensive play excerpted from Auburn University's 2004 defensive play book indexes the complex streams of literate activity in a football community of practice. The chapter ends by posing the following question: If this is indeed the complex and messy scene of cognitive activity in which these three football players are immersed then why do are they struggle with the more basic writing and reading necessary for first year composition?

Finally, chapter 3 works through how these three football players learn the complex plays, demonstrating the distinction between how learning is accomplished on the football field versus in the composition classroom. Utilizing theories of situated learning illuminates disconnect between the learning processes for football versus those for composition.

CHAPTER 1:
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORTETICAL FRAMEWORK

Distributed Cognition

Going as far back as Descartes's notion of a singular *cogito*, some scholars have

focused on the power of cognition as located in an individual mind. Disciplines such as

literature and composition believed creativity flowed from a head of a single mind

working in isolation. These disciplines held firm to ontological and epistemological

notions of the individual possessing supreme agency. Slowly the role of the environment

in cognitive activity was revealed and theories of cognition began to ascribe agency to

external factors during cognitive activity. While the idea that the environment—the

external—could facilitate and contribute to internal thought was radical, cognitive

researchers were pulling from established mid-twentieth century scholarship to solidify

their argument. The environment became crucial; thus cognition is situated when

"individuals [act] in concert with each other and with tools, symbols, and conventions

delivered by the culture" (Rose, 2004, p. 218).

The work of Jean Lave in the mid-80s is central to burgeoning theories of situated

cognition. She followed a group of shoppers in a grocery store. These shoppers, Lave

(1988) found, were performing a high level of literate activity, in their case mathematics.

The shoppers were figuring tax, sales percentage, and final cost, without the supportive

framework of a classroom. When these same shoppers were asked to perform similar mathematical equations in a classroom (read: situated in a different context), the majority struggled or failed. Lave (1988) works through how the environment fostered and aided in the cognitive processes of these shoppers and eventually begins to sketch out ways to bring situated cognition into the classroom.

More recent treatments of situated cognition continue Lave's work. Thus, we read of the Alzheimer's patient Otto who, in an attempt to remember street locations, writes them down in a notepad. When he wants to visit the Museum of Modern Art on 53rd Street, he consults his notepad to find the location of the museum (Clark & Chalmers, 1998). On the other hand, Inga does not suffer from memory loss and is able to store the location of the museum in her memory. When she wants to attend the exhibit she simply recalls the location. Clark and Chalmers argue that Otto's consulting the notepad is no different than Inga consulting her internal memory: "For Otto," they argue, "his notebook plays the role usually played by a biological memory" (p. 12).

I elaborate on this example to highlight a way in which studies of cognition have branched out since Lave's early work. Today, cognition is being studied and understood as embodied (i.e., we need a mind and a *body* for cognitive processes), embedded (i.e., cognitive processes exploit the environment), and distributed or extended (i.e., cognitive processes exist outside an individual and encompass features of the environment [Clark & Chalmbers, 1998; Hutchins, 1995]). With that said, the splitting of hairs between embedded and distributed cognition is not especially helpful for this paper. Both understandings of situated cognition, ultimately, give a nod to the role of the external.

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Despite the near ubiquitous nature of novel theories of cognitive in fields such as psychology and artificial intelligence, composition studies has been slower to embrace these ideas. Paul Prior (1998), working with theories of distributed cognition, traces the trajectory of various forms of academic writing for a graduate level sociology class. Prior argues for the need to trace the entire trajectory of a text, thus foregrounding the myriad tools and individuals that facilitate in the construction of a text as well as how the construction of a text crosses spatial, temporal and even discipline boundaries. These tracings allow him to argue for viewing writing as situated, mediated and dispersed: To view writing as situated means is to understand that the environment is intrinsically linked into the production of a text. Mediated writing "weave[s] together people, practices, artifacts, and institutions" (p. 138). Finally, a dispersed view of writing holds that texts are not autonomous but are connecting a responding to a myriad of previous texts. These traits, situated, mediated and dispersed, collectively constitute writing as literate activity: "Literate activity, in this sense, is not located *in* acts of reading and writing, but *as* cultural forms of life saturated with textuality, that is strongly motivated and mediated by texts" (p. 138). Prior's tracings are helpful for viewing academic writing as literate activity; however, he sticks strictly with academic literate activity, avoiding the rich and fertile area of non-academic texts and textual practices.

Helping to fill this gap in research, scholars are now researching literate activity in a variety of every day non-academic settings as diverse as street gang graffiti (Cintron, 1998) and talk in an airplane cockpit (Neville, 2005), to plumbing (Rose, 2005), and an internet chat room (Syverson, 1999). These studies not only point to the growing need to

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attune more closely to non-academic texts and textual production, but they also highlight

the need to continue to view the distributed and situated nature of texts and textual

production. Maurice Nevile, in particular, when tracing the literate activity of landing an

airplane argues pilots accomplish this task by "drawing upon and coordinating a range of

available resources" (p. 32). These external resources which Nevile highlights include

"visual displays, aural alerts and other sounds, and non-talk activities such as moving

levers and pushing buttons" (p. 32). Ultimately, Nevile contends that landing an airplane

hinges on the "situated and temporal realization of…these resources in ways that are

constitutive of the work of airplane pilots" (p. 32). While the literate activity of landing

an airplane seems rudimentary, Mike Rose (2003), discussing workplace literacy, makes

a convincing case for studying everyday literate activity. He argues that "analytic

moments can be embedded in routine, and seemingly basic reading and writing can be

cognitively richer than they seem" (p. 127). Viewing such literate activities as a

repository for a high level of cognitive activity (Rose, 2003) opens up the everyday

literate activity as fertile ground for exploration and analysis.

Intent Participation

     Lave and Wenger (1991) look outside the school for a new theory of learning:

legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). Through studying butchers, tailors,

quartermasters, midwives and nondrinking alcoholics, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue for

that an individual learns the literate activity of a given community of practice through

active situated social participation, not detached and abstract lessons. This new theory of

learning is best manifested as apprenticeship.

A brief sketch the context in which their work arose and some of the underlying assumptions will give a clearer view of Lave and Wenger's (1991) radical rethinking of learning. In mid 80s and early 90s, cognitive research had begun to analyze how social factors influenced cognition. Naturalistic research, studying individuals performing tasks in a situated environment became the norm. Researchers theorized a conception of learning that placed the individual on the same pedestal as the social: agent, activity, and world were agency alongside the individual. Learning became understood as a situated activity where the location of learning had just as much influence as the individual.

Accompanying these notions were theories of "communities of practice." If the social is vital to cognition, the line of reasoning went, we need to better understand the social in which cognition is occurring. As such, the idea of communities (alternatively called "discourse communities" or "communities of practice") arose. Communities became understood as static forms with a set of strict rules governing the literate activity therein. An individual's learning was gauged by how well (s)he learned and adhered to the rules of a given community. Pulling strongly from a structuralist position of abstraction, decontextualization and conformity, an individual's task, therefore, is to "make a cognitive journey to the center of a [community of practice], to internalize the [community of practice's] language, rules, and knowledge" (Prior, 1998, p.19). While still employing the idea of a community, Lave and Wenger (1991) react strongly to notions of communities existing as static and strictly defined entities. Learning, they contend, occurs in harmony with a constellation of tools and across a variety of situational contexts. While learning can be describing as occurring in a definite

community of practice, they reject the idea that communities are static homogenous

areas, as the previous structuralist position would argue. Instead,

> Given the complex, differentiated nature of communities, it seems important not
>
> to reduce the end point of centripetal participation in a community of practice to a
>
> uniform or univocal 'center,' or to a linear notion of skill acquisition. There is no
>
> place in a community of practice designated 'the periphery,' and, most
>
> emphatically, it has no single core or center. (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 36)

So while Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of communities of practice pulls from a

previous tradition of understanding cognition as largely facilitated by external factors,

they have moved more toward recent sociohistoric notions of learning which place equal

agency among the social, the individual and the material in the construction of cognition.

For Lave and Wenger (1991), a community of practice "is a set of relations among

persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and

overlapping communities of practice" (p. 98). Communities of practice are fluid,

dynamic systems, which individuals cannot master (like with earlier notions of

communities), hetergenous systems, and concretely situated phenomena.

Continuing in this line of inquiry, Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez, and

Angelillo (2003) trace the important of what they term "intent participation" toward a

child's learning. For Rogoff et al. intent participation involves "keenly observing and

listening in anticipation of or in the process of engaging in an endeavor" (p. 178) and,

they suggest, is a more informal pedagogy found in out-of-school literate activity and

non-Western cultures. Rogoff et al. have found evidence of intent participation in

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Senegalese children, Mayan toddlers, and a tribal community in India. This theory of learning is at odds with the more common Western pedagogy of "assembly-line instruction," predicated on the "transmission of knowledge from experts, *outside the context of productive, purposive activity*" (Rogoff et al, 2003, p. 176; emphasis added). The final phrase is especially salient to discussions of intent participation. The literate activity which occurs does not exist in isolation from (pre)existing environmental factors. Unlike assembly-line instruction which asks, for example, students to work through lessons and complete pertinent exercises in an attempt to mimic a literate activity, intent participation emphasizes "doing" the literate activity. Assessment with intent participation, therefore, is located in the act of doing. Rogoff et al. elaborate:

> In the intent participation tradition, experienced people play a guiding role, facilitating learners' involvement and often participating alongside learners— indeed, often learning themselves. New learners in turn take initiative in learning and contributing to shared endeavors, sometimes offering leadership in the process. (p. 187)

The emphasis Rogoff et al. place on "productive, purposive activity" along with evidence derived from non-Western and non-school literate activity draws parallels to theories of learning espoused by Lave and Wenger and elucidates the learning processes salient to a football community of practice.

CHAPTER 2:

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY[3]

On December 28, 2008 the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* published a front page news

story titled "AJC investigation: Many athletes lag far behind on SAT scores." In the

piece, the *AJC* obtained the SAT score and high school GPA of student-athletes for 54

universities (the public university members of the six Bowl Championship Series

conferences and other public universities that finished the 2007-08 season in the men's

basketball or football Top 25).[4] These figures were then compared to the SAT score and

high school GPA of non-student athletes at the same university. The article opened with

this catchy lead:

> Football and men's basketball players on the nation's big-time college teams
>
> averaged hundreds of points lower on their SATs than their classmates, and some
>
> of the gaps are so large they call into question the lengths to which schools will go
>
> to win. (Knobler)
>
> The largest gap at any of the Southeastern Conference universities (of which

Auburn University is a member) was found at the University of Florida, the current

---

[3] While the first section of this paper traces the trajectory of a football play, the second section relies heavily on case study methodology to elaborate on the learning processes for these football players. This chapter outlines this methodological approach.
[4] The Bowl Championship Series (BCS) is unique to college football. It includes the SEC, ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Big East, and PAC-10.

NCAA Division I football national champion and 2006 and 2007 NCAA men's basketball national champion. The SAT gap between student-athlete and non student-athlete was 216 points, a substantial figure considering the *AJC* used the 1600 scale which predates the current scale of 2400 points. Auburn landed around the middle of the pack with a 99 point difference on the SAT.

