

3-1-2013

From Class to Community: EP 2.0 and the New Media Legacy of Jesuit Education

Allen Brizee

Jenn Fishman

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations>

Recommended Citation

Brizee, Allen and Fishman, Jenn (2013) "From Class to Community: EP 2.0 and the New Media Legacy of Jesuit Education," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*: Vol. 43, Article 18.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations/vol43/iss1/18>

From Class to Community

EP 2.0 and the New Media Legacy of Jesuit Education

By Allen Brizee and Jenn Fishman

As early Jesuits traveled across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, they carried not only their faith and their mission but also their era's newest medium: print. A powerful and mutually sustaining mix, conviction inspired calling, calling inspired print, print inspired conviction, and so on. Jesuit education developed within this cycle, and lessons in *eloquentia perfecta* helped lay and Jesuit students participate. At the outset, when rhetoric was taught alongside humanities and grammar, studying classical speeches and style meant integrating orality with scribal and print literacies. Today, instruction in *eloquentia perfecta* is concentrated in (though not limited to) first-year composition, English, and writing and communication curricula, where it involves a range of media. As a result, a new version of *eloquentia perfecta* is emerging: what we call *EP 2.0*. Still dedicated to communicating with and for others, *EP 2.0* enables students to make good, ethical and effective media choices while learning to use media well.

Legacy

As teachers of *EP 2.0* at Jesuit institutions, we are inheritors of a significant legacy: consistently early, yet careful and critical adoption of new media for pedagogical purposes. As John W. O'Malley reminds us in *The First Jesuits* (1993), "[A]t least some Jesuits considered publication incompatible with their vocation," while Ignatius and others took great care to demonstrate how print might "aid Jesuits in their ministry." The *Ratio studiorum* (1599) is an excellent example. The product of thirty years' collaboration, written correspondence, and print technology, the *Ratio* represents the same balance of innovation

Allen Brizee is assistant professor of writing in the department of writing at Loyola University Maryland. Jenn Fishman is assistant professor of rhetoric and composition in the English department at Marquette University.

and consideration we seek as we incorporate available media into our pedagogy.

Certainly now the need for *EP 2.0* instruction is greater than ever before. As Fr. Adolfo Nicolás warns in “Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today” (2010), new media can short-circuit the work of serious critical thinking and communication (2). However, when new media are used well, Fr. Nicolás explains, they can help us “find creative ways of promoting depth of thought and imagination,” and “maximize...new possibilities of communication and cooperation.” Online, JesuitNet and AJCU members’ digital repositories support these objectives, and the Jesuit Conference has even developed a mobile app (<http://tinyurl.com/bqs3kav>). In turn, when we integrate these resources into instruction, we have similar goals.

Classroom

For Jenn, teaching advanced composition means assigning new media “readings” and research, as well as inviting students to make new media texts in response to problems they want to address. When, for example, one class declared Stuart Selber’s monograph *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age* (2004) “outdated,” she challenged them to change it—and they did. Working in small groups, her students transformed the book into a blog populated with their own examples. They also expanded Selber’s text, adding a section on new media and reflection.



Marquette University.

This assignment challenged students to engage *EP 2.0* fully, from choosing a medium to drafting and editing their arguments and related computer code. Since many students initially equated digital literacy with knowing Microsoft Office, their learning curve was steep, and they took Selber’s ideas seriously even while they took over his writing. Working together, they gained new functional literacy, which Selber associates with technical knowledge. They also refined their critical literacy by analyzing peers’ and professionals’ multimedia writing, and they extended their rhetorical literacy by producing a group blog (<http://multiliteraciesremix.wordpress.com/>). For the final, students designed individual capstone projects, which invited—and challenged—they to celebrate their growing mastery of *EP 2.0*. Matching argument and audience to medium, their projects ranged from an academic essay about video games to research-based resource blogs designed for a variety of audiences.

Community

For Allen, *EP 2.0* means helping students learn about rhetoric, social justice, and new media in and beyond the classroom. For many of his courses, he assigns service-learning projects that pair students with economically challenged communities near Loyola University Maryland’s Baltimore campus. As students work with community partners to help them develop online resources, they experience how *EP 2.0* enacts the Jesuit new media legacy. Students’ work in the community begins in the classroom, where they read excerpts from Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, and St. Augustine to understand historical connections between eloquence and civic participation. Students also read service-learning scholarship and articles on Baltimore and website design, all in preparation to meet—and exceed—community partners’ needs for capacity-building civic rhetoric. As representatives from one service partner, the Richnor Springs Neighborhood Association (RSNA), put it: “We need a website that helps us organize, communicate, and grow.” Richnor Springs works with Loyola’s York Road Initiative to provide such resources, including information about local meetings, schools, bus routes, and voting locations.

Contemporary life requires active citizens to be competent and confident, principled and powerful communicators in print and electronic formats. The conversation on how to do all these things well continues. ■