Preparing the Future Virtual Workforce

Changing the Virtual Writing Classroom into a Training Site

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Overview

- Research & workforce preparation
- Current practices
- Alternatives:
  - Cognitive Apprenticeship
  - Collective Feedback
  - Benefits
- Looking forward
Cognitive roles in the online classroom require faculty to assume a larger leadership and SME role.

- Faculty engaging as leaders
- Freeing time for course design and delivery
- Using pedagogy as a cognitive learning function
- Using train-the-trainer methods to prepare virtual leaders
- Pursuing more quantitative studies on virtual pedagogies
In the classroom, we currently...

- Engage in process-oriented approach
- Employ *end comment* strategy (Smith, 1982)
- Focus on product over dialogic practice
- Wane in online engagement (Vonderwell, 2002)
But, in the workplace, we actually...

- Use virtual, collaborative writing practices
- Rely on the use of style guides
- Expect an ability to rhetorically analyze our own writing before completing or submitting work
- Use document sharing and virtual collaboration tools such as Confluence, Box and Sharepoint
Pedagogy = Practice
Alternative A

Cognitive Apprenticeship
What is Cognitive Apprenticeship?

1. Modeling: mentor demonstrates or walks through the initial steps of the process, while revealing the tricks-of-the-trade.

2. Coaching: mentor observes mentee’s activities along with provision of guidance and feedback.

3. Scaffolding: mentor supports mentee while they work through the task with gradual fading of such supports.


6. Exploration: mentee explores the topic beyond what was shown by mentor.

Cognitive Apprenticeship

Exter & Ashby, 2019
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4. Articulation: mentree verbalizes reflections

5. Reflection: mentee self-assesses own performance

6. Exploration: mentee explores the topic beyond what was shown by mentor

Exter & Ashby, 2019
Stories From the Field
Collective Feedback
Aligning with Professional Practice

The need to align what we do in the technical writing classroom with what we’re doing in the workplace.

- Cook’s layered literacies - basic, rhetorical, social, technological, ethical, and critical
- Reich’s symbolic analytic abilities - abstraction, system thinking, experimentation and collaboration
- Meloncon & Henschel fundamental technical writing skills:
  - Rhetorical proficiency
  - Abstraction
  - Social proficiency
  - Experimentation
  - Critical system thinking
What is Collective Feedback?

Collective feedback is a way of providing an entire class with feedback on a particular assignment through one, comprehensive document in a centralized location.

1. **Approachable language.**

   **Explanation:** It can be tricky to write policy that is both direct and yet personable. Try imagining you’re having a conversation with an actual person—telling the policy to them face-to-face. How might you word it then?

   **Student sample:** “It should be understood that when one begins to work…” — *This is written in passive voice and in “professional voice.”*

   **Revision:** When Swihart Group Employees begin work, they should understand that…

   **Rationale:** This takes out the passive voice and the stiff tone.
Pedagogical Challenges Addressed with Collective Feedback

**EFFICIENCY**
- Create feedback and post once
- Communicate common errors in a centralized place

**USABILITY**
- Use visuals
- Link to course texts and resources

**SPACE LIMITATIONS**
- Use detailed examples and provide revisions

**SKILLS BUILDING**
- Rhetorical analysis
- Abstraction
- Situational analysis

**WORKPLACE PRACTICE**
- Mimic workplace processes
- Place faculty as leader
The Back Story

- Individual comments took too much time and were ignored.
- Students continued to make the same mistakes.
- Commenting spacing limited how detailed we could get.
- We weren’t doing the same in the classroom that we were doing for and with our clients.
The Study

Does collective feedback negatively affect student performance?
How do we move forward?

- **Teacher training**
  - Providing access to alternative feedback strategies in early phases of teacher development

- **Leveraging technology to support collective experiences**
  - Cloud-based (i.e. Google Suite), dynamic feedback (audio and video)

- **Research and publication**
  - An open-ness to the research exploring alternative strategies
  - Larger studies that include student response, include composition and other WAC courses

- **Collaborative studies**
  - Integrating psychology, organizational communication, and other fields to explore change and how best to implement it
Questions?

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