Mahaffey Handout

Presentation Title: Online Parlors: Meaning-making Discussions for Online Asynchronous Writing Courses

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Burke's Parlor Metaphor

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.

(Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action 3rd ed. 1941. Univ. of California Press, 1973)

F2F Parlor Cycle

We will mimic the **Parlor** by having robust academic discussions that include both written and verbal components. We'll be **listening** to each other, putting **our own ideas** out there, and then **processing the understandings** we've generated as a class of thinkers and writers.

Each Parlor will include a predictable **two-part cycle** :
1. **Parlor Post** - read the assigned text and respond to the online discussion forum. The primary skills emphasized in this work are critical reading and formulating questions/ideas.
2. **Live Parlor** - participate in a roundtable discussion about the reading and ideas generated from the reading. The primary skills emphasized in this work are active listening, responding, and oral synthesis of emerging ideas.

Each Parlor will have **TWO Grades**
1. Parlor Post
2. Live Parlor

Sample Parlor Cycle
- August 30 - Parlor Post 1 post due (homework)
- August 30 - Live Parlor 1 roundtable discussion (in-class)

Live Parlor Goals
1. Have the text open for reference during the discussion
2. Actively participate throughout the discussion (listen and respond to classmates' thoughts; ask questions to clarify or extend your own or classmates' ideas; etc.)
3. Demonstrate that you have read the text (quote from the text when you ask/answer questions; refer to passages you read; etc.)

Online Parlor Cycle

We will mimic the Parlor by having robust academic discussions. Since we won't be face-to-face in a classroom, we'll be having Online Parlors (OPs) via Canvas discussion forums.

Each Online Parlor will include a predictable three-part cycle:
1. An Initial Post to a forum (all students)
2. Creating a Synthesis of the Initial Posts (when assigned, at least once during the semester)
3. A Talkback response to the synthesis (all students)

This cycle allows us to mimic the kind of meaning-making of the traditional Parlor. We'll be listening to each other, putting our own ideas out there, and then processing the understandings we've generated as a class of thinkers and writers.

Each Parlor will have **THREE Grades:**
1. Initial Post
2. Synthesis (when assigned)
3. Talkback

Sample Parlor Cycle
- August 30 - Initial Post 1 due (all students)
- September 1 - Synthesis due (for those assigned)
- September 3 - Talkback due (all students)

Synthesis Assignment Description

Purpose

This assignment asks you to critically read your classmates' discussion forum posts and practice the skill of synthesizing them.

What is Synthesis?

Watch this Synthesis Tutorial. Take notes if necessary since you will use the strategies outlined as well as the sample synthesis to complete this assignment.

Assignment Steps

1. Review the format and layout of the Sample Parlor Synthesis
2. Read through your classmates' posts and copy quotes that seem relevant onto a Word or Google doc.
3. Use the quotes to identify at least 3 themes.
4. Create a Matrix similar to the one described in the video.
5. Write a synthesis that describes the themes you've identified. Incorporate the quotes from your classmates. Your synthesis should be around 300 words.

Sample Online Parlor Synthesis

Created By Ted Lasso

Synthesis

Throughout the Parlor responses about Digital Minimalism, the responses heavily rely on the toxicity of social media and its connection to the 21st century, wherein in today's society, technology is everywhere. Many of the responses highlight their lack of questioning in their own relationship with social media, simply because they lived into the generation where social media was born. Roy Kent shares how "being a part of the generation that was raised on technology, the addiction aspect brought a lot of past memories" in which young people are trapped in "one big popularity contest." The habit of craving to gain popularity is the closest definition of addiction.

"Addiction" is an uncomfortable word because as Coach Beard describes, "I thought I had control over social media, [but] I was wrong" which is the mindset of unchecked addiction. But why do we lose control? A shocking discovery was revealed about the business of social media - the use of manipulative psychology to "program[ing] people to act, behave, and look a certain way" to make profits (Keeley Jones). The disturbing findings spike curiosity in how social media is related to, as Higgins adds, "the idea of 'big brother' and the almost dystopian description of companies resonated with that [addiction] idea."

