Interviewer: How does your role here as director of the writing program affect the way you integrate technology in the writing program? So when you made the switch, when you transitioned in this position, did you fine that there was resistance to incorporating technology in the writing program, and if so, how did you overcome that?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's a good question. Because we're smaller, I think, I mean we don't have probably the same institutional structure that a large state school with 400 sections of composition has to manage. I'm working on a much smaller scale. Pretty much, you need to deal with somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 to 60 sections of composition a semester for both levels.

So once I got this position, there aren't – there really weren't any rules. We had an established curriculum, but to me, it was just, it was kinda stale, and it hadn't been updated in about 20 years, so it was pretty out of date, I thought. So when I was able to kinda look at it and decide what we wanted to do, one thing I felt very strongly about was having students have multiple opportunities to write in different sorts of genres. And to me, that sort of makes that natural extension into multimodality because some genres, you can't put them in print. For example, something like collage, yes, you can do like a Wordle or something that's got kind of collage sorts of features, but it's not necessarily the same.

So the way that we worked it is, like I said, I built in this instructor's choice assignment. So we maintained some standard assignments because, for one, we wanna make sure that our curriculum aligns with other state schools in Ohio and the issues of transfer and that. So I mean I can't totally just say, "I'm gonna throw out the whole thing and do all these digital assignments or multimodal assignments."

But the way that we worked it out is basically they do a couple standard ones, like an argument paper and a narrative and that. Then, we have the instructor's choice, and the instructor's choice is not something that we just throw, "Here's five percent of your grade. It's not real. It doesn't really count." I mean we give it 15 percent. It's a significant portion, and I'd like to give it a little bit more based, again, once our lab situation, I think, gets a little bit better. That's something I am waiting for to see if we can possibly integrate it all the way across.

But yeah, and in terms of how we went about doing that, I'm sort of a, "I got a great idea. Act now," and see what happens. I don't

mind having the fallout. So if the whole thing blows up, I'm not particularly bothered by that. We just try something else.

So one thing with the faculty that I've sort of noticed is they find that very – you know, they're very worried about how the execution of something happens, but I don't think there is a good way to make a transition between print and multimodality. Like I never wanna advocate if you only do this because it's different at every place for all the different technology levels, and you know, there's no way to do that.

But if you do have it, we just, "Hey, let's try it one semester. Let's see what happens. Everybody will survive. Maybe some videos don't open, or the students don't like, or they wind up spending, maybe, too much time on the video, and then they don't work on their argument paper," which is a higher percentage of their grade. You know, "All those issues we will work out at the end."

So one thing that's built into our writing program here is I have monthly composition meetings with both the people teaching our College Writing I and our College Writing II, and all those issues just come out. We just say, "All right, who's teaching it? What are you doing? What are some assignments?" We share them.

At any given time, we might have between – on a small semester, we might have six people covering multiple sections. On a bigger semester, we might have 14, so it's kind of a range. But yeah, I usually get feedback in that way, and because the assignment right now is set up to be an instructor's choice, they can avoid something they don't want to do. So let's say it's somebody that's really freaked out by using microphones or podcasting, they can just choose not to do that.

And there are some – particularly some of our part-time people – that, you know, they're not on campus a lot. They're maybe teaching at three or four places, which is the reality, they don't have time, a lot of times, to learn some of the higher, you know, what we would consider to be maybe the more in depth kind of technology. They shouldn't even call them "higher order" 'cause a lot of times, they've got kind of easy processes. So even things like – we've allowed them to do things like a PowerPoint and make it not a PowerPoint 'cause there's a lot of ways that you can trick even a program like that and make it mimic something like Flash and be more advanced, you know, if you get rid of some the templates in that.

So in terms of resistance, there hasn't been a whole lot because it is not forced. It's a choice. At some point, we will be at a stage where we have enough technology, and at that point, I probably will go with some kind of a mandate that, "This is the type of writing that's out there. It's just as important as writing an argument paper or a narrative or an interview paper or surveys," you know, something like that.

So when we get to that point, I don't have a problem with saying, "We're at the point. We gotta all get there. Let's talk about how that's gonna happen and see," and again, I still don't think we would want to go with something like, "Everybody does a video," because they have a lot of freedom otherwise. They choose their own textbooks. We have different course themes, so it's not as lockstep as it is with some other programs as long as they meet some minimum requirements, so –

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Okay.

[End of Audio]