
This text is a research paper conducted and written primarily by Jeff Grabill with help from other researchers at Michigan State University, Elon University, Indiana University, Perdue University (Fort Wayne), Lansing Community College, Leeward Community College, University of North Carolina (Pembroke), and University of Texas (El Paso). The purpose of this paper is to “[report] initial findings from a Writing in Digital Environment (WIDE) Research Center study entitled Revisualizing Composition: Mapping the Writing Lives of First-Year College Students,” (Grabill 2). To condense, the research paper was a report on the findings about Grabill’s hypothesis that current college student are very literate but are unable to comprehend how writing should be used in their lives. By conducting research on a survey of students enrolled at US postsecondary institutions, Grabill concluded that “SMS text, emails, and lecture notes are three of the most frequently written genres of writing,” (Grabill 2). He also concluded that students generally write alone and feel more comfortable writing alone that with groups. Grabill used the statistics and data he gathered from the surveys to provide evidence to back his findings. Along with providing written evidence, Grabill also compiled the data into easy, readable charts for the audience to understand.
I, personally, am very interested with Grabill’s findings. I think that it’s very interesting to look into what college students are using to write on and with. Much of the conclusions he came to are reflected in my life and writing. Only one did not match. One of Grabill’s finding stated that “students’ write for personal fulfillment nearly as often as for school assignments,” (Grabill 2). I don’t particularly find this relevant to my life because I rarely write for personal enjoyment. The only times I write are for school assignments. Apart from this discrepancy, nearly every other conclusion he reached I completely agree with. I do feel like this generation of college students use cell phones, Facebook, and email to communicate more than they use a pencil and paper. Grabill mentions that contemporary college student are leaning towards newer, more updated technology to write with and that it “point[s] to the pervasiveness of writing in the lives of our participants and the importance of hand-held devices like mobile phones as a writing platform,” (Grabill 2). I use my cell phone all the time to check social media websites and text my family. I even use it to send emails to professors and employers. This just shows how I really connected with Grabill’s research because I am a college student who uses different composition modes to write with.

Reading this research paper really opened my eyes to how exactly I write. It never occurred to me that sending a quick text on my cell phone really did count as writing and that I put a certain level of value on those texts. It also came to my attention just how much notes I write during lectures and how that is a writing experience for college students. Lecture notes are the third most frequently used writing practice, right after texting and e-mail (Grabill 5). This gives me confidence to know that even though it may not seem like it, everyone else around me in school is most likely using writing in the same way I am. After reading and
reflecting on this research, I think that I will be paying more attention to what I am writing and what I am using to write, whether it be a pencil and paper, or some kind of word processor. I think that it is really important to keep in mind how many different writing technologies and practices there are and remember that they can be used for any number of tasks we students are given.
Works Cited