Pencils to Pixels

00:05

Michael Day: "It is finally, and it wasn't in earlier years, recognized that this basic premise that the computer is the major tool in writing and so therefore, we should be using it."

00:18

Lisa Gerrard: "There is research in the process of writing, they talk over their ideas with each other on the computer. They email me their papers and I comment on them in email you know? Imagine that! So, I mean the computer is part of that whole process of teaching writing."

00:37

Steve Krause: "What is interesting about chalkboards, and this is part of what I was writing about in that essay, is when chalkboards were introduced, they were seen as this incredible technical innovation. And they were seen as this sort of… I think there was a quote that I quoted from somebody else having said 'the using of a chalkboard or blackboard allows students to see what someone is thinking.' In other words, they were sort of a window into this sort of vision for everyone to see. And it is difficult for us to imagine what it would be like without that technology because we are so immersed in it. You know what I mean? I mean, I give an assignment a lot of times in classes where I ask students to write something that is twenty-five words or less. But they cannot use pens, paper, computers, typewriters, any of these modern technologies of writing. They have to essentially invent their own tools. And the whole point of that is to highlight the materiality of writing. The whole extent to which we are dependent on tools. So, when Walter Ong was talking about literacy as a technology, that is an interesting theory, but the thing is that it is also not a theory. It is a reality in terms of, we cannot make writing without the tools around us and we are dependent on the tools around us in ways that they become invisible to us eventually. So, chalkboards no longer represent technology. Pencils are another good example that I mean Dennis Barron has written about that very well in the sense that you cannot really make a pencil at home and things like that. So, computers in terms of what is happening with all of this. It is not as dramatic in course, it is not as naturalized yet, but it has still become pretty natural. I am old enough to remember when people did not trust ATM machines."

02:57

Will Hochman: "And I think there is a dilemma. Do we want to continue a brand name that is dependent on technology that is eventually going to be obsolete or quaint? We could have been called 'Pencils with Erasers in Writing' at the turn of the century or something ridiculous like that. Now it just seems a little silly but maybe those first teachers with erasers were blazing revision trails like you never saw!"

03:28

Charles Moran: "What the students learned was how to put together a webpage and website and that had possible commercial and job applications for them. They also learned, as did I, the

integration of graphics and language which was really important. It took us back to an earlier stage in graphics where graphics were always a part of writing. And somehow post 18th century, graphics dropped out entirely and we became a text-based outfit. But moving graphics back into the mix was really interesting and exciting."

04:13

Cheryl Ball: "We're not just writing in print as you said before, you know, we're not just writing in digital environments either. We are composing, designing, we are creating these performance or rhetorical pieces. They are much bigger than a written piece of paper. But, producing that kind of text versus producing a print kind of text- a linear text, an alphabetic text- the process is still the same rhetorical process. What am I building, for whom, in what context, what materials are going to satisfy that rhetorical situation? And so, how do I figure out how to gather those rhetorical assets?"