Issues in Teaching Series

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Abstract: This whitepaper documents the goals of an Issues in Teaching series established by the pedagogy developer group within the CWRL, detailing the creation of the series and the ways in which it is meant to be used by instructors. The whitepaper also includes sample spotlights that were included in the 2004-2005 Issues in Teaching series.

In the Fall of 2004, the Computer Writing and Research Lab formed its first group of developers dedicated entirely to supporting innovative and pedagogically sound computer-assisted teaching. One of our first goals was to establish a series focusing on issues in teaching. We envisioned a series of articles that would spotlight the work of instructors of English and rhetoric in the CWRL, as well as issues unique to teaching in a computer lab. We hope that the series, along with our contributions on professionalization and teaching philosophies, will serve as a useful tool for instructors as they prepare both effective and creative lessons and teaching portfolios.

The CWRL does not have an established body of assignments like the rhetoric and composition Blue File. Whereas the Blue File provides instructors with classroom assignments, essay topics, and other pre-written pedagogical material, we wanted to encourage instructors to reflect on the theoretical underpinnings of their own pedagogies. The Issues in Teaching spotlights offer a varied series of adaptive assignments, uses for technology and theoretical and pedagogical rationales

that encourage instructors to think critically and creatively about their roles as teachers. Rather than asking experienced instructors to submit pre-written assignments, the series invited instructors to discuss various computer classroom assignments in light of their own teaching philosophies. By highlighting good teaching and successful assignments as well as the pedagogical foundations that inform the choices made by the spotlight instructors, we hoped to negotiate the tension between the practical aspects of teaching and larger theoretical framework. In other words, instead of merely addressing "what to do on Monday," the Issues in Teaching series helps instructors put their theory into action during every class.

Our initial series featured a piece on the pros and cons of using blogs as a teaching tool with first hand experience and troubleshooting from several instructors; an essay on one instructor's incorporation of feminist pedagogy into her computer classroom; a discussion of three instructors' movie-making assignments; and, finally, a feature on a specific web design assignment for a literature course with links to assignment sheets, sample pages and pedagogical rationale. [See appendices A through D.] Each of these spotlights is meant to be adaptive. We hope that instructors will cull useful practical and theoretical frameworks from the assignments and experiences of fellow instructors and adapt them to their own teaching needs and style.

The spotlight series is a multi-purpose professional tool. Instructors can see how to articulate their motivations for the use of technology in the classroom as they build their teaching portfolio and start to think about how they wish to present themselves as an educator when they enter the job market. Although many universities and colleges will not have the extensive resources of the CWRL, thinking critically about the rationale for specific pedagogy in or out of the computer lab as well as innovative ways of approaching the humanities will prove useful in job interviews inside and outside the academy.

We see this series as a combination of the philosophical, present in excerpts from teaching philosophies and pedagogical rationales, and the practical, evident in specific yet adaptable assignments. Taken together they provide a professional model that can be shaped according to an instructor's particular needs. The series is meant to read as a body that will hopefully not only prove practically applicable for our own teachers but also raise the profile of the CWRL as a unique liberal arts learning environment. In an effort to facilitate those goals, we would like to see the Issues in Teaching spotlight series take a more prominent place on the CWRL Web site as next years' developers continue the series. The Issues in Teaching series would better serve instructors if it were demarcated from the rest of the CWRL home page by an icon, banner or simple differentiation of color background. The incorporation of such changes, along with better headlining and more

visuals, would emphasize the spotlights as part of a sequence. If the series is presented more effectively visually and spatially, we hope that more instructors will take advantage of this resource.

Appendix A: Spotlight on course blogs
Appendix B: Spotlight on feminist pedagogy
Appendix C: Spotlight on class movie-making projects
Appendix D: Spotlight on class Web design activity

Appendix A

Steps toward a Successful Classroom Blog

For many writing teachers, our first response to the growing popularity of online weblogs is something like what my colleague exclaimed when I first showed her a number of blogs: "Cool! But, how in the world would I actually use this?" My colleague's response reflects both the potential and the difficulty of integrating blogs into the computer classroom. While blogs can encourage a dynamic and community-oriented writing environment, there are some steps an instructor can take in order to create a more successful experience with classroom blogs. In an effort to share some of these ideas with other writing teachers, two CWRL instructors, Tom Nelson and Mariela Hristova, discuss their own experiences with classroom blogs. Although they use blogs in different ways, Tom and Mariela suggest some basic strategies for productive classroom blogging. Both instructors agree that is important to pursue a clear purpose and context when integrating blogs into a writing classroom.

