

Karina Benziger

Writing 1122

Professor Campbell

February 9, 2009

Position Statement

Since advanced technology has shifted the learning atmosphere within classrooms, the University of Denver's Writing Program should incorporate blogs, wikis, and podcasts to improve student's writing skills. Wikis, podcasts, and blogs encourage students to tailor their text according to the specific audience reviewing the new technology which is a key component to motivate students to write in a more sophisticated manner. In addition, these applications encourage student engagement outside the classroom since they are based on the internet and easily assessable. Writing in different rhetorical situations and platforms for public audiences will enhance students' writing skills to meet the standards and goals of the Writing Program by integrating these technologies.

The article "Embrace the Wiki Way!" by Matt Barton advises professors how to use wikis best in their classrooms. Wikis are "simply websites that erase the boundaries between authors and readers" (Barton 1). Anyone is able to access the edit button on the wiki to change or update it, and each version is saved under its history. Original authors are notified when their pages are modified and can either accept the alterations or undo the additions. When planning a class project with either a "bibliographic format," "a statement on behalf of the class," or even a "reference guide," teachers can invite students to share, comment, and add anything to the wiki that would benefit the rest of the class

(Barton 4, 5). Wikis are easily accessible to both students and professors as a website that can be updated for everyone to view. This is a very useful within or outside a classroom setting and depicts another type of rhetorical platform students would benefit from. The engagement of new technology in and outside the classroom is critical; wikis demonstrate great a tool that further includes students in active learning and enhances content delivery which is a primary goal of the Writing Program.

Doug Dangler, Ben McCorkle, and Time Barrow express their views on podcasting, in the article, "Podcasting and the Classroom Audience." They conclude that podcasts allow instructors to teach beyond classroom time by engaging students in supplemental material that is not covered in class, such as class reviews, reflections on discussions, and further explanations that can be posted on the Internet. These podcast applications help build a collaborative, interactive atmosphere that promotes active learning outside the classroom. Educators can also post on the internet, "recorded interviews with professional colleagues on topics germane to the class" (Dangler, McCorkle, and Barrow 2). My own experience in an online Business 1040 class confirms the success of podcasts since my professor posted a couple on Blackboard further explaining how to work with Microsoft Excel. The clip was established in Excel with my professor's voice in the background demonstrating with the mouse how to create a pivot table. It was helpful to listen and understand while experiencing the visual demonstration of what to do. Students will experience a greater education and appreciate the encouragement of engaging outside the classroom as they witness professors properly deliver content through podcasts.

Charles Tryon emphasizes the use of blogs within first-year writing seminars in his article “Writing and Citizenship: Using Blogs to Teach First-Year Composition” while Tryon advocates the important activity of web logging in a first-year composition class to engage his students in writing for a public audience. By emphasizing that “writing matters,” students became active participants in productive discussions, confirming Tryon’s aspirations of his students accurately understanding the “interactivity in the blog world” (Tryon 128,130). Advanced technology today allows students to engage in new ways of learning and actively participate in innovative learning experiences. Students benefit from writing in a more serious manner for the public audience that views blogs. Tryon claims that using blogs will, “instill in [his] students that much of the writing that they will do in their academic lives and beyond will require them to make and support arguments...” (128). He hopes to “help students become invested in their writing, to give them a sense that writing-and citizenship- matters” (128). Productive conversations, arguments, and constructive feedback between students resulted when discussions, articles, and kindled questions immediately appeared on the blogs. This proves the blog’s effectiveness since students felt a passion to write about important topics, blogging is also a valuable tool that emphasized the foundations of rhetoric.

Public audiences are essential for students to improve their writing skills since students are pressured to think through their work before submitting it on the Internet through blogs, wikis, and podcasts. Tryon discovered that when bloggers failed to review their work or express their arguments creatively, endless feedback and criticism emerged from other blog writers. Therefore, Tryon and his students were able to compose a set of

rules and approaches for writing in a blog setting, which maximized their potential to write successfully for a larger audience. Although some students found the Internet intimidating, other's expressed an alter ego and succeeded in blog writing; these "students felt validated when outsiders commented on their blog entries" (Tryon 130). Similar to blogs, podcasts created by a student for a public audience within a first-year composition class foster critical thinking and improve writing techniques with basic elements of rhetorical analysis.

When creating a podcast, students must consider the delivery of the information more because "situation expectations [need to be] established between the podcaster and his or her audience" (Dangler, McCorkle, Barrow 2). According to Dickie Selfe, these expectations are the advantage of using podcasting in class assignments rather than other forms of digital audio (qtd. in Dangler, McCorkle, and Barrow 2). Authors of podcasts need to be aware of the "long-term organization and commitment that goes along with [the project]" because peer and instructor evaluation will require revising (Dangler, McCorkle, Barrow 3). Authors need to consider the logos, ethos, and pathos in their work before submitting it for the public to make sure they evoke the right emotions from listeners. The additional component of a public audience inspires students who post on blogs and create podcasts to improve their writing skills since their work is being reviewed and assessed by people other than the professor.

Since many of the professors at University of Denver may not be as technology savvy as needed to understand blogs, podcasts, and wikis for class assignments, DU must consider a training course in advanced technology for educators to know how to deliver modern technologies. The future benefits of professional development through a

technology-training course in order to use the applications in class outweigh the cost for a preparation class. Although there may be hesitation to put in the time, effort, and resources into a training course, professors and students will gain the advantage within school and future professions of being “consumers and producers of media products in the future” (Dangler, McCorkle, and Barrow 3).

Blogs, podcasts, and wikis represent the latest technology being engaging students inside and outside the classrooms to improve their writing skills because the key element of a public audience heightens students desire to write effectively. These applications will help demonstrate the concept of analyzing and writing in different rhetorical situations using basic elements such as logos, ethos, and pathos and produce writing that effectively provides evidence from many sources. The University of Denver’s first-year writing composition class will be at a greater advantage if professors and students are exposed to these different technologies as they improve writing skills with the aspect of public audience and create engagement within and outside the classroom to meet the goals of the Writing Program.

Works Cited

Barton, Matt. "Embrace the Wiki Way!" MattBarton.net. 21 May 2004. 9 Feb 2009

<http://www.mattbarton.net/tikiwiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=4>.

Dangler, Doug, Ben McCorkle, and Time Barrow. "Podcasting and the Classroom Audience" Expanding Composition Audiences with Podcasting. 9 Feb 2009

<<http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/podcasting/classroom.htm>>.

Tryon, Charles. "Writing and Citizenship: Using Blogs to Teach First-Year Composition." Pedagogy 6:1(2006): 128-132.