What I find so troubling about the study is not the gap in SAT scores; it has long been understood and almost accepted that athletes in some sports struggle academically. What is troubling is the methodological approach of the article. The piece does a good job of avoiding generalizations which qualitative studies are apt to display. Instead of looking only at three to five samples, like a qualitative study might do, quantitative studies are able to take in the larger picture and often make more complete conclusions. However, the studies like this tend to overlook individual nuances, individual stories of success or individual stories of failure for the sake of a holistically calculatedly score. This methodology is the norm for news reporting and, early in the field of composition studies, was the norm, as well.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the field of composition studies, in an attempt to gain validity in the academic community, starting arranging studies with a more quantitative (read: scientific) bent. Flower and Hayes's (1981) research in the cognitive processes of composing worked in this vein, as did the majority of the research on student-athletes. For roughly twenty years, from the 1970s to the early 1990s, there was a surge in literature focusing on African American student-athletes (e.g., Picou, 1978; Dawkins, 1982; Anderson, 1990) which too took this approach. Spanning across journals

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such as *The Journal of Negro Education* and *The Sociological Quarterly,* these studies

tended to be quantitative studies aimed at correcting the erroneous connection between

sports and social mobility. Scholars found no evidence supporting the myth that sports

led to higher educational score or movement up the socio-economic ladder. These

studies, like the *AJC* piece, made persuasive arguments; however, they did little in terms

of illuminating the literacy of these student-athletes. The trouble with these studies, I

suggest, was not the intent (the *AJC* is looking to reveal any transgressions of academic

integrity at major universities—an admirable goal), but the methodology behind the

research question. Quantitative studies run the risk of forcing individual nuances and

idiosyncrasies to the background, instead favoring the cut and dry numbers of

standardized tests and entrance exams. The numbers overshadow the individual

personalities of the students examined.

Luckily scholars have realized this. New literature tackling the issues of African

Americans, sports, and education (certainly a tricky triad to navigate) has moved to a

more qualitative approach. Ethnographic research (e.g., Mahiri, 1998; Way, 1998;

Dimitriadis, 2003) abounds where the authors are interviewing, observing, coaching (in

the case of Mahiri), and spending time with their research participants. Quantitative

numbers are backgrounded in favor of thick description and revealing vignettes.

Yet more work needs to be done. Ethnography, while an improvement over the

static results of quantitative studies, fails to focus specifically on a case (or issue) within a

culture, instead favoring (as a result of its anthropological roots) an overall description of

a specific culture. As such, the reader is provided with rich and lengthy description of

myriad components of a culture, with very little space devoted to working through

specific cultural nuances and issues. Case study research, on the other hand, allows a

researcher to avoid the shortcomings of quantitative studies, while describing and

focusing on a specific issue within a culture. I intend, therefore, to locate the central

issue of the literate activity of three freshman football players within this case study, offer

an in-depth description and analysis of this issue as it appears on the football field and in

the writing classroom, and ultimately enrich our understanding of the issue.

My research began in the fall semester of 2008, though I met all three of my

research participants over the summer. When drafting a research protocol for approval

by the university administration and the Institutional Review Board, I made explicit that I

would not be teaching the student-athletes whom I was researching and that no monetary

reward would be given in return for the student-athlete's participation.[5] Using a

purposeful sampling strategy (Creswell, 2007), I focus solely on three male freshman

football players at Auburn University, enrolled in STEP English 1100 and graduates of

2008 STEP. Additionally, I focus only on a 6 month period of time (the fall 2008

semester), and the academic performance of the student-athletes only in STEP English

1100. This bounding of the study by time and case is consistent with case study research,

as is my method of data collection: seven total in-person open ended interactionist

(Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 1993) and text-based interviews[6], class room observations

(Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Silverman, 1993; Creswell, 2007), and textual analysis of

typed documents (which include drafts with teacher comments, as well as "clean" final

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[5] While I did co-teach a class over the summer that included two of my research participants, I purposefully
waited until the fall semester to draft my IRB protocol to avoid any issues of potential coercion.
[6] See Appendix B for the interview questions.

drafts). I will present a holistic analysis of the entire issue and analyze my data through categorical aggregation, establishing patterns of issue-relevant meaning (Creswell, 2007). Finally, interviews transcripts, observational notes and textual analysis of a single research participant will be triangulated against the results of the data analysis for the other two participants to either validate each other or highlight points of departure.

However, case study research, like all methodologies has its disadvantages. Naumes and Naumes (2006) discuss the inability to generalize from these studies: "It is difficult to extrapolate from the results of single-case research into a larger context" (p. 64). The results of my single bounded case study that I present here cannot be transferred and applied to a population at large. Here I outline what is learned and how it is learned for three freshman student-athletes at Auburn University. My results cannot speak for anybody but these three student-athletes. Instead, this case study is generative in nature. It is the beginning of a re-evaluation and re-examination of the key issues of student-athlete literacy. The results of this case study will provide the impetus for further research. What case study research can do is challenge current theories, question pedagogies, and propose new avenues of research much more readily than bulky quantitative studies. Looking closely at an issue allows for a more critical view than looking from a distance.

CHAPTER 3: FROM FIELD TO TEXT AND BACK AGAIN: TRACING THE

TRAJECTORY OF A COLLEGIATE FOOTBALL PLAY

Tracing the trajectory of a football play indexes the complex literate practices of

football players. Before exploring and elaborating on a football player's literacy (see

chapter 4), it is first necessary to illuminate the textual practices in which he engages.

In this chapter I will first work through the complex positions and assignments on

the defensive side of the ball. Second, I will provide a play excerpted from Auburn's

2004 defensive playbook which illustrates how the 11 members of the defense work in

unison during a play.[7] Finally, I will trace the trajectory of the particular play, following

the genesis of the play all the way to the point where the play is enacted in a real-world

situation. To accomplish the final goal, I will focus on Bruno Latour's (2006) argument

that interactions are not "synoptic" (p. 201).

The defensive side of the ball is played, like the offensive side, with 11 men.

Depending on a coach's preference, these 11 positions can be divided in a handful of

arrangements. Typically, these positions include: defensive lineman, composed of

defensive ends, defensive tackles and/or a nose tackles; linebackers, composed of a

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[7] This section pulls largely from Hutchins's discussion of coordination. After illustrating "the propagation
of representational state across a series of representational media" (p. 117), he investigates how tools and
people flow into coordination with each other to dock a ship.

middle linebacker, and a strong side and weak side linebacker; and defensive backs, composed of cornerbacks and a free and/or strong safety. To navigate around the cumbersome names of these positions, common nicknames and abbreviations have been assigned. Thus, defensive linemen are called "Es," and "tackles"; strong side linebackers are called "Sam," middle linebackers are called "Mike," and weak side linebackers are called "Will"; cornerbacks and safeties are grouped under the abbreviation "dbs" for defensive backs, individually, they are designated "C" for cornerback, "FS" for free safety, and "SS" for strong safety. Throughout, I will employ this terminology.

The defense is further divided into two sections: the linemen and linebackers are one section, and the defensive backs (dbs) are another section. "Mike" is responsible for relaying the defensive coordinator's signals to his section, while one of the safeties is responsible for relaying the defensive coordinator's signals to his section. Further, "Mike" and the safety are responsible for "audibling" or changing the play at the line of scrimmage. An audible becomes necessary if the offense changes their play at the line of scrimmage.

This formation below (see Figure 1) is labeled a 4-3 formation. Auburn typically runs their defense out of this formation. As evidenced here, 4 defensive linemen are lined up on the line of scrimmage, while 3 linebackers are stacked roughly 3-5 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Typically, a head coach works from a consistent defensive line position throughout the game; Auburn has traditionally run a 4-3 defensive formation.
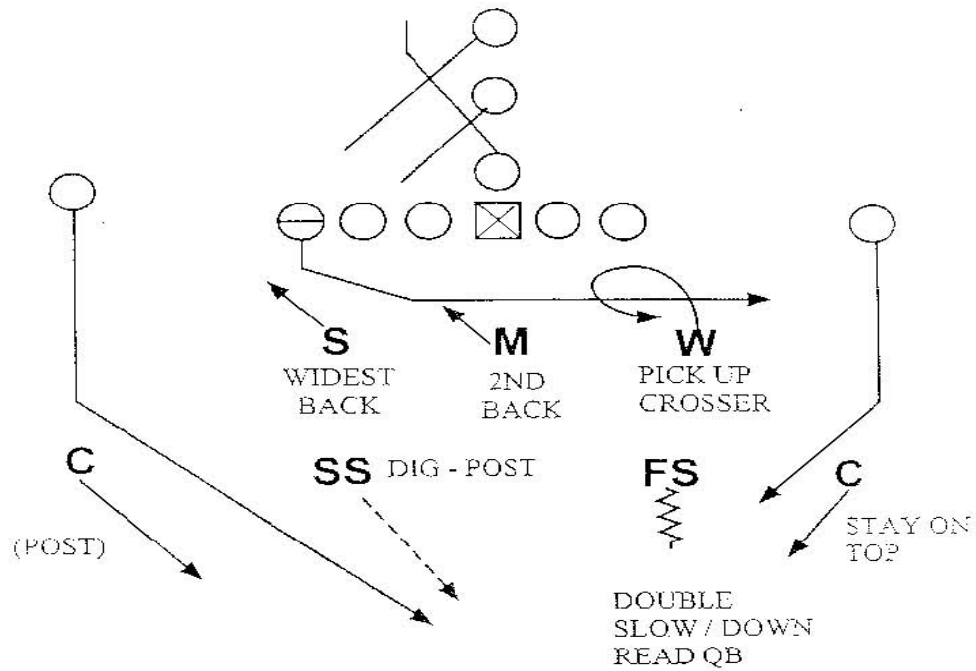
Figure 1: Auburn lines up in their traditional 4-3 defensive formation against the University of Georgia. Number 26 is the strong safety who is inching close to the line of scrimmage (photograph taken by author).

The dbs work with different formations. Formations are divided into man versus zone coverages. With man coverage, an individual defensive player is responsible for covering a single offensive player. With zone coverage, more common at Auburn, defensive players cover areas, or "zones" of the field. Zone coverage is divided into Cover 1-free (with only one player in the backfield), Cover 2 (field divided into 2 zones), Cover 3 (field divided into thirds), and Cover 4 (field divided into quarters).

The particular play which I will focus on shortly works from a Cover 4 formation. In this formation, the defense works with two cornerbacks and two safeties (a free and a strong).[8] All four dbs are responsible for covering their particular zones. Unlike the offense, the defense stays in a particular formation throughout a game. As mentioned Auburn prefers a 4-3 formation, and, if facing a passing team, work from a Cover 4 formation. Thus, we have a 4-3 Cover 4. The variation that results on individual plays occurs in calling blitzes and responding to an offensive play. The following play is a 4-3 Cover 4 response to an offensive play called a "play action." Putting all the pieces

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[8] A "strong" safety is usually the larger and stronger of the two safeties. He plays closer to the line of scrimmage and lines up on the "strong" side the ball—the side which has more offensive players. The "free" safety usually plays behind the strong and covers the "weak" side the field. He is usually the last line of defense.

together, we have 4-3 Cover 4 play action. Figure 2 on the following page is excerpted

from Auburn's defensive play book. The circles represent the offensive players; the

circle with the line in the middle is the tight end, thus the strong side; and the square with

the X is the center responsible for snapping the ball to the QB:

Figure 2: "Play Action," excerpted from Auburn's 2004 defensive playbook, illustrates the complex geometrical construction of a typical football play. Working left to right starting at the top, "S" is Sam, "M" is Mike, and "W" is Will. On the bottom from left to right, "C" is a cornerback, "SS" is the strong safety, "FS" is the free safety, and "C" is the other cornerback.