Tom Nelson: The Purpose of a Classroom Blog

Tom is currently using blogs in his Rhetoric 309m course, where students are divided into "blog groups" according to their interests. The groups in Tom's class include blogs on such subjects as politics, sports, movies and music, food, and technology. Students post weekly writings that relate to their group's topic. Rather than imposing the criteria for what counts as an acceptable post, however, Tom asked students to create their own rules for what the group's blog should include. The groups were asked to collectively decide on guidelines for each post's content, style, and length.

Students responded to this assignment by reflecting on the rhetorical goals of the blog, the needs of their audience, and as the desires of the group. For example, the technology group decided that posts to their blog "should discuss some aspect of technology and how that affects people. Post should offer answers as well as questions into the future of the technology being discussed." In addition, the group

specified the blog's style should take "a more casual approach . . . in order to gain a more personal experience. All technical terminology that is uncommon to most should be defined or linked. Sources must be stated if they exist, and general good conduct is expected."

By asking the groups to devise their own criteria, Tom suggests that students are able to define their own purposes of what the blog should accomplish. This helps students to engage more with the rhetorical situation in which they are writing. A student can use her group's own guidelines as a way of determining whether or not her post is helping to accomplish these goals.

In addition to designing their own guidelines, Tom asks the groups to further define their rhetorical purpose by addressing a clear audience. The groups achieve this goal by generating their own "blog rolls," or lists of relevant links to other blogs that relate to the same topic. Students research similar blogs and add links from the group's main page. This kind of "blog rolling" helps students to refine their own sense of the discourse communities that surround their group's subject.

Mariela Hristova: Putting Blogs into a Context

Mariela currently uses blogs in her Rhetoric 306 class. Unlike Tom, Mariela asks students to keep individual blogs, where students post reflections about their development in the course. This allows the blogs to serve as a kind of online portfolio for students, helping them to track their own progression from one assignment to the next. More than just a "progress report," however, the portfolio-style blog can also help students to generate invention work and ideas about current projects or future revisions.

In past semesters, Mariela has also integrated a single class blog into her courses. Students were asked to post responses, questions, and thoughts about the week's readings. While many teachers require such reading responses from students, the blog format makes student responses immediately available to the entire class. Mariela often began her classes by reading aloud these posts as a way of generating discussion. She explains that this helped to put students' blog writing into a real context, bringing various "out of classroom" ideas back into the classroom. By putting blog posts into actual use within the day-to-day exchanges of a class, students are encouraged to view their own writing as existing within a specific context.

Mariela suggests that framing class blogs within a context is crucial. Students better understand their rhetorical purposes for writing when they envision their writing within a real context. This context—the sense of having an audience who want to engage with the writer's ideas—also helps to create a rhetorical purpose for writing (beyond

just fulfilling an assignment). Instructors can even contextualize student blogs by having cross-classroom blogging exchanges with other classes or a real group of readers outside the classroom. As Jill Walker writes:

> Weblogs are good as learning journals (searchable, writing practice, catching thoughts, intellectual workout. . .) but all these things could be done in a paper notebook - though the knowledge that other people are (or can be) reading is important. What's more important to teach our students is network literacy: writing in a distributed, collaborative environment. Bringing network literacy to the classroom means jolting students out of the conventional individualistic, closed writing of essays only ever seen by your professor.

By stressing the importance of a broad writing context, Mariela echoes Walker's arguments about network literacy. If a blog's writing never seems to circulate outside of the student-teacher loop, it is difficult to achieve the fuller collaborative and dynamic potential of classroom blogs.

Summary

Both Tom and Mariela suggest some specific ways to achieve more successful and productive classroom blogging. These include:

- Encouraging students to generate their own guidelines for blogs.
- Asking students to create "blog rolls" that engage the same discourse communities that they wish to address.
- Integrating students' blog posts in day-to-day classroom discussions.
- Pursue cross-classroom networks of readers.

Although these are only a few examples of how to implement blogs in the writing class, Tom and Mariela point out two important things for instructors to consider: (1) students should be able to recognize a rhetorical purpose of their blog by (2) understanding a clear context for their writing. When both of these elements are well planned, the classroom blog promises to deliver many exciting possibilities for composition classes.

