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A 20th Century English Teacher Educator Enters the 21st Century: A Response to Pope and Golub

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Thank you, Carol Pope and Jeff Golub, for offering your seven principles for the infusion of technology into English teacher education and for illustrating them with such interesting examples from your own practice. I am a member of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Conference on English Education (CEE) Executive Committee. I also serve as coordinator of the M.A./Teaching English program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where I teach both graduate and undergraduate courses in English education. I have completed 31 years of teaching. As I read a pre-publication copy of the Pope and Golub article, written for the first issue of *CITE Journal*, I made several notes as to how I might rethink uses of technology in my own courses.

Last fall semester in my adolescent literature course, I had students do an annotated list of Web sites that would support their use of young adult novels in the classroom. I had students analyze their criteria for selecting their sites. I did not, however, ask them to work together to generate a list of critical criteria for determining the value of such web sites. I did not make it explicit that they might develop a list of critical criteria with their future students. This summer I am teaching a graduate class on teaching writing. Though I always have students experience the writing workshop strategies from the inside (by writing, giving and receiving peer response, editing, and publishing their own work), I have not had them give responses to drafts on the screen in a read-around-the-computer-classroom activity. We can try this and then compare our experience with online feedback to what happens when we use a paper-and-pencil/face-to-face approach.

Readers of your article who are English teacher educators will find much of value in your list of principles and practical examples for enhancing their courses. Some readers, no doubt, will think of additional guidelines and other applications to their courses. I volunteered to write this response article, not because I wanted to offer my own variations to your principles or because I wanted to add to your suggestions for infusing technology in English teacher education courses. I volunteered to respond because I want to emphasize the importance of making specific, explicit plans to incorporate technology in teacher education classes. I want to urge other teacher educators to take seriously the suggestion that they model strategies for using technology appropriately in the English language arts classroom. Recently, I had an experience in one of my graduate classes that illustrated the need for me to do so.

Each spring semester, I teach a course, called Research on Teaching Literature and Literacy, a core requirement in our Master of Arts in Teaching English and Master of Arts Generalist programs. The course focuses on the theoretical foundations of reader response approaches to

teaching literature and on social and cultural differences in early language acquisition and their implications for secondary and introductory college English teachers. The course is research-based, but also offers students opportunities to examine theory as it applies to teaching practice in the high school or community college literature classroom.

I first learned about *CITE Journal* as a member of the NCTE Conference on English Education Executive Committee. At the CEE meeting in New York, during the 2000 NCTE Spring Conference, CEE Executive Committee members were offered a chance to preview the article Carol Pope and Jeff Golub had written for this inaugural issue.

"Technology" was a topic on my syllabus for the first meeting of the graduate class in teaching literature and literacy after I returned from New York. We were two thirds of the way through the semester, so we were ready for activities designed to help students synthesize perspectives from their readings. In order to pull forward for discussion those concerns and issues that remained most salient, I asked the 12 master's students to generate individual lists of important concerns, issues, and other aspects of teaching literature. Then they met in small groups, with each person adding to his/her list what everyone else had said. I had the students regroup so that each group of four had one member from each of the previous groups (jigsaw). I asked the new groups to come to consensus on five important aspects in teaching literature. Though several individuals had "technology," "incorporate technology," "technology—how much and when?" or "Is technology helpful?" on their lists, none of the groups listed technology one of their top five aspects. One group added "Internet" as a sixth item, and in their oral report said, "This was sort of an afterthought."

We discussed some of the concerns issues at length. Then, having finished the "synthesis" task, we took up one of our main topics for the night—technology. I started by asking the students to list all of the ways they could think of that technology might be used appropriately in support of the study of literature. Again, students worked individually and then combined items from their lists. They shared their lists, writing them on the board.

Here is a list of all of their ideas in response to the question "What are some ways that technology can be used in the literature classroom?" (I made an aggregated list, eliminating obvious duplication.)