The circle immediately behind the square is the QB, the next circle is the fullback, and the final circle is the tailback. During a play action, the QB receives the snap from the center and fakes a handoff to the tailback, with the halfback running ahead to block the defense. Ideally, the defense has been taken in by (i.e.,"bit on") the fake and is rushing forward toward the tailback leaving the offensive receivers open to catch the ball. The

QB, still in possession of the ball, rolls out to either side of the field looking to throw the ball to his tight end or wide receivers who are split wide on either side of the field.

To counter the play action, the defense, most importantly, needs to "read" the fake handoff (i.e., not "bite"). Once they have successfully identified the fake handoff, they can drop into coverage.

"Sam" is directed to cover the "WIDEST BACK." Here, the widest back would be the tailback. "Mike" is responsible for covering the "2ND BACK" or the fullback. "Will" is directed to "PICK UP CROSSSER." In this case, the crosser is the tight end. "Sam," "Mike" and "Will" are responsible for covering physical people, not spaces. The dbs are required to cover spaces. As a Cover 4, the field is divided into quarters. The corners cover from the hash marks to the sidelines, and the safeties divide up the area inside the hash marks.

Key to running this play effectively is to not let the receivers get behind the dbs. If a receiver's route lead into the middle of the field, then one of the safeties covers him (i.e., "DIG POST"). The FS (free safety) plays closer to the line of scrimmage and is responsible for "reading" the play action by the QB. Once play action has been identified, the FS drops back into coverage, waiting for a receiver to move into the center of the field.

In total, a football play lasts roughly 3-5 seconds depending on a variety of factors. Within less than 1 second, the defense needs to read the play action, and within 3 seconds the defensive linemen need to reach the QB or the ball will be released. The proper execution of 4-3 Cover 4 play action lasts less than 3 seconds. Yet the trajectory

of the play, its genesis, embodiment and subsequent alternation occur across a much larger time frame and include a myriad of agents, not the 11 men on the field. Tracing this trajectory is messy work, but it indexes the complexity and depth of everyday textual practices such as running a football play.

Tracing this particular text's trajectory causes us to look past the here-and-now perspective of viewing the text in its immediate context: on the football field. Instead, we need to examine the past agents and tools which facilitated the construction of 4-3 Cover 4 play action. When charting the computational implementations of the fix cycle (i.e., docking a ship), Hutchins discusses the importance of a variety of persons and tools in this specific cognitive activity. As such, he argues for the importance of, to name a few, the hoey, alidade, chart, and farthometer in his cognitive unit of analysis. He then makes a startling claim which forces us to reconsider when to bound the act of cognition:

> The computation of the present fix [i.e., location] relies on the most recent setting of the hoey, which was done a few seconds ago. The present computation also involves the projection of the dead-reckoning position, a piece of work that was done just a few tens of seconds ago; on the tide graphs that were constructed a few hours ago; on the changes to the chart that were plotted few days ago; on the projected track and the turning bearing, which were laid down when this chart was 'dressed' a few weeks ago; on the placement of the symbols on this chart, which was done upon the publication of the new chart issue a few years ago; on the nature of the plotting tools, which were designed a few decades ago; on the mathematics of the projection of the chart, which was worked out a few centuries

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ago; and on the organization of the sexagesimal number system, which was developed a few millennia ago. (p. 168)

Hutchins is asking us to rethink our traditional boundaries of cognition. He is breaking out of the here-and-now perspective. The cognitive activity of docking a ship crosses spatial and temporal boundaries.

Football plays follow a similar trajectory. 4-3 Cover 4 play action begins during summer practice when coaches gauge their rosters and begin looking at film of opposing teams. For a team to effectively run a 4-3 defense, a strong "Mike" is needed. A 4-3 highlights a team's linebacking core, especially "Mike," instead of having to rely on the combined strength of 4 linebackers which a 3-4 defense contains. Additionally, Auburn has exhibited weakness at the defensive tackle position. Placing 4 defensive tackles at the line attempts to patch over some roster holes.

A Cover 4 too highlights Auburn's roster strength and attempts to mask some roster shortcomings. With a young group of corners, bolstered by a strong free safety, Auburn worked from a Cover 4 alignment. A Cover 4 is helpful in stopping the run and play action,. Also, as mentioned, it divides the field into quarters, thus not placing a young and weak cornerback on an island all alone.

Secondly, 4-3 Cover 4 play action is a reaction to the film of opposing teams. Coaches craft their defensive and offensive schemes as a reaction to what they see on film. This particular play began when the coaches noticed that a particular team emphasized play action and stayed away from an outside passing game and out routes (both of which are effective against a Cover 4).

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Once film has been watched and roster strength has been gauged, the play is put down on paper relying on a set of geometrical shapes and configurations first set down thousands of years ago by the mathematician Euclid. Then these plays are run endlessly in practice. The defense works on reading the fake hand-off which signals a play action. Plays are given succinct names which are then translated into a series of numbers. These numbers are painted onto large yellow cardboard squares (see Figure 3), as well as translated into hand signals. In a game situation, three coaches will flash signs to the defense before a play. Two coaches will use hand signals and one coach will hold up a yellow card. Two of the coaches will be sending "dummy" signals. Figure 3, like Figure 1, comes from the November match-up between Auburn and Georgia. The picture is not able to pick up the quick gesticulations made by the two other coaches; however, the yellow card is clearly seen in the middle of the photo:

Figure 3: Signaling the defensive play, a coach in a grey sweatshirt holds up a yellow sign inscribed with a black number. Notice the thick stack of cards in his other hand. Number 6 is a cornerback (photograph taken by author).

At this point, the here-and-now perspective picks up again. Once the film has been watched, the rosters gauged, the play written down, given a succinct and easy to remember and pronounce name, re-appropriated into hand signals and numerical packages, and then flashed to the defense, we can begin to illustrate a football play as seen on the surface.

The signals are flashed to the whole defense, but Mike and the strong safety are in charge of changing the play and/or making sure their particular section of the defense received the correct play. At this point, the text of a football play ceases to be an empty document, but becomes embodied and enacted across the field. If the offense does not

change their formation once they have broken the huddle, then the defense runs the play as scripted. If there is any variety of formation it is up to Mike and the strong safety to properly react and adapt the play. A defensive alignment, however, is not solely a reaction to the offensive formation. Down count, distance to the goal line, and time left on the game clock all work into the decision to enact a particular play and how the play is constructed. Once the ball is snapped, a play lasts on average 3-5 seconds. When these few seconds have eclipsed, a new play is relayed to the defense and the cycle begins anew.

Understanding that interactions are not synoptic allows Latour (2006) to argue, "Very few of the participants in a given course of action are simultaneously visible at any given point" (p. 201). While it is impossible to highlight all the agents which make the construction and, ultimately, the embodied enactment of a football play possible, this partial tracing begins to reveal the depth and complexity of this particular text. While at first glance a football play appears to be homogenous—lines, squares and circles dancing in black ink across a 81/2 x 11 sheet of white paper—viewing texts, not as static repositories of information, but as fluid, dynamic and distributed pieces of literate activity begins to reveal their heterogeneity. The here-and-now perspective for 4-3 Cover 4 play action would look at the 11 men on the field, the down marker, the score and the distance to the goal to make sense of the text. This perspective would ignore the historical factors which gave shape to the text ranging from Euclidean theories of geometry, summer roster slots, and film studies, to the restrictive practice of condensing elaborate plays into easily

recognizable hand signals and black numbers on yellow cardboard. These historical factors have agency in the construction of this particular defensive play call.

Tracing this trajectory is important in terms of illuminating a football player's literacy. Viewing a football play as a heterogeneous text distributed across time and space attends to the intricacies and complexities behind the textual production of a football play. This is the literate activity in which football players are constantly immersed, which makes it even more baffling when these three football players struggle in the writing classroom. During football season, they are constantly engaging with and being immersed in a highly textual field of knowledge. However, traditionally, football players have not taken the literate skills they have developed through interaction with football texts into the writing classroom. If this is indeed the complex and messy scene of cognitive activity in which these three football players are immersed, then why do they struggle with the more basic writing and reading necessary for first year composition?

What follows in chapter 4 is an examination of how learning is accomplished on the football field versus in the writing classroom. I will elaborate on how football players learn these complex textual inscriptions and how these learning processes are dangerously stifled in their STEP English class.

CHAPTER 4: "YOU GOT TO GET THEM GROOMED": "INTENT

PARTICIPATION" AS VITAL TO THE LEARNING PROCESSES OF FOOTBALL

PLAYERS

When Hutchins is tracing the distribution of cognitive activity in docking a ship

through a representational state of media, he includes, in his discussion of media, the

individuals aboard the ship. So, despite distributing cognitive activity to include external

inanimate actors, Hutchins reminds us that humans are still a salient aspect. To ascertain

how these complex textual inscriptions, these plays which the football team enacts in a

game situation, are learned foregrounds the necessity of individuals working in unison

with each other. For Hutchins, unison plays out as coordination. For football, this unison

plays out as "intent participation" (Rogoff et al., 2003). The difference the two is that

football teams annually have the obstacle of coalescing novices and veterans to make a

cohesive team. The 2008-2009 Auburn football team is proof of this obstacle; 73% of the

119 roster players were underclassmen who were expected to make an immediate impact

on the field. As such, unlike Hutchins's observation of a U. S. Navy ship which is staffed

by experts, football teams rely on an ingrained level of intent participation to assuage the

transition from high school to college level ball.   Through intent participation

underclassmen learn directly from the upperclassmen how to properly execute a

collegiate level football play. Before relying solely on coordination, to which these

football plays ultimately aspire, players must work through a process of situated learning

to move from the periphery of an area of practice to a more attuned level of expertise (Lave and Wenger, 1991). I contend that the reduction of this process of intent participation in composition can become a major obstacle; therefore, while football players may be immersed in a high level of textual interpretation, enaction, and practice that runs closely parallel to the type of textual practice for composition courses, they traditionally struggle.

I situate my analysis of the learning processes of these three football players in a body of scholarship that foregrounds the profoundly social aspect of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff et al. 2003). This body of scholarship adheres to theories of learning that provides agency to external factors during cognitive activity. While Lave and Wenger emphasis legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) as a driving factor in cognitive activity, Rogoff et al. look at learning as a form of intent participation. The difference between the two is one of pedagogical implications. Lave and Wenger stress that LPP is "not itself an educational form, much less a pedagogical strategy or a teaching technique" (p. 40). Instead, they stress that LPP is an "analytical viewpoint on learning, a way of understanding learning" (p. 40). Additionally apprenticeship, as a logical scion of LPP, carries with it some restrictive connotations. Locating its roots in pre-industrial Europe, apprenticeship makes as its goal a desire for independence. Thus we have an individual (the apprentice) working under the tutelage of a master craftsman. The apprentice is learning from the master craftsman in hopes of working for him/herself and gaining economic autonomy (Buechler, 1989). The apprentice, too, is oftentimes delegated menial tasks, denied access to the full cabinet of tools, forced to move up a

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hierarchical and often esoteric social and economic ladder, and, all the while, made subject to the whims of his/her master craftsman.

Intent participation breaks free from these negative connotations. As such, I will discuss the learning processes of these three football players as evidence of intent participation in a football community of practice. Coinciding with aspects of intent participation, these football players coordinate shared endeavors through active participation and a variety of other salient learning strategies (e.g., observation and, what Rogoff et al. term, "listening-in" [p. 177]). Finally, since intent participation is firmly grounded in educational theory and practice, the call to directly translate strategies of intent participation from the football field to the classroom is more readily available than working with LPP.

