

Nicole A Williams  
Technology Philosophy

There was a time when hearing the word technology both scared and frustrated me. As I would often tell people, technology and I didn't get along. I wasn't very savvy with understanding how to use different technologies or aware of the educational benefits it allowed within the classroom. Fortunately, that was the old me.

Over the past years I have learned to utilize and harness the potentials of a variety of technologies both inside and outside of the classroom. Most importantly, I have found ways of implementing technology in my classroom that allow for the advancement of my students' learning and creativity. In his book *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Gunther Kress writes, "The world of communication is not standing still. The communicational world of children now in school is both utterly unremarkable to them and yet it looks entirely different to that which the school still imagines and for which it still, hesitantly, and ever more insecurely, attempts to prepare them. All of us already inhabit that new world" (16). Technology is in constant motion and as a composition instructor I have to find the best ways to ingrate new technologies that can advance the literacy and communication skills of my students.

The most important thing I have learned about using technology in the classroom is to always make sure there is a sound pedagogical reason for doing so. Simply using a technology because students might find it cool is not a valid reason. Each piece of technology I use in my courses, or new ones I find and bring in, are used to enhance and educate students skills.

In the spring of 2008, my first semester teaching, I decided to take a risk and begin with a multimodal assignment. The assignment asked students to create a [visual literacy narrative](#) using multiple modes to compose a document of their choice. The assignment was adapted from a sample assignment provided by Cynthia L. Selfe in her article *Toward New Media Texts: Taking Up the Challenges of Visual Literacy*. The students learned the value of design and critical thinking in composition. They were forced to think about audience and purpose, then decide what resources were the best to achieve their purpose. This assignment was heavily based on technology as the students utilized programs such as Movie Maker, Power Point, Photo editing software, as well took advantage of digital cameras, camcorders, and microphones available to them. I demonstrated ways of using both Power Point and Movie Maker in class. The end result was some phenomenal projects ranging from [movies](#) (actually filmed by the students or images edited together), [Slide shows](#), collages(digital and non-digital), scrapbooks, and even a screenplay. More impressive than the final projects though, was the process of creating them. Beginning with this project enforced the idea that composition is not just about five paragraph, alphabetic text essays with a thesis in the last sentence of the first paragraph. The technology available to the students showed them how creative they could be. Additionally, as Selfe highlights students learn how to not only compose visual texts of their own, but also understand and analyze the visual texts of others.

Using technology in the classroom allows for options and fluidity of learning. The options and opportunities are endless as technology advances each day. As a composition instructor I feel overwhelmingly inclined and obligated to continue to bring technologies into my classroom to advance the knowledge of my students and myself. In any given semester I use online self publishing tools including: Weebly, Twitter, Facebook, Glogster, Slideshare, Blogger, Youtube, Scribd. All of these allow me to fulfill my philosophy of teaching students to communicate in multiple genres, for multiple purposes, and multiple audiences.