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TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Composition 2.0 is a “movement defined by its iterative, collaborative, and participatory approach to composing and working with information” (Day, McClure, Palmquist). ***Composition 2.0 is not a matter of whether or not to incorporate technology in the classroom, but how and in what ways.*** As a writing instructor in the 21st century, I see it as my duty and my privilege to create a space for my students to explore, to fail, to tinker, and to expand their notions of technology use as both communication and a meaning making process

Composition 2.0 in My Classroom

In my composition courses as well as my upper level course on Writing Theory and the Writing Process, I give students tinkering possibilities for assignments; I do not dictate product. ***I want my students to make informed decisions*** on what media will best deliver their message. For example, after discussing the topic for a couple weeks, I had my students write an extended definition of multimodality. Those students who focused on how social media relies on multimodality created their definition through an Instagram story or a series of Tweets. Those students who described how writing has always been multimodal created their definitions as comics or a children’s book. By not having strict parameters, I have found their work to be more creative, more thoughtful, and more rhetorically sound.

I also recognize that if I want my students to not only buy into digital writing, but really value it, then I have to show them that I value it as well. I don’t simply talk about the value of digital writing, but I enact it too. ***Living a digital life as a teacher means*** that I am communicating with them on their blogs (and keeping one of my own), I am creating a writer website along with them, I digitally create important course documents (like their syllabus) as a digital text, and I incorporate digital media as well as digital composition every day that we are in the class. Please see examples of my digital course documents and pedagogy on my website: kendralandrews.com.

Students are often nervous to approach the digital space with the ***messiness, experimental nature, and revision that technological work must require.*** Although it can be a messy process (and one that often creates frustration), students become the authority of their work because they went through the labor of it and they made their own choices. I tell my students who are working on digital or multimodal projects with a critical or rhetorical framework of production for the first time that if they aren’t frustrated or challenged by their process, then they need to start over. We only learn when we move out of what we already know. ***With multimodal composing and technological literacy practices, there are new possibilities for invention.*** No longer is the composer locked into a stasis paradigm with a linear model for thinking, composing in multiple ways can create a choric space for invention where the composer can revel in the messiness of thought and new composing experiences.

Continuity and Change as a Teacher

I knew that I was going to be a teacher by the age of four. While my areas of focus may have changed over the years, I continued in my passion as an educator. Although the levels or areas have changed, I have kept my main principles as a teacher: to ***find something that each student is passionate about and can excel in***, to serve as a safe space for students to discuss issues of importance to them, and to create possibilities to bring what they do in the classroom to the world outside. These principles are always my guide, but I think that ***a teacher needs to be willing to shift and change to keep learning how to best approach her classroom.***