Wondering how Emmanuel, Andre and Tré are able to internalize the vast amount of information necessary to contribute meaningfully on a collegiate level football team, I will explore the following question: What does intent participation look like in a football community of practice?

Next, I will explore the difficulties all three football players encountered in their first semester of college composition. As previously argued, the textual interaction necessary for football and composition run closely parallel. Despite this similarity between these two areas of literate activity, football players traditionally struggle with composition assignments. Exploring this potential disconnect, I will attempt to answer the following questions:

  •What could intent participation look like in English 1100?

•What accounts for the absence of intent participation in English 1100?

Emmanuel is one of the freshmen who is expected to make an immediate contribution to the team. He plays on the d-line as a defensive tackle. Emmanuel remembers the first day that he was handed a defensive play book. This playbook was tailored to positions, so the d-line and linebackers received one playbook, while the dbs and safeties received a different play book. During the first day of two a day practices, the current defensive coordinator, Paul Rhodes, walked the defensive through the myriad formations, schemes and blitzing packages. He drew on a dry erase board, translated the plays into hand signals, which he then taught his players, and had his defense walk through each play on the practice field. Once Rhodes was done, the defense broke up into smaller units headed by their position coach. Emmanuel fell under the tutelage of veteran defensive tackle and nose tackle coach Don Dunn. Again and again, Emmanuel and his teammates ran through plays such as "Toga," "Sid," and "Wick." The only way Emmanuel would be able to play in a game was to internalize and properly execute every play.

Andre was faced with a similar challenge. In high school, Andre, like many of Auburn's players, was a star player. He played both sides of the ball: running back, corner back and kick returner. Even with his versatility, Andre knew that if he wanted to play at the college level, he would have to play corner back. He displays a high level of defensive acumen when talking football. When I asked him to walk through a typical

defensive play in high school, he poured forth an extemporaneous avalanche of thoughts:[9]

> Basically, the only thing a coach might design is a call. He might call a "wedge stack Cover 3." The first part of the call is for the linemen, the wedge, you know, like the gap. The second part might be for the linebacker; stack might tell them to stack right over the d-linemen, so [that] when they shoot the gap they can come free. And the third part might be for the secondary. From the right hash over is the cornerback. Between the hashes is the safety, and from the other hash over is the other safety. (Andre, personal communication, November 10, 2008)

Tré, too, displays an impressive understanding of the nuances of football. Unlike Emmanuel and Andre, Tré plays offense. He admits to rarely looking at his play book; instead, he prefers to learn from experience and watching film of opposing defenses. Like Andre, Tré can talk endlessly and intelligently about the complexities of football play. In the following excerpt, Tré is explaining wide receiver routes. All wide receiver routes are drawn as bold and dashed lines (straight, curved, angled) which determine the path the receiver runs:

> You have a main route, but if the defense is playing you a certain way, the dashes are options you can do. If you have a vertical route and you got one high safety, then you want to keep it vertical so you can't run into the safety. If you got a two

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[9] Excerpts interviews used throughout this paper have been slightly edited for readability. Repetitions and false starts have been omitted, and I have added punctuation and capitalization.

high safety, you got the option to roll underneath the safeties. (Tré, personal

communication, October 31, 2008)[10]

In a football community of practice, intent participation, as a shared and

collaborative endeavor, is best exhibited through four salient modes of activity:

•Physical interaction of talk between upper and lower classmen

•The manipulation of a variety of tools to elucidate complex formations

•Watching game film of yourself and the opposing team

•Mimicking game situations in practice and/or experiencing a real game situation.

I am not proposing these modes as a comprehensive classification system.

Instead of capturing all individual nuances of intent participation in a football community

of practice, these four modes begin to form a useful heuristic for theorizing and exploring

the various methods football players employ to learn football plays. Finally, these four

modes are not mutually exclusive nor are they categorized hierarchically. In other words,

one does not necessarily first engage in the mode of talk before engaging in the mode of

watching game film.

Regardless of the level of play (be it high school or college), Tré, Emmanuel, and

Andre stressed the importance of talking with upperclassmen in hopes of grasping a

better understanding of a play. During Emmanuel's senior season of high school football

he received a season ending injury. Despite this setback, Emmanuel would show up at

practices and games to help the underclassmen out. While not required by the coaches,

Emmanuel would walk the lowerclassmen through a variety of defensive formations in

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[10] See Appendix C for several wide receiver routes Tré drew.

the hallways, locker room, and on the practice field. Andre stresses the necessity of this type of intent participation:

> It is very important. They are going to be coming up under you. You want to help the coaches out. You got to get them groomed. After you leave they are going to be expecting these newcomers to do a better job than you or just as good as you did. You are trying to leave your mark on them. (Andre, personal communication, November 10, 2008)

Specifically, Andre would "teach them how to read the offense. If you got two people in your zone and they are both pushing vertical, most likely they are going to cross vertical, so you might have to split both of them."

At the college level the same type of talk is occurring. Once again, intent participation takes the form of physical interactions revolving around talk. Tré says "the older guys kinda help you out" and remembers his fellow wide-receivers pushing him hard in practice:

> Like they expect me to do everything like they do. Because at the beginning of the year, they told me they were going to really need me this year. So if they see me do something wrong they will be like 'D, you aren't doing that right,' and they show me how to do it right, the correct way. (Tré, personal commnunication, October 31, 2008)

Here Tré begins to move beyond simply explaining a play, formation or technique to a teammate and into showing. More so than provide more evidence for the role of talk in intent participation, Tré's excerpt begins to highlight how talk adroitly moves into the

physical interaction of showing. The older wide receivers display to Tré the "correct way."

Showing is also seen in the manipulation of a variety of tools to elucidate complex formations. Talking about plays can be seen as a method of manipulating the tool of language for the benefit of understanding a play, but, more directly, Emmanuel remembers a senior defensive nose tackle on the team using a different tool to illustrate a play:

> Xavier Callins helped me out a lot. He took time to teach me plays. In the locker room, there was a couch in there. And he put the pillows down for the offensive linemen and we would walk through it. (Emmanuel, personal communication, October 15, 2008)

As the defensive coordinator used hand signals, yellow cardboard signs and a dry erase board as tools in teaching, Xavier, too, relied on external tools to aid in teaching. Methods of learning these plays, and just as important, teaching these plays, are not restricted to certain types of tools. Instead, Xavier, like the defensive coordinator, displays a tacit awareness of the "affordance" (Gibson, 1979) of tools. Affordance is an important notion in Gibson's ecological psychology. For James Gibson, "The theory of affordance rescues us from the philosophical muddle of assuming fixed classes of objects, each defined by its common features and then given a name" (p. 134). Working with affordance, Xavier pulls the sofa cushions away from the view of a padded surface which we sit on and transforms the cushions into offensive linemen. The sofa cushions are repurposed and remediated (Bolter and Grusin, 1999; Prior, Hengst, Roozen, &

Shipka, 2006) for a specific pedagogical purpose. As will be discussed shortly, this

perspective of the affordance of tools works against pedagogical instruction espoused in

their STEP English class. Taking up the perspective of the affordance of tools as a

method of intent participation is helpful in illuminating the disconnect between learning

for football and learning for composition.

Film is also a tool which is repurposed in a football community of practice. In

this community, film moves from being a medium of artistic expression developed for

consumers' entertainment to becoming a method of metacognition and preparation.

While film provides some of the genesis for the textual production of a football play, as

seen when tracing the text's trajectory, film also works as a method of reviewing

previous games and practices. Players and coaches spend countless hours in front of

television screens breaking down the most menial nuances of a game. In an increasingly

high tech society, the role of film has become more important. Auburn, as is the case

with most sports programs from little league to professional, employs a video coordinator

whose job is to film an entire game and then edit the film down into meaningful chunks

of film (for instance, a film of the defensive line, a film of the wide receivers, a film of

kick off formations, etc.). Teams then congregate together, after the coaches have

watched the film separately, and walk through the entire film. Individual chunks are

digested during position meetings. More so than critiquing individual players, the film

becomes a collaborative tool for the increased production of the entire team.

Andre uses films to get a better feel for the talent level and tendencies of his

opponent:

We spend a lot of time watching film. When I watch film I look for the down and

distance. I look for if the wide receiver has a tight split, [and if] they break off

[their] routes at 8 or 10 yards. I look at their releases, are they a fast twitch

person, or do they just get off and go. (Andre, personal communication,

November 10, 2008)

Like Xavier with the cushions, Andre is using a tool for a unique purpose. He tacitly

understands what film affords and what it does not. As signaled by the plural pronoun

"We," film is jointly used for the improved performance of the team, but also for the

individual player. It acts as a sort of review process by which the team and individual

players can gauge and refine their performance. In pedagogical terms, film works as

metacognition, but more than targeting individual performance, it allows wholesale group

assessment.

Finally, intent participation for football encompasses a real-game situation. As is

the case with LPP, intent participation focuses on individuals doing the real thing, not

simulated and detached drills. When asked if he would rather ask the defensive

coordinator or a teammate a question, Tré immediately chose the teammate: "Sometimes

you don't want to ask the coach about a play; sometimes it is better to ask someone who

is *on the field* and in the game. *I like to get the game experience*" (Tré, personal

communication, October 31, 2008; emphasis added). While a certain amount of practice

time is devoted to running through monotonous fundamental drills, the majority of time is

spent running real-time plays against a "live" defense and offense. What are not stressed

are drills that are detached from the larger goal of preparing for a game. Players are not

individually sequestered away, nor are the novices on the team denied access to real-time plays or restricted to fundamental drills only. The ultimate goal of preparing for a game situation is firmly in place, and all preparation is either simulating this goal or actively working toward simulation.

These four branches (using talk, tools, film and real time scrimmage) are the features of intent participation on the football field. As a collaborative sport, football is fertile ground for intent participation. The complexity of formations and plays hinges on the coordination of various players at a specific moment of time. Collective success is predicated on individual performance. While it is true that there is a certain level of individual "grading"—after all, these college players are hoping to individually impress professional scouts and eventually their individual play may result in a large pay check—at the core, football is a performance of coordinating a variety of media alongside a variety of persons in hopes of collective success.

If this is indeed the most successful pedagogical method for these players then a composition classroom could benefit from more closely aligning itself with pedagogical methods espoused by a football community of practice. During the fall of 2008, Emmanuel, Tré and Andre were enrolled in STEP English 1100, a first year composition course.[11] English 1100, taught by Ms. Gellar, a PhD student, and Mr. Cason, a first year MA student serving as a co-teacher, is connected to the summer STEP program. All STEP students were encouraged to sign up for "STEP English." One large difference between STEP English and non-STEP English is the teacher student ratio. When I co-taught the class in the fall of 2007, there were three teachers assigned for 17 students.

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[11] See Appendix D for the syllabus.

The typical English 1100 class at Auburn has a 25-1 teacher student ratio. Additionally, since the STEP program is largely made up of student-athletes, STEP English has a higher student-athlete enrollment than more typical English 1100 or 1120 classes.