More information about classroom blogs:

http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/ Into the Blogosphere

http://huminf.uib.no/~jill/index.php?p=541 Jill Walker: "Weblogs: Learning to Write in the Network"

http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/javascript/2002/06/13/megnut. html Meg Hourihan: "What We're Doing When We Blog"

Appendix B

Melanie Ulrich's Feminist Pedagogy

Homepage: http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/
Academic Portfolio: http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/main/

"Technology is not the revolution but, in an increasingly technologized world, it is a critical part of it. Feminist teachers can use it and so contribute to a pragmatics and politics of hope and utopian yearning by imagining a world without injustice, inside and outside of the academy"
– Carol L. Winkelmann, 35

For this spotlight on feminist pedagogy in the computer classroom, I spoke with Melanie Ulrich, graduating PhD Candidate in the English Department, about two of her courses: Reading Women Writers and the Rhetoric of Anglo-American Feminism. Throughout our conversation, we agreed that we would like to see more resources for feminist teaching in the computer classroom. This spotlight is an attempt to begin such a resource base; here I focus the spotlight on two of Melanie's central uses of technology, context and collaboration. In order to demonstrate the centrality of Melanie's own teaching work to a growing field of pedagogical writing on feminism and technology, I weave in voices of three authors from the field of feminist pedagogy and technology. This conversation between Melanie and the authors provides an accessible beginning for those instructors new to feminist pedagogy or for those feminist instructors considering a technology-based classroom.

I. Context in E314L: Reading Women Writers

Course Website:
http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/rww03/

Margery Kempe Context Website:
http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/rww02/margerykempe/

In Melanie's E314L, she recognizes that the distance in time between the texts and the students' lives may make inhibit "collaborative discourse [...] related to current social issues in their own lives," as Sara P. Pace, then Assistant Instructor at Texas Women's University, describes above. To generate understanding and collaboration in spite of this gap, Melanie explains, "I use the computer to create a cultural historical context for the texts. [...] Context makes alien texts more concrete, puts a face on people and places that are otherwise a blank for my students." By creating a context for the text, Melanie restores women's voices to historical narratives by placing women's works in conversation with 'standard' historical information. According to Melanie, this builds "connections between what you're doing and other things that are going on at the time," making a reading of women's texts "not hermetic, but relevant, larger." Melanie builds this context in two ways: through context websites she builds for her class and through a series of MOO [Multi-user domain Object Oriented] projects she conducts with her class.

The examples I offer here from Melanie's class relate to one text from that course, The Book of Margery Kempe, a text from the 1430s narrated by an illiterate Margery Kempe and transcribed by a monk (or several monks) and written in the form of a spiritual biography. Because texts like The Book of Margery Kempe present us with "an alien worldview," Melanie uses "technology to make that world clearer" to students. These context websites transform lecture topics into an interactive presentation guided by Melanie. She generates the website as a truly networked space that includes links, sound, images, and text to immerse students in the world of the text. Melanie guides her students through the website during class, but because it is online, students can access the website at any time. You can visit her context website for The Book of Margery Kempe at the website listed above, and you'll find other context websites linked from her course website, also listed above.

Melanie developed a companion project to the context website: the MOO projects provided space for students to participate in the world of the text. The MOO is a virtual space that can be shaped by students or instructor to include images, objects, and sounds in a series of rooms where students can 'talk' with each other in a text window. For a brief introduction to the MOO, visit http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/technology/moo/mooing.shtml. Melanie developed MOO spaces for several of her texts in this course (including Aphra Behn's Ooronoko and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre). For The Book of Margery Kempe she constructed a medieval hall where students would interact in character as either Margery Kempe or another medieval person responding to Margery Kempe.

The MOO benefited the class because it decentered authority,

"made [Kempe] more fun," and offered students a break from classroom dynamics (like an aggressive student). Xavier University Associate Professor Carol Winkelmann explains cyborg feminist theory through which we might view the MOO as ideal for feminist pedagogy: "[C]yborg feminism rejects both androgynous and essentialist views of gender. Instead, human nature is understood in a multiple-term schema that 'allows for connection in difference rather than in constantly guaranteeing identity through opposition or uniformity'" (24). Providing a space to take on alternative identities and experience difference, the MOO offers context both for the text and for a feminist learning environment.

