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ABSTRACT
        The marriage of computer-assisted and portfolio-based
approaches to freshman composition, while already in place at other
institutions of higher education, is a new approach at Middle Tennessee State
University (MTSU). Intended as a part of the English Department's ongoing
effort to improve the quality of instruction, computer-assisted,
portfolio-based composition offers the advantages inherent in the technology
approach to the process-centered, multiple-draft pedagogy of the portfolio
system. This paper describes the rationale behind the merging of
computer-assisted and portfolio-based composition, how the system works,
benefits of the approach, student and instructor feedback, computer-based
editing, problematic issues, and the accompanying World Wide Web page that
supports and expands the course. (Contains 14 references.) (Author/AEF)

Computer-Assisted, Portfolio-Based Composition:
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By:

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The marriage of computer-assisted and portfolio-based approaches to freshman composition, while already in place at other institutions of higher education like the University of Rhode Island, Trinity College (Connecticut), Louisville University (Kentucky) and Yavapai College (Arizona), is a new approach on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University. Intended as a part of the English Department's on-going effort to improve the quality of instruction, computer-assisted, portfolio-based composition offers the advantages inherent in the technology approach to the process-centered, multiple-draft pedagogy of the portfolio system.

Computer-assisted, Portfolio-based Composition: The Next Step for Freshman Composition at MTSU

As I began my project to develop a Freshman-level composition course at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) that would merge our four-year-old portfolio assessment program with the technology available through our computerized writing classroom (the Frank Ginanni Classroom), I could not escape feeling excited at the prospect of trying something new on our campus. The notion of presenting a blending of two innovative and constantly evolving pedagogical approaches to composition was somewhat intoxicating because setting down and implementing my ideas would allow me to contribute something useful to an institution I am proud to serve. During the planning and development process, I experienced a good deal of anxiety over how the project would be received-a scaled-down version of the tension encountered by respected, portfolio composition expert, Kathleen Blake Yancey, as she undertook guest editing a special issue of Computers and Composition devoted to Electronic Portfolios. In the essay that opens the issue, "Portfolio, Electronic, and the Links Between," Yancey voices her fears to her readers: "Most of my teacher friends who 'do' technology don't 'do' portfolios. And most of my portfolio pals who use technology do so for their own purposes; they don't combine it with portfolios" (129). Written in 1996, Yancey's comments prophetically describe the situation at MTSU in 1998. My anxiety, then, was brought on by a desire to pique the interest of colleagues involved in using one or the other methodology or, more importantly, in using neither. Computer-assisted, portfolio-based composition could offer these teachers a new avenue, a fresh approach to writing instruction.

However, my initial, and more important objective quickly emerged as the controlling, driving force behind the development of this course: improving the quality of instruction in the English 111 sections I teach. Because of my own lack of training in composition theory, the student-centered, process-focused pedagogy I espoused had been rather hazily defined in my mind until the Fall of 1994, when I became associated with Ayne Cantrell and the Portfolio Assessment Pilot at MTSU. Through her and Sushil Oswal, who co-designed the pilot, I was able to crystallize those ill-defined concepts and finally implement a clearly developed pedagogy that stressed the nature of the composition process of prewriting, writing, and rewriting; recognized the student's need for multiple feedback opportunities; and promoted student ownership of the writing. The proverbial light was on. Since then, I have been an active participant in portfolio composition, continuing to collaborate with Cantrell and other faculty members committed to the program, such as Linda Badley. Together, we strive towards our goals of refining our pedagogy and tailoring the portfolio system to meet student, portfolio faculty, and department needs. One of our latest projects involved the compiling, developing, and revising of Portfolio Composition: A Student's Guide for English 111 Portfolio Sections, now in its second edition. This resource has provided the foundation for CAI Portfolio English 111.

Perhaps the most important insight reaffirmed by my involvement in portfolio-based composition has been that just

as the composition process is fluid, recursive, and not finite, so, too, must be an instructor's pedagogy-always perched, ready for the possibility of rethinking, for the possibility of growth, for the possibility of shifting directions, in short, focused on process. As a result of this newly gained flexibility, I took a leap to the second, major stepping stone which led to the development of CAI Portfolio English 111.