All composition classes at Auburn require students to write four major papers, as well as complete a final exam. While the topic of the four major papers and the final is at the instructor's discretion, Auburn stipulates that the following four categories must be used: personal narrative, exposition, observation, and critical evaluation of a non-fiction text. Working within these parameters and with her interest in horror films, Ms. Gellar chose to theme her class around zombie films. For the semester, the students read and watched all things zombie.[12] Ms. Gellar explained her reason for picking a unique theme:

> I like to pick a theme to be consistent in all the papers. I picked zombies because I have used it a few times before. The reason for doing any sort of pop culture theme for the class is that I think it helps students be interested early on. It encourages them to be analytical and say what they are thinking earlier in the semester. It helps them feel authority early so that when you start asking them harder questions about things written down rather than movies and asking them to do a little more, they are more willing to take chances, I think. It keeps them interested and it gives them some authority. (Ms. Gellar, personal communication, March 25, 2009)

Ms. Gellar uses the portfolio method with grading; as such, she allows students to revise their papers multiple times. Each paper she looks at receives a grade and

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[12] See Appendix E for the four major paper assignments

comments for improvement. Students then have the option of revising and hoping for a higher grade or keeping the current grade. Students are instructed to keep all their papers; at the end of the semester, they turn in a portfolio of their work complete with a reflective piece devoted to how their writing has changed over the course of the semester.

The majority of the semester was spent either in the classroom with Ms. Gellar working through a lecture or in the tablet PC lab. Around mid-November, all four papers had been written; classes then met in the tablet PC lab and students were given the remainder of the semester to independently revise their papers. As incentive to work hard, students were allowed to stop coming to class if all their papers received an "A." Despite this incentive, the use of popular culture, and the ability to revise a draft an innumerable amount of times, neither Tré, Andre or Emmanuel ever received an "A" on a paper. The highest grade any of the three received was an 85 which Andre received on his second paper. The lowest grade was also given to Andre when he notched a 65 on his fourth paper. The average grade for these three student-athletes was a 76.[13] While a 76 is a respectable and passing grade at Auburn University, examining the prose these student-athletes churned out during the semester still points to the struggles they had with college-level writing. The following passage is taken from the first paper assignment asking the students to compare two zombie movies and, using cinematic terms such as lighting and music, argue for which one is scarier. The first paragraph of Tré's paper, written early in the semester on September 7th, points to the struggles he is having with college level writing:

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[13] Individually, the grades for the four major papers and the final exam broke down in this order: Andre received an 83, 85, 83, 65 and 80; Tré received a 73, 70, 83, 73 and 83; Emmanuel received a 67, 70, 80, 67 and 75.

The movies that I choose were, Dawn of the Dead, and Night of the Dead (original). I decided to go with these two because there were things different and things alike. I thought that both of the movies were good within their time period and common time. The main components I want to talk about are music, acting, and the scene setup.

Ms. Gellar's comments following this last sentence read, "Thesis? What are you going to argue?" On the last page of the 1 and a half page paper, Ms. Gellar writes, "This will work as a framework for your essay, and I think you made a good choice of points to cover. Now go back and address why they're important and get into more detail. Step one is to choose a thesis. Current grade: below a C."

Eventually, Tré is able to pull his grade up to a 73; however, as seen from his excerpt and Ms. Gellar's comments, he is struggling to understand the assignment and articulate a clear position. Over three months later, in the middle of December, Tré turned in his second and final draft of paper 2. The opening paragraphs reads exactly the same except for an additional sentence added at the end. It reads as follows: "Also the Dawn of The Dead shows these characteristics more than the Night of The Dead." The sentence reads as a thoughtless last minute add-on. The thesis, for this paper, does not work as the linchpin on which an entire argument is based. Instead, it appears Tré does not see the thesis as necessary for his argument. Other than adding several details throughout his paper to meet the page length and flesh some ideas out, the paper does not change much between early September and the middle of December. Tré's struggles to see the necessity of a thesis sentence, is not fully clear how one is constructed, nor understands

how to carry one through an entire paper. Certainly freshman writers can struggle with thesis sentences; it is a challenging exercise to craft an effective and succinct sentence which will drive a 4 to 5 page paper. However, Tré struggles point to more than the obstacles freshman writers typically face. He does not need to work on refinement or focusing; he simply needs to understand that he needs one and that one is the foundation upon which a paper is constructed.

Andre, too, exhibited marked difficulties with the first paper assignment. While he eventually received an 83 on this paper, the first draft is clearly rough. Here is the first paragraph:

> What makes a scary movie scary? Do you even know even what goes into making a scary? In a scary movie there are a lot of things that we don't even notice that makes it scary. In this paper I will compare 28 days later to the Dun of the Dead, and tell you why Dun of the Dead is better than 28 days later.

Several weeks later, Andre returned to his draft and began revising. Figure 4 are his handwritten comments on his draft:
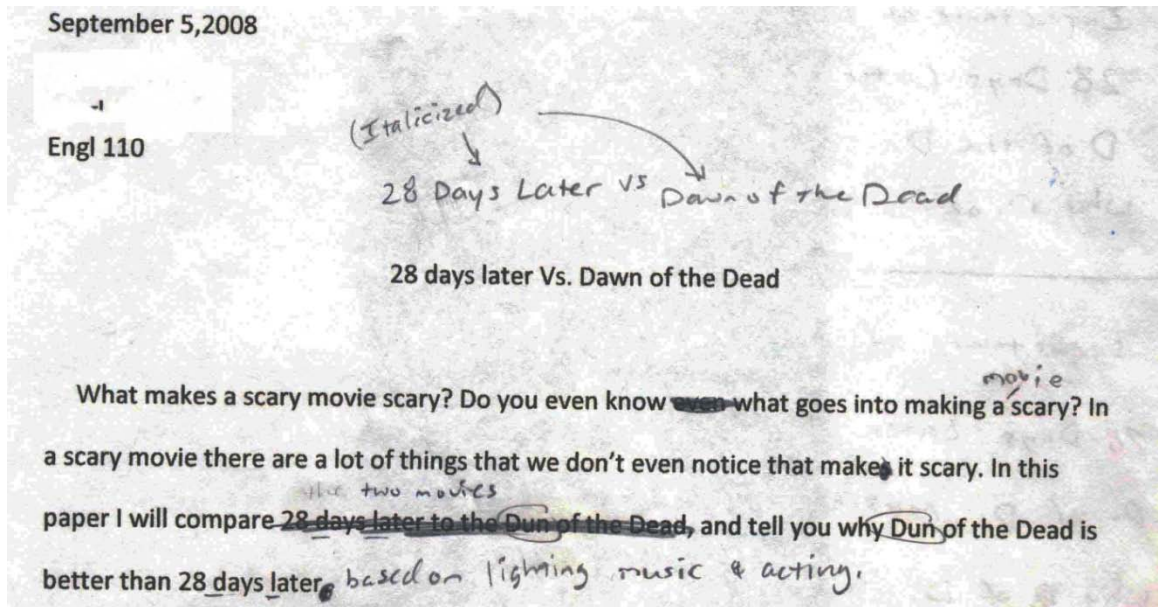
September 5, 2008

Engl 110

(*Italicized*)
28 Days Later vs Dawn of the Dead

28 days later Vs. Dawn of the Dead

What makes a scary movie scary? Do you even know ~~even~~ what goes into making a ^movie^ scary? In a scary movie there are a lot of things that we don't even notice that makes it scary. In this paper I will compare ~~28 days later to the Dun of the Dead~~ the two movies, and tell you why Dun of the Dead is better than 28 days later, based on lighting, music & acting.

Figure 4: When editing his own paper, Andre stuck with correcting surface level errors, instead of focusing on developing his central argument

As seen from his hand-written comments, editing for Andre meant working through surface level errors. While he does make several of his sentences easier to read (the second and third especially), he struggles with moving from surface level corrections to deeper level corrections.

Like Andre, Emmanuel struggled to craft readable prose free from surface level errors. The following excerpt comes from the second paper assignment which invited students to examine the credibility of Max Brooks, the author of *The Zombie Survival Guide*. Here is the first paragraph:

Have you ever thought about what you would do if you saw: Jason, Freddy Cruger, Candy man, Leprechaun from the hood, or even a Zombie? Well, today I'm going to be talking to you about why I think this book writer is credible to talk about real zombies.

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Written on September 28, Emmanuel's introduction makes an interesting rhetorical move. Possibly drawing from his required communications class required during summer STEP, he crafts his introduction as one would craft the opening of a speech. He starts with an interesting question to grab the reader's/listener's attention, and then he moves into telling that reader/listener what he is going to talk about. This succinct opening paragraph works well for speech, but as readable prose written for a composition class, Emmanuel clearly struggles.[14]

The rest of this chapter highlights the disconnect which exists between learning for football and learning for composition. As evidenced by these excerpts, Tré, Andre and Emmanuel struggled with their writing despite the high level of literate activity they daily encounter on the football field.

One disconnect between learning for these two communities was the lack of peer review in STEP English. Students were not instructed or encouraged to read and respond to each other's work. Ms. Gellar mentioned she has had little success with peer review in non STEP English classes and does not believe peer review would benefit the STEP students: "I have a hard enough time with regular students. It is not necessarily asking too much of them, I just don't think that they would think they are in a position to help other people. I felt that it would not benefit them as much as, say, another conference" (Ms. Gellar, personal communication, March 25, 2009).

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[14] As with Andre's excerpt, I do not have Emmanuel's revised drafts to explore how his paper changed throughout the course of the semester. The drafts I have were the ones turned in by the students during the final exam period. Working from the portfolio method, Ms. Gellar instructed the students to turn in all their drafts as well as "clean" copies at the end of the semester. Unfortunately, Andre and Emmanuel only turned in the first drafts of their assignments. However, I believe the final exams, which I have included, speak to how well their writing improved.

Instead, a more isolated and individually driven atmosphere was created by Ms. Gellar and Mr. Cason. When the class would meet in the tablet PC lab, Ms. Gellar opened up both labs and allowed students to spread out. Students were encouraged to find a quiet place to work and to separate from their friends. On one level, this makes sense in terms of classroom management. Ms. Gellar and Mr. Cason taught 9 freshman football players, 4 women basketball players and one male basketball player; these student-athletes knew each other well and were more prone to chat about non-school activities than to help each other out with their papers. Opening up both classrooms allowed the teachers to spread the students out, ideally facilitating constructive work. Interestingly, Ms. Gellar directly points to those students who were able to separate themselves from their peers as being most successfully in her class: "The ones that tended to do the best were the ones that separated themselves off from the rest of the football players" (Ms. Gellar, personal communication, March 25, 2009).

Two entries from my classroom observation notes from November 7, 2008, capture this isolated writer atmosphere which Ms. Gellar was fostering: "Tré: loose gray t-shirt, backwards Atlanta Braves navy blue fitted hat, navy sweat pants…Quite. Sharing table with [another football player], but for the most part [Tré] is not talking."

Andre is captured in a similar fashion:

Andre spending time in louder classroom. 6 students at 4 person table…spending time on Myspace and iPod touch. Binder open in front of him but playing with laptop on lap. Largely ignoring peers but immersed in other distracting action. Khaki and white collared shirt, dark blue jeans, Nike leather loafers.

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These entries point to how Tré and Andre attempt to work Ms. Gellar's instructions (i.e.,

work quietly and independently) into their own learning processes (i.e. work in

collaboration toward a shared endeavor). Tré and Andre are indeed working quietly;

however, they still congregate toward one another. Andre is sharing a four person table

with six people, while Tré never sat alone throughout the semester.

As has been discussed, if these student-athletes, the three football players in

particular, have thrived and are thriving in an atmosphere that encourages and hinges on a

cognitive collaborative system of straining toward a shared goal, then encouraging the

independent and isolated cognitive activity of constructing a 4 page runs counter. Of

course, for assessment purposes, a collaborative paper could be difficult to work into a

tightly structured Auburn English 1100 curriculum, but peer review seems to be a solid

method for inserting more of a collaborative feel to the classroom. These football

players, as Tré's quote on page 39 illustrates, are adept at critiquing each other's

performances. Ms. Gellar expressed reluctance toward peer review, but with the correct

vocabulary and instruction, it would be a natural transition to move from critiquing a

wide receiver route to critiquing an introductory paragraph.