- Power Point and/or other presentation graphics
- Computer dialogue journals
- Audio/Video Files
- TV, CD, Multi-media
- Videotaping
- Web-based course programs (e.g. WebCT)
- Threaded discussion
- Bulletin boards for articles
- Interactive study
- Internet (literature-related sites) for teacher research
- Internet (literature-related sites) for student research
- Downloading library materials/expansion of library holdings

- Web page production for group or individual projects
- Word processing
- Portfolios submitted on disk, online
- Peer response
- E-mail for communication
- Class listserv
- Submitting papers as attachments
- Cross school, cross age pen pal projects
- Sharing of response to common readings
- Student letters to authors
- Chat rooms for discussion
- Building reader support kits on CD Rom
- Archiving of student work on CD Rom
- Computerized reading programs ("Read-up")
- Desktop publishing
- Integration on music with literature
- Teacher use of online lesson ideas for planning
- Teleconferencing
- Virtual tours, historical background for literature study

Together, the 12 students had created this wonderful list of so many possibilities. Then, I asked the students to think back on our previous activity. It was one of those moments of collective "Aha!" The inference we made was that they all had great ideas for using technology, but their past experience with literature in classrooms did not include those strategies. Technology was not yet in the consciousness of these people preparing to be teachers. They know about technology; they have good ideas about applications for the literature classroom. The back-to-back activities, however, suggest that these students are not seeing technology as one of the most important aspects of teaching literature. Is that good news or bad news? The good news may be that the students are still placing their focus on content. I think this slice of classroom life also offers evidence that teacher educators do need to model appropriate applications of technology, and we need to make explicit our intentions for infusing technology into our preparation of tomorrow's teachers.

Later, I asked the students in this class, "To what considerations should we attend when thinking of infusing technology into the high school or introductory literature classroom?" I thought they might have ideas that would complement Carol and Jeff's principles. Here is the list we generated together before the students read the Pope/Golub article:

- Access (#5,7)
- Equity (#7)
- Keep it a tool for learning the content, don't let technology become the content. (#1,2)
- Keep the classroom a human community; living within a classroom community prepares

students to live in society.

- Monitor access so students have related sites available, but not ones that may be harmful.
- Teach students how to use technological applications, but provide alternatives, options, choices.
- As students learn new technological skills, make sure assessments are appropriate to the content they are to know, don't develop assessments that measure their computer acumen. (#6)
- Recognize that the medium can be a part of the message. (#1)
- Teach Internet etiquette and safety; develop school-wide guidelines for safety.

Though these graduate students, like Carol and Jeff, have a concern for issues of equity and access, they think learning to value and evaluate sources is important, and they don't want to see technology become the focus over the content. They also suggested additional points. First, they cited the importance of maintaining schools as human communities, as places where human beings interact face to face. Second, they pointed to the value of offering students choices in what media they use to access and share information. Finally, perhaps because censorship of potentially harmful sites gets so much media attention, my students noted their sense of responsibility to provide for student safety.

As a follow-up to our discussion, I assigned the Pope/Golub article for the following week and told my students that I would send them the URL when the journal appeared online. As I handed the students a copy of the article, I chuckled at the irony of my giving them *printed copies* rather than sending it to them via email attachment or posting it on our WebCT course page. So it goes for this 20th century teacher educator who finds herself working into and preparing teachers for the 21st century.

To conclude, I believe that as teacher educators, we must make explicit how we intend to bring technology into our courses, and we must model appropriate ways to use technology, while prioritizing content in the English language arts classroom. Doing so is especially important for those with histories similar to mine.

I did my undergraduate teacher training at the University of Northern Iowa in the late 1960s, decades before the widespread availability of personal computers. I first used word processing in 1982 as a student at The Bread Loaf School of English in Vermont. That fall I bought my first PC—a Tandy Radio Shack 80. (Remember the Trash 80?) My choice was simple—TRS 80 was what was used in the new computer lab at my high school in Buena Vista, Virginia. In the late 1980s, I studied to be an English teacher educator at Virginia Tech—before we could have imagined the impact of technology on the English language arts classroom. I wrote my dissertation on the Zenith "Super Sport" laptop I bought in 1988. I knew then that word processing was rapidly changing the teaching of writing, but had no hint of the coming of email, the Internet, synchronous and asynchronous discussion, and hypertext—and their potential for changing the very nature of reading and writing. And, just last week, I celebrated my entry into 21st century technology by ordering a whole new computer system for my home office—online. Amazing.

We cannot model technological applications that are not yet available, ones that we cannot even imagine. We can, however, keep up with and use appropriately what is available. In doing so, we model an orientation toward embracing the new and being vigilant in our critical review of its

impact on the teaching and learning of English language arts.

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