There were some problems with the MOO, however. Having several MOO projects worked for Melanie because the first time there were technology problems, and at first it was difficult to know how many rooms to set up or how to make sure people were equally distributed among rooms. Students continued to complain about the lag time in communication, challenging the MOO's billing as a "synchronous" environment. Sara P. Pace had similar problems with the "asynchronous" environment of the discussion board, and determined that one solution is to learn the "genre" of the tool so that we can "let students develop a familiarity with the [...] genre" of the learning tool. Repeated MOO projects throughout the semester again helps here to familiarize students with the goals and limitations of the tool.

II. Collaboration in RHE 309K: Rhetoric of Anglo-American Feminism

Course Website:
 http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/RHE309/vicfemhome/

Women's Issues Then and Now:
http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/femhist/

Pamela Whitehouse, Technology Specialist at Harvard Graduate School of Education, designed her online women's studies course to achieve the feminist goals of "individual and group ownership of the class," "creating a safe place," and "building a community of active learners" (221); Melanie combines online with in-class learning to incorporate these goals into her rhetoric course. For Melanie, the computer classroom is a vital tool for countering student stereotypes about feminism: "The Internet helps to build a feminist bubble, especially when students say, 'Oh, feminists, what are those? I'm not one of those!' We can say, 'Look, we've got a Web presence.'" Ultimately, students in Melanie's course contribute to that web-presence and thus become a part of feminist history.

Melanie introduces students to the existing feminist Web presence by assigning for the first project a rhetorical analysis of a website. Their final project, then, is transformed into a collaborative website. This prepares them to critically read websites as well. Carol Winkelmann points out that "electronic technologies are not inherently liberatory" (26), and Melanie conveys this to students, explaining, "So much of their culture is coming to them via Internet, they need to be alert when they're constructing and reading electronic texts." Winkelmann articulates this construction as a tool "used to reconceptualize or rewrite classroom life because [it evokes] reading and writing practices as naturally collaborative or collective" (26).

For Melanie, the Web project makes the class more student-focused because students can choose their own issues and the paper format prepares them for their independent application of that learning. Melanie sees her class, then, as providing "a space for feminist community," and "the website makes that more concrete." "We're exhuming buried histories." You can view these histories at the collaboratively-constructed website "Women's Issues Then and Now: A Feminist Overview of the Past 2 Centuries," at the URL listed above.

Sara P. Pace describes the significance of keeping these classroom histories from being buried: "Given that scholarship dealing with feminism in the technology based first year composition classroom is sparse, it is crucial to examine how well we as feminist instructors can fit our pedagogical objectives in both modes of instruction: face to face and online" (104). Melanie's use of technology to uniquely create a classroom that generates context for and collaboration among students offers another vital example of how feminist instructors use technology to achieve our pedagogical (and social justice) objectives.

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Appendix C

"Take Two": Student Movies Give College Writing a New Look

Last summer, rhetoric instructor Jenny Edbauer borrowed the CWRL's digital video camera and looked at Austin through it. "I taped stuff and made a mini documentary for myself. I thought, 'This is another kind of writing.'" That insight enabled unique projects in her course RHE 309L: The Writing Process, in which students spent the semester researching topics of their choice and producing documentaries about those topics.

Edbauer's students worked in multiple media—one produced a bound book capturing the Red River Shootout from the perspectives of many generations of Longhorn football fans, others created Web sites, still others made movies about, for example, UT gym culture and the recent history of the Austin music scene.

Working on technology-rich projects energized them, Edbauer says. "They weren't just writing another essay. Their approach was more, 'I'm doing this and it's kind of amazing—I've never done anything like it.'

"Students commit themselves in a way I've never seen before because these projects are theirs," she adds. The movie-makers, in particular, "put hours into editing, making all these decisions—music, cuts, effects—it's a tremendous amount of work.

Through the documentaries, Edbauer covered "all the things you're supposed to cover" in a writing class: students learned research skills and to use quotations; they discussed style, audience and revision, she says. But their engagement with these course components was transformed from academic and removed to everyday and integral.

For example, research was more than a boring necessity for Edbauer's students: it became a "creative process," she says. Edbauer required both primary and secondary research from her students. "They had to search for what's interesting rather than just fill in slots." She challenged students not to let their preconceptions guide interviews with sources, but to let people surprise them, and lead their projects in new directions.

That sense of research as an open investigation meant starting early. "If you're still planning rather than producing midway through the semester, you're behind," Edbauer says.

