Chapter 29
Scaffolding Pre-Service English Teachers to Teach Secondary Students How to Utilize Digital Tools When Composing

Megan Guise
California Polytechnic State University, USA

Susanna L. Benko
Ball State University, USA

ABSTRACT
The use of digital tools in the composing process and the development of 21st century literacies are becoming more important in order to equip students with the skills needed for college and career readiness. As new technologies continue to emerge and shape daily life, it is important for teachers and students to envision how these digital tools can be used to enhance communication, particularly writing. The authors share effective strategies for helping pre-service teachers to become more comfortable – as writers – with certain digital tools and to critically evaluate the benefits and limitations of these digital tools. In addition, the authors present a unit of instruction that scaffolds pre-service teachers to develop their own writing instruction and assignment for secondary students, which require secondary students to utilize digital tools throughout the composing process. The authors argue for working towards greater inclusion of technology in the English classroom.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER
Teri Lesene (2007) argued, “this generation of teens more than any other before them is wired to technology of their day…and is living through a technology explosion,” where teens are inundated with various technologies (computers, cell phones, tablets) and countless technological tools, both in and out of school settings (p. 61). In response to this “technology explosion, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in “Writing in the 21st Century” (2009) outlines three challenges and opportunities: (1) developing new models
Scaffolding Pre-Service English Teachers to Teach Secondary Students

of writing, (2) designing a new curriculum that supports these new models of writing, and (3) creating models for teaching that curriculum. Both Lesene (2007) and the report from NCTE (2009) illustrate the need for teachers to understand how students use technologies inside and outside of the classroom, to become familiar and fluent users of these technologies themselves, and to reconceive what it means to teach writing in the 21st century.

In this chapter, we posit that teacher education programs need to produce pre-service teachers who are themselves users of technology for different purposes and who can evaluate technology tools – thinking critically about the affordances and limitations of these tools – if we want secondary students to be able to do this type of work. More importantly, we suggest that to do this work, teacher educators need not think of themselves as technology experts – rather, they need to be committed to working toward including more digital tools in their classrooms and providing spaces for pre-service teachers to be thoughtful consumers and users of such digital tools.

Our goal in this chapter is to show one approach to supporting pre-service teachers to be able to implement a writing curriculum that supports secondary students’ use of digital tools throughout the composition process, recognizing that pre-service teachers need new models of writing instruction in order to be able to support secondary students to write in the 21st century. We begin by providing background on the current state of education in the 21st century, outlining key learning and writing standards for K-12 students. After providing this background, we outline our approach in a pre-service methods class in which we positioned the pre-service teachers as writers and explored digital tools to enhance their own writing processes. In the next section, we describe how we scaffolded pre-service teachers to develop a writing curriculum that required secondary students to utilize digital tools in the composition process while achieving the Common Core Anchor Standards for Writing. We conclude the chapter by providing key implications for teacher education programs.

BACKGROUND

What Do We Expect of Our K-12 Students Digitally Today?

Since the standards movement in the 1980’s, various standards have guided professionals’ thinking about classroom content, curriculum, pedagogy – and now – technology. In 1998, the International Society for Technology in Education created the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), which they called a “roadmap for improved learning and teaching” to support teachers’ and students’ uses of technology in education (“About,” 2013). There are sub-standards of the NETS for students, teachers, and various other groups who work within schools. For students, standards focus on six topics: (1) creativity and innovation, (2) communication and collaboration, (3) research and information fluency, (4) critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making, (5) digital citizenship, and (6) technology operations and concepts (NETS-S, 2007). The standards for teachers (NETS-T) call on teachers to “model and apply” the standards for students and provide five main categories of standards, requiring teachers to: (1) facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity, (2) design and develop digital age learning experiences and assessments, (3) model digital age work and learning, (4) promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility, and (5) engage in professional growth and leadership (2007). These standards are not specific to writing instruction or composition; rather, these standards focus on higher-order thinking skills broadly across disciplines (e.g., evaluating and selecting appropriate information or tools for various situations or tasks) and require students...
Professional Development 1.5: Two Models for Helping Teachers Implement Digital Tools in Writing Pedagogy
www.igi-global.com/chapter/professional-development-15/109196?camid=4v1a