More troubling than the lack of collaborative among classmates is the absence of

coordinating and re-appropriating a variety of media. While one of the class objectives

stated on the syllabus reads: "To identify and assess the rhetorical effectiveness and

appropriateness of various kinds of texts", the noun "texts" was fenced in by traditional

usage and understanding. Ms. Gellar does insert the use of movies into her classroom,

thus slightly breaking up the traditional use of "texts" as referring solely to books;

however, as is clear in the class computer lab policy, any other type of text is strongly discouraged in the classroom:

> We will meet in one of the computer labs for our class sessions at least once a week. During these classes, there will be no Facebook or Myspace use -- nor other netsurfing that is unrelated to your work for this course -- during class. If you feel like you need to check these websites, you need to arrive before class starts to do so. After 10 am, if you are caught on Facebook, Myspace, Youtube, or any other site that you don't need for your paper, you will be asked to leave and counted absent for the day.

Identifying the complete trajectory of a football play and the affordance of a variety of tools, has illustrated how football re-appropriates a wide expanse of tools for the cognitive activity of football. For these football players in STEP English, for those who have used sofa cushions to represent offensive linemen and hand signals as written inscription and explicit instruction, a limited view of what constitutes a text, and thus, what is valued in the classroom, hinders their ability to "do" composition. A more expansive view of writing would allow the inclusion of social networking sites and other commercial web pages into the classroom. Football cannot and does not operate from these exclusive principles.

Of course, like with the lack of collaborative assignments, Ms. Gellar and Mr. Cason are working within a tight curriculum, and, additionally, forbidding the use of social networking sites is necessary for classroom management. It may be too optimistic to believe that students, with free access to any website during class time, would be able

to successfully and intelligently weave that website into his/her final paper. However,

automatically shutting down access to these sites, denying these "texts" a voice in the

classroom, may be even more limiting for Tré, Emmanuel and Andre. The question

should move from how can we best limit exposure to non-academic social networking

sites, like Facebook, to how can we best include these sites in a way that facilitates

pedagogical instruction and burgeoning rhetorical awareness.

Alongside physical interaction and remediating tools is the method of

metacognition. For football players, nothing is done without metacognition. Drills,

practices, and games are all taped and laboriously scrutinized by players and coaches. In

STEP English, the only time students were asked to review their own progress was for

the final exam.[15]

The following excerpt (see Figure 7) comes from the first page Tré's final exam.

He wrote barely over a page attempting to articulate how his writing has improved and

what he still needs to work on:

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[15] See Appendix F for the final exam assignment.

English Comp.

December 12, 2008

Final

Coming into a college English class I thought it would be a lot different. I thought the grading would be harder and I was right. Then I thought it would be much harder than a high school class and I was wrong. The instructors helped me learn stuff I didn't know, also helped me improve on the things I am good at.

For example, using good description and good details are things I am good at. Sometimes I can describe things to make it seem like you are really there. It's around 7:00; the sun has gone down all the dogs are barking because of the train. Then you could see the fog all over the streets like the clouds came down from the sky. That was an example of some description of my surrounding. I think I am good at this because I like to rap and I tell stories when I rap. When I tell the stories I tell every single thing that is happening. Sometimes I get thrown away and mess up on switching subjects, like going from paragraph to paragraph.

Transitions are very tough for me, I don't know why but they are. When I came into this class I was already bad at this part of writing a paper anyway. The worst transition I used this year was when I was talking about a grave yard in on paragraph and my hometown in the next

Figure 5: An excerpt from Tré's final exam indexes a burgeoning level of metacognition.

This excerpt is important because it indexes a burgeoning level of metacognition in terms of his writing ability. While very little class time was devoted to examining and then articulating one's own writing, Tré displays a developing ability to do so. In the second paragraph, he points to his ability to use "good description and good details." He provides an example and then moves into how this narrative ability developed. He makes a insightful connection between writing raps with rich description and writing narratives with rich description.

In the bottom section of the first page, he then moves into analyzing his weakness. He understands that he has traditionally struggled with transitions and is able to point out a weak transition he used in the course of the semester.

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As the excerpts from Emmanuel and Andre's final exam in Appendix G indicate, these football players were able, with limited instruction, to analyze their own writing and then articulate how their writing has developed over the course of the semester. Consistent metacognition is a salient aspect of learning in a football community of practice. Aligning writing metacognition with that which occurs through gaining football literacy would require it to occur more regularly throughout the semester. How successful could this pedagogical strategy be if Tré began to critically evaluate his transition sentences earlier in the semester? Or if Andre began to look at his organization like he does the opposing offenses? Tré, Emmanuel and Andre already are adept at reviewing and reflecting on their own performances on the football field. They have the vocabulary, were and are given the instruction, and, ultimately at some point in their careers, they will gain metacognition without the prompting of a coach. All three football players understand the necessity of metacognition on the football field; the value of this practice in the writing classroom needs to be more explicitly clear and required periodically throughout the semester.

Finally, assignments need to be grounded in more concrete situations and respond to "game-like" (to borrow from football parlance) scenarios. Ms. Gellar, interested in horror films and believing students will respond favorably to zombies movies and books, chose a engaging theme; however, the context in which the students are writing and the topics assigned (e.g., Would you survive a zombie apocalypse?) are too fanciful to successfully replicate "real-world" writing. Tré, Emmanuel and Andre are accustomed to running through drills and plays that have a direct connection to their goal of playing and

winning on the football field. No drill is disconnected from this ultimate goal; plays are not designed just to keep the players interested and entertained. Plays mimic real-world football. For STEP English, this is not the case. The writing assigned is more geared toward entertainment than preparation for real-world writing. The argument about the purpose behind freshman composition (i.e., should writing prepare students for the job force, thus mimic "real world" writing or not?), is secondary to the disconnect between the cognitive activity of football and that of composition. Instead of exploring the purpose of freshman composition, we should explore how students' previously developed cognitive abilities can best be exploited in the composition classroom. For these three football players, they are accustomed to practice being directly connected to games; thus writing practice, for them, needs to be directly connected to real-world topics and situations.

Intent participation as explored by Rogoff et al. (2003) and enacted in the football community of practice is reduced inside the four walls of this composition classroom. Football is a performance of coordinating a variety of media alongside a variety of persons in hopes of collective success. In STEP English, the media is limited, the persons involved in the coordination are limited and the success is limited. Accounting for the absence of intent participation as seen on the football field is the narrow view of writing and texts. Tracing the trajectory of a football play illustrates the myriad agents acting on the construction of this particular text. Instead of viewing the football play as a homogenous text, a sociohistorical view would see the text as profoundly heterogeneous. Football exists in this sociohistorical view. Players and coaches employ a wide variety of

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media; this media is re-appropriated to fit specific rhetorical situations. Plays are not responding simply to here-and-now situations, but are responding to forces that cross time and space. Thus the cognitive activity for these football players models this approach. STEP English is stuck in the tradition of viewing writers as members of a discourse community. Here "discourse communities," in this case, the writing classroom, is a static community with set, strict rules. Students attempt to navigate these rules and enter the static community. Certain tools and literate practices are allowed in the community model and certain tools and literate practices are strictly forbidden. This discourse community view is present when Ms. Gellar mentions code-switching as one of the more common struggles football players have in STEP English:

> They have a really hard time getting the hang of using academic language instead of the language that they would use with their friends. So they would write it like they would say it. So when you read it out loud, you completely understand what they are saying, but when you see it written down, it doesn't make any sense at all. Sometimes it is a benefit and sometimes it is a detriment that they are in the class with each other because I think they are reluctant to get out of that language when they are all in their together. There is less reason to try to learn a new language. (Ms. Gellar, personal communication, March 25, 2009)

Following in line with pedagogy attached to a discourse community view of writing, Ms. Gellar is looking at the football players' ability to take up a "new language" (i.e., academic discourse). Success is predicated on the ability or inability to acclimate to this new language. Additionally, since STEP English works from a discourse view of

writing, Ms. Gellar and Mr. Cason are not able to give attention to the wide array of tools and artifacts which influence writing; they are not able to give attention to collaborative assignments or peer review (for how can a student critique another student if they are *both* attempting to enter a community and thus are both novices?); they are not able to give attention to metacognition during the course of the semester because the students are still trying to enter this community; and they are not able to pay attention to "real-world" writing because the students have not entered the real-world as defined by academia (i.e., the discourse community).

For intent participation to work in STEP English 1100, the co-teachers need, as Linda Brodkey (1987) argues, to see writing anew. To make the instruction of STEP English relevant to the literate instruction of these three football players, writing needs to be viewed through a more expansive view. It needs to include the various tool and texts, persons and places which impinge on the construction of cognitive activity. It needs to pay credence to mediated action (Scollon, 2008, 2005) which breaks away from the dangerously limited here-and-now perspective. And it needs to pay attention to the distributed nature of cognitive (Clark 1998; Huthchins, 1995), which leads to the distributed nature of writing (Prior, 1998).

CONCLUSION

It is the fall 2008 semester, and I am sitting in on STEP English. The class is meeting in the tablet PC lab, and the students are supposed to be working on drafting their first essay. I notice Tré and Emmanuel amongst a pocket of other football players. One makes a comment about the running back at the University of Georgia being the best in the Southeastern Conference. Eric, a star freshman running back, suddenly declares his own superiority. He launches into some self glorifying speech about his athletic prowess when I notice Emmanuel over in the corner mouthing something to himself as he sits hunched over his work.

Though Emmanuel is several feet taller than Tré and almost 50 pounds heavier, you wouldn't know it. He is especially reserved, sits by himself, and prefers the company of his iPod to the company of his teammates. I have heard some of the players express shock that he, as an African-American, is dating a white girl and that he just as much enjoys the sounds of country music as he does Lil' Wayne.

"What are you working on?" I ask Emmanuel as I slide into the chair next to him.

He shows me his paper, saying nothing.

"You understand what you need to be doing for this essay?" I ask since he shows me some work that appears to be on topic with the class assignment.

He takes out his earphones and simply shrugs his massive shoulders, his braids

dancing on his high forehead.

"Kinda, don't make much sense though," he replies.

Emmanuel, a prized defensive recruit, stand out player at his high school, puts his earphones back in his ears and reaches for his cell phone. Our conversation is over, and I learn that there is no quicker way to halt the flow of conversation with these football players then to bring up the subject of academic work. And I wonder why?

Emmanuel's obstacle is not that the assignment does not make sense. His challenge is breaking into the discourse community espoused by his composition course and realigning his view of writing to adhere to his cognitive abilities developed for football. With a discourse community view, which Emmanuel is working under, he is not able to connect what he does on the football field with what he does in the classroom. With a sociohistoric view of writing, with a distributed view of writing, he can. What I am not suggesting, however, is that modeling a form of intent participation in the writing classroom is a panacea for the academic struggles football players traditionally face. It is not a simple solution of implementing peer review, encouraging a variety of media in the construction of a text, instructing students toward a deeper level of metacognition and mimicking real world writing. Instead, I suggest we need to display a more acute awareness of the high level of literate activity that swirls around football. This literate activity was illuminated in chapter 3, and this is the literate activity which the football players in our classroom have mastered and are comfortable with. The literate activity which we teach in the writing classroom is akin to that which occurs on the football field. Both ask participants to analyze current information, examine previous information,

interpret existing information, and synthesize information into meaningful chunks. However, since football and writing are taught in a vastly different manner, we invite difficulties into the classroom. For these three football players to make sense of composition and to connect their football literacy to the composition classroom, we need to continue to explore making writing contingent upon these social and collective resources of learning.

