

Technologies and Possibilities

00:05

Lisa Gerrard: “I think that computers in writing has always attracted people who want to try something new, to experiment, and it might be a total failure but to try anyway. In the early years of the conference, many of the presentations were about things that people tried in their classrooms that totally failed. And that was not a cause for embarrassment, it was part of, it was all of us learning together, it was part of that whole experience. Where now I think that people can, and I might be wrong about this because I have not studied the recent years, but people tend to write in growing terms about what goes on in computers in writing and how it is going to change this or that. And I think that people feel they need to do that because it’s expensive for schools to have a computer-based classroom. So there is a need to justify what you are doing to administrators that we did not really have at the beginning, because we did not have computer-based classrooms, we usually had or what I usually had was six computers in a room in the library that was in the back of the stacks.”

01:24

Charles Moran: “I think the guise behind our repeated, it is almost an algorithm, some new piece of technology comes out and we have a couple of articles in computers and composition about how this new thing, whatever it is, can help us improve classroom atmosphere, empower writers, do all the things that we want it to do. And then after a bit there is this critical look at this technology because someone else has used it to do something bad or that we judge to be bad. Then we kind of move onto the next new thing, and I don’t mean to be cynical about that at all. I think it comes from an admirable desire to make things better and I think that is where we fit. We want to make things better and we see technology as a chance to make things a little better.”

02:34

Kristin Arola: “The new technology that comes in, whatever it is, social media or MOOK’s, so this new technology that comes in. And that year you will see presentations in computers in writing all about just that technology itself. Like huh, what’s this? How will we use it? What is it good for? And then the next couple years you will see the critiques of said technology. Like oh, who is it for? Who is it including, who is it excluding? And then there seems to be some point threaded in there where we say okay, it is not inherently good, it is not inherently bad, how should or can we teach with it? And then you see that cycle again and again.”

03:15

Michael Day: “In early years, Fred Camp, Trent Batson, Gail Hawisher, Cindy and Dicky Selfe, speaking of getting us to this of ethics and politics, of what we do with technologies in writing class that they are real superstars in getting us to take a step back and be critical of technological literacies.”

03:47

Michael Palmquist: “People get enthusiastic about these new technologies and this is more five to six years ago, maybe even ten years ago. They would spend so much time teaching students how to use a particular tool that would become class time that was used up and students would be struggling with it but by the end they would know how to do a video. When they could have

spent more of their time doing other things and maybe learning how to do that video was less important than the overall goals of what that course was.”

04:11

Michael Day: “It has been a movement afoot for a long time to connect both learning styles and gender, race, basically difference among students in affordance of network based classrooms, where some of this time you could be working not face to face as we are now, but you could be working with your fingers on a keyboard and not paying attention to that, so somewhat freed up from some of the constraints of a classroom setting where some people may be feeling social pressure to act or think in a specific way. One of the things we realized early on was that if you do it synchronously people are forced to think quickly and, on their feet, but if you do it asynchronously, they can put in a lot of thought into it. What you have in some class discussions are proto-essays, and the cool thing about that is either the chats or the email, asynchronous discussions can lead to, they are a stepping stone to a more formal piece of writing. I want writing to be noticed, public and engaged in social fabric not just in the university but in the community as well. And I used to say there are ways in which technologies can help us do that, and now I say that it is kind of vital that we, that we cannot be involved in civic discourse for example, or in a lot of workplace discourse unless we understand that we can use these technologies efficiently, intelligently and ethically.”