“Breaking it in new and spectacular ways”: a writing-technology manifesto

Madeleine Gonin, Instructional Technology
Laura Plummer, Writing Program

Center for Innovative Teaching & Learning
Overview

- Introductions
- Our IU context
- Discussion of technologies and rationales
- Our writing-technology manifesto in brief
- Example projects
- Our manifesto
- Q & A
Multiple faces of any tool

- Technological: How does it work?
- Pedagogical: How does it help students learn?
- Administrative: How is it to be tested, evaluated, shared, paid for?
Small-group discussion
Answer the following—

1. List and describe the technologies that you use in your teaching
2. What technology(s) do you use related to writing/writing instruction?
3. Why do you use them?
4. How do they serve your learning goals for the course?
Large-group discussion

• How involved were you in testing or piloting?

• What information would you relay to the software provider if you had a direct means of communication?
## Projects to illustrate our manifesto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenet</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Begin with pedagogical problem</td>
<td>Foreign language course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Use “real life” testing and piloting</td>
<td>Writing center online tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Push technology to breaking point</td>
<td>Online campus history course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Build in a feedback loop</td>
<td>Turnitin.com originality check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Share best practices</td>
<td>Various projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Begin with a *pedagogical* problem
Instructional challenges: Turkish

- Managing frequent writing assignments
- Moving informal writing outside class
- Encouraging student interaction
2. Using “real life” testing and piloting
Test and pilot online tutoring

Timeline: Summer-Fall 2011

- Exploration of tools
- Testing (Skype, Adobe Connect, Google docs, Google chat, Google video)
- Training small team of tutors
- Low-stakes piloting with staff and “frequent fliers”

- The winner: Google+ hangouts
3. Push technology to its limits (and beyond)
Traditions & Cultures of IU

• IU’s first solely online course
• early adoption of course management system (CMS)—Sakai/Oncourse
• 600 enrolled; 133 activities
• Seamless moving between the course website and the CMS
4. Build in a feedback loop

missing limbs that is focused around the main characters in the story. Irving’s focus on the loss of limbs is meant to show that all aspects of life undergo, at certain intervals, a loss of control that yields the unexpected.

There is significance put upon armless figures at the beginning of the book that foreshadow the fact that Owen decides to join the army and, despite Owen wanting to go to Vietnam, foreshadow the fact that he never fights directly in the war. Not far into the opening pages of the book, John tells us the origin story of Gravesend. In telling the story of Rev. John Wheelwright’s encounter with Watahantowet, we learn of Watahantowet’s mark, which is an armless totem that sometimes appears as having a tomahawk in its mouth and looks completely crazy—or else, he is making a gesture toward peace: no arms, tomahawk in mouth: together, perhaps, they are meant to
Feedback loop with GradeMark/PeerMark

1. Consultant testing
2. Faculty surveys
3. Student surveys
4. Input from other IU campuses
5. Reports to IU administration
6. Revision requests to Turnitin.com
7. Revised version used by faculty
8. Rinse and repeat
5. Share best practices
Informational outreach: various projects

- Best practice workshops with pilot faculty
- Pamphlets
- University-wide online pedagogy resources [http://kb.iu.edu/data/asxq.html](http://kb.iu.edu/data/asxq.html)
- Conferences and publications
First principles

• Be mindful of students’ needs
• View projects as collaborations
• Remember that technology should solve problems, not create them
• Insist that tools improve service or save time for faculty
• Maintain oversight of pilots
• Be aware of the privacy issues of 3rd-party software
• Avoid the forced guinea pig
Anticipated consequences

• Soft- and hardware serve instructors
• Use is determined by users, not providers
• Knowledge gained hands-on
• All participants become experts who provide feedback for improvement
Laura Plummer
lplummer@indiana.edu

Madeleine Gonin
mgonin@indiana.edu
These are students learning