Dear American Studies New Tech Students,

We are very pleased with the work you did on the project, “Twittering in a Combat Zone” and have learned a great deal about the potential for using Twitter in the classroom and the ways you are capable of learning about difficult new media concepts and applying your learning to your projects. We would like to continue our work with you and would like to research what might happen when you create fan fiction and podcasts. This work is important to you because it will prepare you for the 21st century workplace where skills for learning collaboratively, making decisions with others, negotiating your understandings, and using social media are essential. These skills are reinforced in this project.

We would like you to creatively engage in fiction writing and create a piece of fan fiction for “On the Rainy River” in *The Things They Carried*. You will also be asked to write a detailed formal reflection of the process you used to create your piece of fan fiction and what you learned, as you did in the last project. That was very helpful to us and we appreciate the work you put into it. In doing the fan fiction activity, you will get better at using the skills of appropriating, speculating, remixing, and empathizing. You will also develop the important literary skill of “character analysis.”

Henry Jenkins, noted media scholar, describes the creation of fan fiction as finding the “gaps or excesses in the unfolding of the story…. Readers… elaborate on these story elements, working them over through their speculations, until they take on a life of their own. Fan fiction can be seen as an unauthorized expansion… into new directions which reflect the reader's desire to ‘fill in the gaps.’” Fan fiction is also a way of thinking about reading in a broader sense and a way of moving from the local to the global by implementing a new trend. The electronic world and social media lets us interact with books in new ways, and we will be taking advantage of this new trend.

In the Twitter project, you demonstrated learning about the experience of the Vietnam War, and you also raised questions about the history and purpose of the War. To do a good job with this project, you will need to demonstrate an understanding of the history surrounding the Vietnam War. You will do this by creating podcasts modeled after NPR’s “This American Life” or “StoryCorps.” The topics you will address will be provided when your work begins on the project, and you can choose what interests you for a list of possible topics.

We value the work you have put into the Twitter project and look forward to working with you as you create fan fiction and podcasts.

Sincerely,

Jenna McWilliams

Mary Beth Hines

Jenny Conner

Steve Bishop

Dan Hickey