Edbauer is quick to point out that supporting student video projects can be tough. She recounts many one-on-one help sessions, long hours working with students, and the trouble of getting technological resources in students' hands. "And it's all experimental for me, which is scary, but it's also the only way to start."

But striving toward her teaching ideals made the extra anxiety worthwhile, she says. "I'm committed to the idea that the future of writing classes will be more than just writing with words. And, as I become more dissatisfied with teaching genres of academic writing—say, types of arguments—I'm increasingly interested in the production of different types of non-academic writing that help make people more able to deal with the world on a daily basis."

Found in translation

Each student in Eric Dieter's RHE 309K: Rhetoric of Media created a five-minute movie as part of a semester-long focus on adaptation from word to image. Dieter wanted students to see the many decisions that go into transforming a narrative from one medium to another—and, thus, become more aware of the many arguments embedded in every text, he says.

"What we are asking is how and why images, ideas, issues, people,

places, and events are translated between different kinds of art," Dieter writes in his course description. "Then we will try our hand at making, and justifying, decisions in translations. We will concentrate on the translation of word into film, including short movies by you, starring you."

Dieter asked his students to write personal narratives, then trade stories: each student would make a movie of another's narrative. "While maintaining a certain sensitivity to the original document, students would adapt or translate that situation or story with their own thumbprint," Dieter says. Or, as he puts it in his course description, "What will you show? What will you cut? How will your movie look/ sound/feel? You will answer these questions, and plenty of others, before you shoot a single frame."

The movie-makers also produced "validation essays," Dieter explains. "They would write, 'Here is the film I was trying to make,' and include evidence from the film and the personal narrative. 'Here's what I tried to do and how reality set in.'"

Dieter was happily surprised that about 14 of his students had access to video cameras; for the rest, he checked out hardware from UT's Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services. He allowed students to borrow those University-owned cameras from him for four-hour blocks.

Managing limited resources and learning to use new software was challenging, Dieter says. "I had played around with iMovie [a digital video editing program] a bit over the summer, but a lot of my learning was on the fly."

Many students matched his extra efforts. "My expectations for the films were low—they didn't need to have music or dialogue. But they worked on it twice as long as I'd expected, each student averaging six or seven hours of in editing time alone.

"I had a lot of anxiety about the project—that they would think it was too hard or I'd be exposed as a fraud—but that never happened. They seemed to appreciate the time I spent with them. I though making films would be cool and interesting—and they seemed to think so too."

Framing the Future

Science fiction is a genre of apocalypse—and of hope, suggests Peter Caster in his RHE 309K: The Rhetoric of Crisis Cinema. The course considered representations of the future that imaginatively engage current social problems, offer visions of future social transformation, and call for change.

Or, to put it another way: "by projecting current problems into a future consumed by them, [science fiction] imagines annihilation

and can offer that imagination as a means of change. That is, seeing the future can extend the invitation to change it," Caster writes in his course description.

His students presented their own visions of the future in end-of-semester multimedia projects: many created short movies. "Whatever you make needs to meaningfully engage our course topic, and it needs to be cool," Caster writes in his assignment description.

Caster offers instructors who might assign movie projects some practical advice: "We need to try making films ourselves to see how much work is involved—our own attempts help us see how hard it is to make even a bad film."

And students should have "a lot of agency in the things they make," Caster says. That freedom will help them find projects that truly absorb them, which is important because making movies is "an incredible amount of work," he adds.

Caster based his assessment of student movies on analyses the students write of their work, not on the movies themselves. He writes in his assignment description: "You will write a paper that describes what you intended to do and the process of making your project, including an account of who did what. Then, you will offer an analysis of the degree to which you feel you met your goals, where you fell short and where you succeeded. What does your project mean? What does it do?"

Appendix D

George Waddington's Novel Ideas: Author/Text Websites

George Waddington, who has taught RHE 306, RHE 309K: Rhetoric of Authobiography and E314L in the CWRL, has incorporated multimedia group presentations with textual analysis in his E314L: Banned Books and Novel Ideas. Waddington successfully combined two projects that can are potentially onerous for students: group work and technology. By providing a clear framework and expectations for the assignment and hands-on tutorials, Waddington's E314L students were able to create engaging websites that allowed them to become experts on one of the class's novels, sharing their research not only with their peers but with a larger virtual classroom.

