

## Call for Papers

### User-Centered Design and Usability in the Composition Classroom

A Special Issue for *Computers and Composition*

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User-centered design, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), experience architecture, human-centered design, usability, usability testing, human-interface investigation—all of these terms emerge from a growing interest in making human-computer interactions more functional and have recently inspired innovation in composition pedagogy. In the domain of the teaching of writing, instructors and students both are increasingly involved in aspects of ease-of-use of digital information, and the reality that faces designers of this information (those who create/teach courses) is that common practices for improving user experience can and should be imported into and adapted for composition curricula and students (Arduser, et al. 2011; Blythe, 2001; Miller & Rodrigo, 2006; Purdy, 2014). According to Potts (2014), this ease-of-use brings about a newer set of challenges, not only “purely issues of interface, interaction design, and information design,” but also in permitting reuse and allowing for sharing across systems (p. 3). With this proposed special issue, we seek to learn how instructors can use technology to enhance classroom practices—whether this technology comes in the form of a Learning Management System (LMS), mobile technology, social media, and so forth—in such a way as to promote ease of use on the student side and reuse within future course curricula on the instructor side. This special issue also intends to examine how this technology can be used across multiple platforms (i.e., face-to-face, online, and hybrid) by instructors and administrators at various institutions.

In the field of composition studies, we often teach students to maintain a focus on how audiences will interpret and use their texts (Ball, 2012; Lauer, 2103; Rankins-Robertson et al., 2014; Selfe, 2009). Likewise, we must examine how our learning technologies are composed for our users (students), and how we create mechanisms to check for and address challenges those technologies pose. This special issue will encourage instructors who use all types of technology to examine how the technologies we use support students. This issue will be an indispensable tool for teachers, researchers, and administrators as they navigate the new terrain of user-centered design in the context of the composition classroom. In addition to offering an introduction that will survey previous scholarship and the current conversations surrounding user-centered design research, this special issue will connect the theories of user-centered design to the practice of teaching composition in f2f, online, and hybrid settings.

In this 2018 special issue, we seek to answer the following questions:

- How do we design a user-centered, accessible curriculum that challenges, engages, and meets the needs of diverse learners?
- How does this design change based on the environment in which the curriculum is taught, whether face-to-face, hybrid, or online?
- How do we incorporate user-centered design into seemingly static Learning Management Systems (LMSs)?
- What are the best practices for implementing user-centered design principles in hybrid, online, or MOOC environments?
- In which ways can we teach students at all levels principles of user-centered design when using technology for composing?
- How does user-centered design shape writing and instruction?
- How do instructors create course technologies that respond to different student abilities? How does the Americans with Disabilities Act influence our use and design of classroom technologies?
- How does user-centered design facilitate instructor training either in face-to-face or online settings? What are the best ways to introduce new instructors to principles of user-centered design in the writing classroom?
- What is the academic “home” of user-centered research? How does rhetoric and composition offer a unique way of understanding this sort of study? How does “usability” function in English departments and how can it be implemented across the disciplines?
- How do we account for usability in FYC programs, where the number of students and teachers may make common understandings of user-centered design difficult to codify?

This special issue seeks to open up the conversation on usability studies and writing research and to spur more discussion about this rapidly expanding area of study, providing practitioners, administrators, and researchers an opportunity to reinvigorate ideas within their own institutions and the field at large. For more information or queries, contact Joe Bartolotta at [jbartolotta@unm.edu](mailto:jbartolotta@unm.edu). All submissions should go to [comcompspecialissue@gmail.com](mailto:comcompspecialissue@gmail.com)

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                    February 1, 2017 - Notices of acceptance and regret  
                    April 15, 2017 - Draft of Completed Manuscripts for Reviewers Due  
                    September 2017 - Feedback on Manuscript from Reviewers Returned to Authors  
                    January 2018 - Final Draft of Manuscripts Due