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APPENDIX A: AUBURN UNIVERSITY'S STEP

Originally offered through the Center for Diversity and Race Relations, Summer Bridge (SB) was renamed STEP in 2004. Now offered through Office of Undergraduate Studies, more specifically Student Affairs and Student Success Center, STEP is committed to easing the often academically and socially difficult transition from high school to college. As laid out in their literature, the faculty and staff of STEP are committed to: "Supporting scholarly learning as the central mission of Auburn University; Promoting an environment that is diverse both culturally and socially; Providing a stimulating and challenging academic experience; Giving personalized, comprehensive advising and counseling; Upholding our students to the highest ideals of personal and academic honesty; Maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our students."

As evidenced in the goals, STEP attempts to prepare students academically and socially for college. STEP employs upperclassmen who work as peer counselors and two graduate students (of which I was one) to work as academic counselors. The peer counselors live in the resident halls with the students; the academic counselors are responsible for co-teaching a class and overseeing mandatory daily study hours.

Participants are enrolled in three academic for-credit courses, as well as a mandatory Success Strategies class. Participants chose from: Introduction to Public; Introduction to Theater; Appreciation of Music; Introduction to Psychology; and World History 1.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
1. Do you read in your spare time?
2. If so, what do you read?
3. Other than homework, did you read anything last night?
4. What did you read last night?
5. Did you write anything last night?
6. What was it?
7. How many books or magazines would you say you have in your dorm/apartment?
8. Do you rent books or magazines, or exchange them with friends?
9. Do/did other people help you with your homework?
10. Who helps you, usually?
11. Do you usually study alone or with others?
12. What do you like/dislike most about school?
13. Would you prefer to be studying in school or not?
14. How far do you hope to go in school?
15. Why do people learn to read?
16. What will they do with it?
17. When completing English assigns, do you usually talk with your peers about the assignment?
18. How many hours do you think you spend working on assignment s for English?
19. What is the most difficult part about writing at the college level?
20. Do you feel like you can write at the college level?
21. What is the easiest part about writing at the college level?
22. What is the most difficult part about reading at the college level?
23. Do you think you can read at the college level?
24. What is the easiest part about reading at the college level?
25. How do you retain information you read for classes?
26. How often do you talk about your classes with your peers?
27. How often do you talk about football players with your peers?
28. When was the last time you looked at your football plays?
29. Are you allowed to keep the playbook?

30. If so, where you do keep the playbook?
31. How many hours a day does your coach go over the plays?
32. How do you retain football play information?
33. What is the most difficult part of learning football plays?
34. What is the easiest part about learning football plays?
35. Why is it important to you to learn these plays?
36. Do you study the plays alone?
37. Do you often study the plays with a group?
38. Do you ever write out the plays?
39. Do you ever write out the plays for fun, such as doodling during class?
40. What happens if you forget the plays?
41. Do you think you could write an English paper describing the football plays?
42. Do you think football plays count as reading?
43. Do you think learning football plays helps you in English class?
44. Does your coach ever ask about your English class?
45. Does your teacher ever ask about your football progress?
46. Do you have an academic tutor?
47. If so, does your tutor ever ask about your football progress?
48. When the coach is going over plays during film sessions, where do you sit?
49. Is it hard to pay attention when the coach is going over plays?
50. How far do you hope to go in football?
51. Do you feel like you can play football at the Division I level?
52. How do you begin to remember football plays?
53. How do you retain the information in the football plays?
54. How do you retain the information you read for English 1100?
55. Do you get help from other teammates when you are learning football plays?
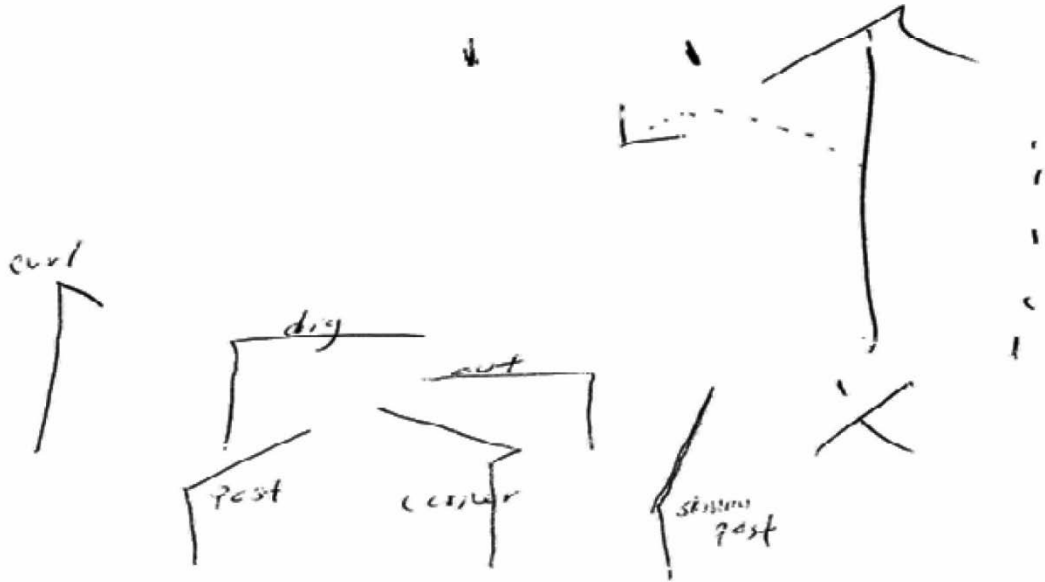
APPENDIX C: TRÉ'S HAND-DRAWN WIDE-RECEIVER ROUTES

Figure 6: In the upper right hand corner, Tré drew a route (the bold line) with an optional route (the dashed line). The "X" marks the wide-receiver's starting position. On the left side, Tré drew 6 typical routes. Starting on the top row from left to right, he drew "curl," "dig," and "out." On the bottom row from left to right, he drew "post," "corner," and "skinny post."

ENGL 1100 (English Composition I)
Section 043 - MWF 10:00-10:50 am – HC 3166

Ms. Gellar	**Mr. Cason**
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Overall Preparation for ENGL 1100

The same as your coach or employer, we expect you to be on time, to be respectful, to pay attention, and to complete the assignments required to the best of your ability. In return, you will have our full attention and assistance. We are very committed to helping you pass this course.

English Department Objectives for ENGL 1100

- To become adept at using writing processes that will help students achieve the general objectives of English Composition. Processes include various kinds of prewriting and discovery, drafting and reviewing drafts, editing and revising, and submitting polished essays on time and in the appropriate format.
- To develop and articulate a claim that answers to the requirements of the assignment and that represents a thoughtful understanding of the issues the student is writing about.
- To support the claim with evidence that answers to the requirements of the assignment and that demonstrates the student's ability to make appropriate rhetorical and logical choices.
- To become proficient in the conventions of standard written English appropriate for an academic audience or educated readers and to apply these conventions to meet the requirements of the assignment.
- To become proficient in writing with some stylistic fluency and to begin to attain a mature understanding of prose style.
- To identify and assess the rhetorical effectiveness and appropriateness of various kinds of texts.

Textbook

Lunsford, Andrea A. *Easy Writer*, Third Edition.
Lunsford, Andrea A. *Everything's An Argument*, 4th Edition.
Readings and other materials on Blackboard.

Grading

We want you to have maximum credit for the work you do, but at the same time, we have to follow the English Department's strict guidelines about the evaluating the quality of your work. Further, we want you to know what your grade is at all times during the semester.

This is our general grading policy: Each time that an assignment is due, we will write comments on what you submit and assign a grade. However, you may revise the assignment for a higher grade as many times as you want to. We will make suggestions for revision and regrade the assignment each time. When we average your grades, we will use the last grade on each assignment to determine your final average.

One exception: If points are taken off from an assignment because it is submitted late, you will not get those back. Effort counts; do not get behind in this class.

All assignments are due for final grading on the last day of class.

Assignments

Essay 1: Observation	20%
Essay 2: Critical Response	20%
Essay 3: Evaluation with Criteria	20%
Essay 4: Personal Narrative	20%
Reading Responses	10%
Final Exam	10%

All grading will be on a 10-point scale. 100-90 is an A; 89-80 is a B; and so forth.

Please remember that you have to earn a C to receive credit for this course as a core requirement.

Reading Responses & Final Exam

For each reading you are assigned for this class, we will assign you a task to perform as a reading response. The reading responses will be turned in at the beginning of class on the day the reading is due, will be graded by us, and then returned to you. Reading responses

will receive grades of 0 (not acceptable), 1 (somewhat acceptable), or 2 (acceptable). On rare occasions where a response is particularly outstanding, it may receive a grade of 3. When these are returned to you, you should keep them in a folder or binder to turn back in to us with your final portfolio. You may also use them for reference in your final exam essay, which will be written by you during the final exam period; this essay will be a reflection on your reading and writing processes and how they have changed and developed over the course of the semester.

Late-to-Class Policy

To discourage late students from disrupting the class, we will maintain a tardiness policy.

If you arrive to class 5 minutes after it has started, you will be marked late. **Three instances of being late count as an unexcused absence.**

Furthermore, if you arrive to class 30 minutes after it has started, you will receive an **unexcused absence**.

Information on unexcused absences is explained above.

In short, come to class, every time, on time.

Computer Lab Conduct

We will meet in one of the computer labs for our class sessions at least once a week. During these classes, there will be no Facebook or Myspace use -- nor other netsurfing that is unrelated to your work for this course -- during class. If you feel like you need to check these websites, you need to arrive before class starts to do so. After 10 am, if you are caught on Facebook, Myspace, Youtube, or any other site that you don't need for your paper, you will be asked to leave and counted absent for the day.

On days when computer lab time is designated for drafting or revising your essays, music (from iPods or otherwise) is acceptable if you are using headphones and are not listening to it at an excessive volume.

APPENDIX E: MAJOR PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

Essay 1 – Observation

For this assignment, we will watch six similar movie scenes, all from zombie movies. All six scenes occur early in their respective films and are scenes that must occur in virtually every zombie movie: the hero(es) encounter the zombie creatures for the first time, react, and attempt to escape or take refuge somewhere. We will be watching scenes from the original *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), the 1990 remake of *Night of the Living Dead, 28 Days Later* (2002), *Dawn of the Dead* (2004), *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), and *Diary of the Dead* (2008)

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Since content-wise all six of these scenes are essentially the same, our purpose will be to observe how other elements of the scenes besides simply *what happens* shape our experience of the scenes, the effect the scenes have on us. You will ultimately choose two of the six scenes to compare and contrast with each other, building toward an argument about how the two scenes compare.

First, we will practice observing filmmaking techniques such as lighting, editing, cinematography, music, colors, and costumes with two or three movie scenes in class on Friday (scenes you will *not* be writing your essays about).

In class next week, we will watch each of the zombie movie scenes once and discuss it afterward to compare notes about observations made and what the implications of those observations are. While you are watching, you should take note of or jot down notes about things you notice about the scene. The scenes will be put up on the web and linked from Blackboard so that you can rewatch them as much as you need to.