The successful use of carefully designed features in social media creates fear and enhances negative emotion. It is the fear of missing out on whatever feels "important" when scrolling through or how social media can be used to bring awareness but yet "can affect your mood [in a negative way] for the rest of day" (Jamie Tartt). Fear enhances uneasiness of what the future will look like, especially for the generations ahead of us, especially when social media already "has turned into a dangerous world of its own, harming users mentally, emotionally, or even physically" (Trent Crimm).

Matrix

Name:	Addiction is the nickname of social media	Social Media Technology's companies' Use of Psychology	Social media enhances fear and emotion.	Social media was born in our generation.
Jeremy	...it is a place where popularity and addiction sprouts			
Colin	While a technology addiction may	"It is unsettling to think about how heavily they are		"It is not uncommon to see children

	not manifest itself in the same way, they can still have very real consequences on our lives.	incentivized to make money off of us, the user."		barely old enough to speak being captivated by a tablet or their parents' phone for hours on end, practically ensuring that they will grow up to continue these unhealthy habits."
Rebecca	"...how invested we are in maintaining an image on these apps."			"Most social media users care so much about how many likes or comments they get, because it is one big popularity contest." -
Dani Rojas	"I know I would gain much more satisfaction and knowledge from reading than wasting so much time on social media, however, it has been a hard habit to break."	"I feel a bit naive in thinking that many social media features were designed for utility/usefulness when, in reality, they were designed to increase screen time"		
Higgins	"While in the writing, the use of the word addiction aptly fits, but it seemed as if they feared something else."	"The idea of 'big brother' and the almost dystopian description of companies resonated with that idea…"	The illustration of mindlessly wandering a news website, not wanting to close the app for fear of missing out on whatever post was just off-screen.	

Coach Beard	"I thought I had control over social media, I was wrong."		"There is a good chance of being left behind since so much today relies on the internet and social media (even school)."	
Sam Obisanya	"The first thing I do when I wake up is check my phone and see if anybody has texted me. When I forget to charge my phone or I don't know where it is, I have a mini panic attack."	"Until today, I didn't realize how the social media and technology companies are using our minds to earn money."		"I have realized our minds are being controlled by likes, comments, and retweets. Everyone in my generation is constantly worrying about how many likes they got on an Instagram post and if the person they like has snapped chatted them back yet."
Roy Kent			"If I missed 2 or 3 days because I went on a camping trip I'd scroll through liking everything because I had to catch up."	"Being a part of the generation that was raised on technology, the addiction aspect brought up a lot of passed memories with technology."
Jamie Tartt			"It is important to bring awareness to these injustices because change needs to happen, however, waking up to seeing another victim of police brutality can affect your	

			mood for the rest of day.”	
Thierry Zoreaux		“...shows how true that is because of the features and new things that all social media apps do to keep their users on their apps for the longest time.”		““Our generation grew up on social media and we grew up looking for "likes" from our peers.”
Dr. Sharon Fieldstone			“A question that the two chapters gave me is if the idea of phone and social media addictions is being taught in schools to young kids? If so, how serious is it being taken?”	
Keeley Jones		“...programming people to act, behave, and look a certain way.”		“Today we have social media and entertainment platforms where we use them to judge ourselves and to gain popularity.”
Nathan		“These social media creators are successful because they know how to manipulate our brains to absorb it. No one knew that we would become this entrapped.”		““Numerous times have I heard my parents or grandparents say that our young generation has become so addicted to technologies such as cellphones or video games that we don’t

				know how to function as people without them."
Trent Crimm			...has turned into a dangerous world of its own, harming users mentally, emotionally, or even physically.	"Nowadays, this can start from a very young age, and this can cause many issues while children are growing up and taking the next steps in their lives."