

Larger Field

00:06

Lisa Gerrard: “What people have done over the years whether they were exploring word processing or inventing software or blogs or having students do videos as a writing project, all of that came out of in some way of composition. So what I started in 1980 through 1985 or so, process based pedagogy was sort of the buzzword in composition. And the three sessions of the WANDAH program were inventions, writing, rewriting. And that came right out of what I was learning for composition writing, American composition. I couldn’t have even thought of that if I hadn’t come to a writing program and reading Linda Flower and all of those burly based composition theorists.”

01:09

Cindy Self: “I think that computers in writing folks have always had a sense of humor about this because they realize that everybody in English studies is implicated in a technological system, they just do not realize it. So when people say oh, you’re the computer people who work in computer environments, they never come to us and say that they’re the pencil people, that they work with paper and we work with print and we do this kind of work. They ought to think of the kind of technology they use as well, and I think that over the years a lot of people in computers in writing have said well, I think it’s not that people who use digital technology have to think about why they use those technologies and what the implications and affordances of those technologies are, and what the people who use pencils and papers and pens and printed books also have to think very hard about the implications of those technological systems on communications and compositions and the nature of the exchange of ideas. To me, I think there’s still plenty of difference between the two. I think computers and composition is still the smaller, more intimate professional space and that composition and rhetoric studies is the larger space, I feel very much at home there. We’ve both been very welcomed there, but I think that the larger field doesn’t always pay close enough attention to the tools and the ways in which humans interface with those tools.”

03:16

Gail Hawisher: “It’s hard to belong to just say, composition studies or just writing studies. I think this has always been a character of the larger field of rhetoric and composition, we have sought other fields to inform our research.”

03:34

Charles Moran: “Well long ago I said to Gail Hawisher and wrote somewhere, that everyone was going to be writing on computers and trying to figure out if people wrote better on computers or not was an absolute waste of time. I thought to say later on that everyone is going to be writing on computers so the need for computers in writing as a separate entity was going to disappear and computers in writing would just submerge seamlessly into rhetoric and theory or composition in theory or whatever we call ourselves. I just don’t know, I could see it going either way. We have to figure out a reason for having a separate, I would call it a subfield. We’d have to figure out a reason for calling it a subfield. And the reason could be that there are some people

who are especially interested in technology and its effects and they would be the subfield, they would write in computers in composition and so what and so forth. It is that institutions have their own dynamic and survival is a tremendous force. Nobody goes out of business in the academy unless they have to, nobody goes out of business in the economy unless they have to. If our university is in the grow or die mood, it has to grow or it will die, or at least that's what we believe, that's what the administration believes. And so we're doing a thumb drive and we're building buildings and so on and so forth. And this is an institutional dynamic. We might be better smaller, but then we wouldn't be a research one university. We would be like the state universities- 'horrible' and so it is grow or die. And that's going to happen, if it hasn't already, to computers in composition. People will be reluctant to let it die, even if it becomes in spirit and whatever like the rest of rhetoric composition."

06:03

Cheryl Ball: "Somebody mentioned this on Facebook just the other day. They said it used to be when you're talking to an entry level assistant professor in composition that everybody would know what you mean when you talk about the history of composition and the basic movement and the process of writing and Excel and these very basic you know, everybody knows Jim Berlin and everybody knows so and so's work. That's not true anymore, which is kind of weird in a way. But what we have either given up or missed in training graduate students in the history of the field and those threshold conversations, we have gained in the diversity of the field. I don't just mean people but I mean concepts but also how concepts and people are related."

07:04

Mike Palmquist: "What I think is really cool about this is that we have sort of rediscovered the canon of delivery in ways that we had left out when I was coming through graduate school. We didn't talk much about the deliveries it was that's for speech or that's for morals but we don't really talk about that. Well, the heck we don't! We talk about that all the time so the canon of delivery is extraordinarily important and that's where computers in writing as a field has really led the larger field of composition and rhetoric. The notion of delivery as a critical part of what we do as rhetoricians."

07:41

Michael Day: "Kathleen Blake Yancey keynote for her chairs address for 4C's in... when was she... 2003 or so? When she said made not only in words even a moment in composition can be something beyond, can and should be something beyond what we are looking at in text and on paper."