Your essay should do the following
1. record your observations of how filmmaking techniques are used in two scenes
2. speculate on why they are used this way, what the effect is supposed to be
3. compare and contrast the ways these techniques are used
4. use your comparison and contrast to form an argument about which scene achieves a specific objective more effectively

I strongly recommend using your comparison and contrast to decide which is scarier, but if you have a different idea for your argumentative slant, talk to me about it, and if I think it will work, I will give you permission to use it.

There are a lot of different pairings available to you between these movie clips. You can compare the original and remake of *Night of the Living Dead*. You can compare a serious

movie with a comedy (any of the other five with *Shaun of the Dead*). You can compare a clip with slow zombies (bo
th *Night of the Living Dead* clips, *Shaun of the Dead,* or *Diary of the Dead)* to a clip with fast zombies (*28 Days Later* or *Dawn of the Dead*).

We will talk in class on Thursday about different formats for comparison and contrast, but in short, there are two main options available to you:

Option 1 Organized By Movie Clip	Option 2 Organized by Comparison Point
1. Introduction (includes argumentative thesis – "The scene from Movie X is scarier than the scene from Movie Y because of its use of music, lighting, and camera motion." 2. Discussion of scene from Movie X (several paragraphs, evaluates as it reports observations) 3. Discussion of scene from Movie Y (several paragraphs, evaluates as it reports observations, refers back to evaluation of these elements of the scene from Movie X, builds toward argument) 4. Conclusion (restates the thesis with the evidence in mind; it should not come as a surprise that there is an argument being made)	1. Introduction (includes argumentative thesis – "The scene from Movie X is scarier than the scene from Movie Y because of its use of music, lighting, and camera motion." 2. Discussion of use of music in the two scenes, comparing & contrasting, concluding with a statement about which is scarier based on the use of music 3. discussion of use of lighting, comparing & contrasting, concluding with a statement about which is scarier based on the use of lighting 4. discussion of use of camera motion, comparing & contrasting, concluding with a statement about which is scarier based on the use of camera motion 5. comparing & contrasting, concluding with a statement about which is scarier based on the use of music

Common problems that students have with this essay that you should watch out for include:
1. not having an argumentative slant or only making the argument in the introduction and conclusion (Your paper should have a clear thesis, and you should tie every paragraph back into your main argument.)
2. not including details about the observations made (Be specific about what you have observe. Don't just say the director uses lighting to make the scene scary. Describe how the scene is lit. Give a few specific examples.)

3. reporting observations but not analyzing/discussing why the filmmakers used these techniques (After you've given a few specific examples of lighting in the scene, describe what you believe is the effect this is supposed to have on the audience.)

The essay should be 4-5 pages long, typed and double spaced in either Times New Roman or Calibri 12-point font with standard margins. The first draft is due in class on Monday, September 28.

Essay 2 – Critical Response to a Written Text
Part of one's ethical appeal comes from the appearance of credibility. Max Brooks' *Zombie Survival Guide* likely appears to be a credible survival guide, until you consider that it's written to help its readers survive the zombie apocalypse. For this assignment, you will be looking closely at several sections of this book and evaluating the author's ability to come across as credible. Ultimately you will argue that he seems credible, not credible, or some combination of the two.

As we will discuss in class over the next few weeks, there are many things that may contribute to or detract from one's credibility. Considering content, does the writer have facts or evidence or sources to back up his claims? Does he provide enough detail? Considering how he delivers the content, is he well-organized? Are his vocabulary and tone appropriate?

In addition to the above, we'll discuss other tactics writers may use in order to make you trust them. You will pick a few of these tactics, examine how they are used by Brooks in *The Zombie Survival Guide*, and from that draw conclusions about whether or not he comes across as a credible writer.

Your essay should do the following
1. Take a clear position on Brooks' credibility in *The Zombie Survival Guide*
2. Choose a few (3-5) specific elements/tactics used by Brooks to examine
3. Use specific evidence from the text in your evaluation (quotes, specific descriptions of non-written elements)
4. Respond to those examples and quotes by explaining clearly whether it helps or hurts his credibility

The essay should be 4-5 pages long, typed and double spaced in either Times New Roman or Calibri 12-point font with standard margins. The first draft is due in class on Friday, September 22.

Essay Three – Evaluation, Writing with Criteria
An important skill to gain in effective argument is being able to define your terms, to choose criteria by which to argue. When you're arguing based on fact and evidence, making a logical argument can be relatively easy, but when you're arguing something

subjective (something that is more based on opinion, that can have multiple right answers), choosing criteria is essential.

Keeping with our zombie theme, we are going to be evaluating different survival plans. If there really were a zombie apocalypse, what would be the best course of action to take? Close yourself up in your own home? Go to another type of location? If so, what location would that be? Would it be better to stay in a larger group or go it alone?

We'll be looking at survival plans from movies, comics, books, and the internet, both specific to a zombie apocalypse and also to other scenarios, and we will examine the pros and cons that are pointed out both in the works and also that we come up with through class discussion.   Because all plans will have strengths and weaknesses, you will need to decide what should be one's highest priorities – food? A secure location? The company of others? There's no real right answer, but you will lay out your criteria at the start of you paper (what *you* think should be the highest priorities), defend those as being the most important, and then hold several different survival plans to the standard set by those criteria to determine which is the best plan.

You may choose to start by setting your criteria first, or you may want to decide which plan is best first and then develop criteria from that (what are the best parts of that plan?).

Similarly to essay one, you can either organize by survival plan (one paragraph per plan, evaluating it based on your criteria), or by criterion (one criterion per paragraph, hold all the different plans to it to see which meets it best).

Your essay should have a thesis that states which plan you believe is best. It should have clearly stated criteria (3-4 things you are looking for in your ideal survival plan) and you should explain/defend why these are the most important factors in choosing a plan. You should evaluate 3-4 different survival plans, and you should hold *al*l the plans you discuss to *all* the criteria you choose.

 Your essay is due Friday, October 17 at the start of class. It should be 4-5 pages long, typed and double-spaced in Times New Roman or Calibri font. We will meet in computer lab 3143 on Wednesday, October 15 to continue drafting your essays – a full page is due at the start of class.

Essay Four – Personal Narrative
Although we as teachers have exposed you to different mehods of writing, we have also given you instructions on how to become expert zombie survivalists. You may have at one point, while watching all these grisly films, wondered what would happen if the zombie plague were real. In order to examine this idea, I am going to call on your skills of observation, critical analysis, and subjective argument in order to answer this question: *Would you survive the zombie apocalypse?*

Purpose: The purpose of this essay is to teach you the characteristics of narrative writing, how it differs from other forms of writing, and how to use it as a means of argumentation.

Instruction: Writing a narrative is much different than writing papers like the three previous assignments. However, they all are structured on the same basic principles. For this essay, you will use one story or two stories related to a central theme from your own life as support for your argument. Most stories you read are written using narrative format, and the author's intentions may or may not be openly stated. So, for this unit, consider yourself to be a *writer*.

-Instead of reading responses, you will have writing responses for homework. Assignments will be explained in class. Make sure that you follow the calendar for essay 4.

-In class, we will help you generate ideas from your own life to figure out if you would, wouldn't, or could survive the zombie apocalypse. We will also practice using description and dialogue in order to convey experiences and impressions to the reader. With these writing tools, we will help you develop an argument behind your personal story.

Expectations: Your essay should do the following:
1. Make a claim that states if you would, would not, or could survive based on experiences from your life
2. Use descriptive language in order to provide details to your story
3. Implement meaningful dialogue between the persons (or things) involved in your story
4. Show feelings and attitudes through description and dialogue, rather than telling

Format: Your essay must conform to the following format.
> *Length*: 4-5 Pages Typed
> *Font:* 12-point font in either Times New Roman or Calibri
> *Spacing:* Double spaced
> *Margins*: Standard or 1 inch margins all around

APPENDIX F: FINAL EXAM ASSIGNMENT

Final Exam Instructions

Our final exam is scheduled for Monday, December 15 at 8:00 am. We will also offer an opportunity for you to take it early on Friday, December 12 at 8:30 am. If you come on Monday, please go to the tablet PC lab, [room number] 3194. If you come take it early on Friday, meet us in the English Center and we'll decide where to go from there. On either day, you may bring you own laptop computer.

Your final exam is an essay, which you will write in class during the final exam period, though you may plan it ahead of time. You can also bring in up to a page of notes/outline with you, and you may reference the papers in your portfolio for help.

Your essay should answer these two questions:
-What do you feel you improved upon the most in your writing over the course of the semester?
-What aspect of your writing do you believe stills needs improvement?

You should reference your drafts and our comments in them as evidence for your claims. Your essay should contain a clear thesis statement that answers the two questions above. It should be about three pages long and remain focused on answering the above questions. You only need one answer for each question.

APPENDIX G: EXCERPTS FROM ANDRE AND EMMANUEL'S FINAL EXAM

English 110 Final

Writing an English paper is never easy especially when you are making a transition from high school to college. In high school you could get away with little betty stuff like a run on sentence or maybe an O.K introduction. The biggest thing I had to overcome was organizing my information. There is still one thing I need to improve on and that is writing more detail in my papers. In my final paper for English 110 I will explain my biggest problems when it comes to writing English papers and what I need to keep improving on.

Coming into the semester there wasn't that much I thought I need to improve on but my English teachers quickly showed me different. Organizing my information was something I improved on the most. Putting my information from least to greatest importance has really helped my papers read more fluently. In one of my papers entitled *"Zombie Survival Guide"* I talked about what places would be great to take shelter in because of their great features. Instead of me ordering them from least to greatest important places to take shelter I mixed them up. My approach to fixing this problem was going through what I wrote and organizing it from least to greatest importance. This change was easy because some places for shelter had more things to offer like food, communication without side world, and better security.

My biggest problem I need to still work on is detailing what I' am talking about. *"In 28 days later Vs. Dawn of the Dead"* I talked about how the acting was better in Dawn of the Dead then 28 days later but I didn't give a clear enough picture for example "In Dawn of the Dead there was great acting you could really tell when she was scared in the movie her facial expressions really told the hole story about

Figure 7: Like Tré's final exam, the first page of Andre's final exam shows Andre pointing to specific papers and difficulties he had with those papers.

Final

As, I looked back over my essays that I don't in this class. I see that I learned a lot about writing papers as we wrote them more. But, I still have more to learn about writing papers.

The first paper was about two movies. So, as I looked back over my first draft. I see that the first thing I had trouble with was my Thesis Statement. Then, I had trouble with discussing what's going on in the movie scenes. Then, I started telling the movie, instead of comparing the movies. So, with my first draft. I would say that I had trouble with my Thesis Statement. And I also had trouble with staying on the main topic of the paper. But, one thing that I did do right in this paper was to start off the paper strong. It's just the rest of the paper that I had trouble with.

As I look back over my 2nd paper first draft. The biggest thing with this paper was me staying focused on how the paper was written. And not staying focused on the content of this paper. Another thing I had trouble with was describing how the writer writes and how does that help with his credibility, or do it hurt his credibility. But, at the start of my paper. Everything was going good. I guess when I got bored with it. I started doing my own thing.

Paper 3 was about, Do I think I would survive a zombie apocalypse or not? The first thing I had trouble on this paper was with my content and detail of this paper. Then, again I started

Figure 8: Looking past the troublesome first sentence of Emmanuel's final exam, displays his ability to locate specific areas he struggles with in the writing process. Like Tré and Andre, Emmanuel's ability to think critically about his own academic performance, I argue, finds genesis is the necessary level of metacognition required for football.