The assignment:

For the exact assignment, go to Waddington's class website at www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~waddington and click on the Fall 2002 version of the website. Then click on the group presentation or author websites

link. To see the Spring 2004 version, click on group presentations and author websites. The finished products can be accessed by clicking on the presentation schedule on the Spring 2004 site or on the images of the texts at the bottom of the screen on the Fall 2002 page.

Students often complain about group work but a clear and structured assignment allows students and instructors to take advantage the computer classroom's unique capabilities. In order to address the importance of the assignment, Waddington begins by establishing the pedagogical impetus behind group presentations in his classroom. He states in the first lines of the assignment: "I firmly believe that class presentations encourage student participation and investment in course material; thus they make for a more intimate learning environment and more exciting class time. Student presentations dissolve the traditional, polarized instructor/ class dialectic to allow class members to learn from one another and about one another." In addition, Waddington emphasizes the importance of confident and successful presentations to the majority of students' career choices, saying that "oral presentation is a great skill that goes back to the importance of rhetoric and professionalization." This initial phase of the assignment grounds the importance of the group presentation to the students as individuals and as a class.

Although the assignment initially called for a PowerPoint presentation (and could still very easily substitute a PowerPoint presentation for the website), Waddington decided to have the groups build websites about their texts. He started with the goals of the textual analysis, which were fairly open, telling students that they were "largely free to pursue their own interests as long as presentations are grounded in a meaningful discussion of the relevant text." Through class discussion of the texts he further elucidated what he was looking for in the presentation, modeling different approaches to close reading. In order to give more structure to his assignment he offered a few options for organizing the presentation, including focusing on "an historical, social or personal theme as long as it advances your audience's knowledge of the novel in question [or] what literary critics have to say about the book and offer up these critiques for class discussion." He steered students away from superficial close readings and biographical lectures about the audience, emphasizing the importance of connecting textual details with contextual background during class discussions about the literature and the assignments.

In E314L Waddington decided to shift his focus from PowerPoint, which most students are able to use without a problem, to designing websites in HTML code. Waddington borrowed from David Barndollar's approach to teaching HTML code. In order to ground the web design assignment pedagogically, he explained to students that HTML code is in fact a metaphor for the reading and writing process.

If the computer is unable to "read" the code, the "writing" will not be clear to its audience. By connecting the traditional reading and writing process with a virtual reading and writing process, Waddington was able to connect two seemingly disparate elements of his course: literary analysis and web design.

In order to teach web design, Waddington scheduled two one hour and fifteen minute classes to walk students through basic HTML code. He also gave HTML homework, emphasizing that students would "learn through doing" much better than only modeling his lesson in class. He then gave limited class time to the groups to begin their initial organization.

Several groups in the Fall 2002 class explored author biographies and applied different schools of criticism to the text. Waddington says that a number of the editions of the novels used in class provided essays that explained the literature in terms of literary theory, and students had brief discussions of the applicable schools of theory in class. His personal philosophy is that although some students were successful at reading the texts through the lens of literary criticism, requiring such readings is not practical in an introductory level literature course. In his Spring 2004 class Waddington adapted the assignment slightly. Students still designed their web pages and made presentations but this time Waddington encouraged them to base their presentations on their own textual interests and interpretations, including topics for discussion that could be incorporated into the presentation. This resulted in less psychoanalytic readings of Lolita and more discussions of the use of religious imagery in The Bluest Eye or contemporary media manipulation in relation to 1984.

The web design element of the assignment emphasized "collaboration, technical achievement and innovation as equal parts," encouraging students to master a new technological skill while working together creatively. The web pages in both semesters were meant to visually complement the students' written analysis and oral presentation; by incorporating written, oral and visual elements, Waddington offered students with different learning strengths a means to contribute significantly to the group.

Outcomes

Waddington says that the websites and group presentations were very successful from both his perspective and that of his students. The students felt that they had learned a lot, both about their text and how to interpret it for an audience and about HTML code and web design. He also notes that the assignment "allowed the class to bond and learn from each other as well as from the instructor," fostering a stronger classroom community. After using this assignment in his

classroom twice, Waddington has a few recommendations to make it more successful. If at all possible he recommends that the instructor model the type of website and presentation he or she would like to see. Although the websites came out very well, Waddington says that "sometimes the presentation was not as successful." Although many groups did great presentations, others could have used a concrete example to help them create their own smooth, professional presentation of the material.

This assignment gives instructors a classroom-tested template for a project that incorporates technology, literature and group interaction in a way that fosters community and encourages not only discipline specific skills like close-reading but overall professionalization.