In the summer of 1997, I participated in a course taught by Larry Mapp, MTSU Professor of English, entitled "Computers and Writing," which focuses on "Practical and theoretical implications of computer technology and of the internet [sic.] and world wide web [sic.] for the teaching of writing" (Middle 88). The more immersed I became in discovering how computers affect learning and, more specifically, writing, the more convinced I became that these two new avenues I had become familiar with-first portfolio-based and then computer-assisted composition-were natural partners whose blending in the writing classroom held much promise. I soon learned, as is the case with most novices in any field, that my idea had been supported by others, among them Steve Watkins of the University of Louisville, Kentucky. In "World Wide Web Authoring in the Portfolio-Assessed, (Inter) Networked Composition Course," he proposes that networked CAI and portfolios enhance the unique capabilities of the other" (221). The marriage of the two pedagogies had been tried with much success at several institutions since the early 1990's: the University of Rhode Island, Trinity College (Connecticut), Louisville University (Kentucky) and Yavapai College (Arizona), to name a few. However, no such program was yet a reality in practice nor in theory in the English Department at MTSU. Despite the availability of a high-tech, computerized classroom in the department, freshman composition has not significantly reaped benefits from it, particularly the first semester component, English 111. Since the inauguration of the Ginanni Classroom in the Spring of 1995, only thirteen 111 sections have been taught using this invaluable resource; none have been portfolio-based, until now. I seized the opportunity to propose my idea to William Connelly, Chair of the English Department, and the result is two sections of CAI Portfolio English 111 composition in the Spring of 1998.

The primary objective for implementing this merger, then, is to benefit my composition students and, in so doing, share some ideas that might encourage others to consider new approaches. Because computer-assisted instruction facilitates the immediacy and frequency of peer and teacher-as-coach feedback during the inventing, drafting, revising, and editing stages, thus inviting cooperative learning through technology, the computer-assisted classroom is an obvious and ready ally for the often rigorous, multiple-draft requirements of the portfolio-based composition system. Any time the dialogue between teacher and student or between peers is enhanced, the composition process benefits. Any time the concept of audience is broadened and emphasized for students, the composition process benefits. Any time the recursive nature of drafting and revising is facilitated, the composition process benefits. Additionally, since a significant portion of the course materials are presented through a web page, students have immediate access to resources necessary to understand and fulfill course requirements; this minimizes lapses in student preparedness. Thus by capitalizing on the advantageous dimensions of both pedagogies, CAI Portfolio English 111 opens the door for new and meaningful directions in composition pedagogy at MTSU.

Those not familiar with the portfolio system might well ask, "What exactly is this portfolio-based composition that can reap benefits from the computer-assisted classroom so readily?" Arriving on the scene in the 1970's, by the late 1990's, the portfolio-based system for composition assessment had found a home in higher education English departments across the nation. Writing for the Computers and Composition journal in 1996, Pamela Takayoshi of Louisville University considers portfolios "standard in a traditional classroom" (255). Much has been written about portfolio composition's function, its principles, its implementation since the early discussions by Pat Belanoff and Peter Elbow in the late 1970's and 1980's. The pedagogy emphasizes the compilation of a body of work, a portfolio, that includes essays students select from their writings over a semester. Writing teachers, Marjorie Roemer, Lucille M. Schultz, and Russell K. Durst argue that portfolios "put the emphasis, where it belong[s], on the writing students do over time" (456), and Tim Mayers, from the University of Rhode Island, sees the blending of portfolio and computer classrooms as a valuable mix that emphasizes "writing assignments not as discrete tasks to be completed and moved beyond but as a series of ongoing and related tasks that are only 'finished' (by necessity) at the semester's end" (149). Much emphasis is placed on the ongoing nature of the writing process.

In the MTSU program devised by Cantrell and Oswal, students select the best three essays of five-one from the first two writings, two from the last three. Having undergone multiple revisions (minimum of four) after receiving feedback from peers and teacher, each essay in the portfolio exemplifies the writer's best work. The assessment of this body of work, which is supported in norming sessions with other portfolio instructors at Mid-term and semester's end, is the only grade for writing which is figured into the students' final course average-all other drafts of the essays receive only feedback, although, an informational grade is given at Mid-term on an essay selection

from the first two. The primary advantage of delaying grading is that students are given time to develop writing skills before writing is assessed. Thus, the system recognizes that writing skills are developmental-not learned all at once-so why assess before students are ready? Yancey argues that "the gift of time allows students to learn to become writers, rather than to learn to write papers" ("Teachers' Stories" 17). Additionally, because students select the pieces submitted themselves, the concept of student ownership of the writing is stressed. These are the basic characteristics of our portfolio-based program. Process not product, then, lies at the core of the pedagogy.

CAI Portfolio English 111 implements this pedagogy in the Ginanni Classroom in order to capitalize on the strengths of both approaches to composition. However, this is not an online composition course where all materials and drafts and dialogue are handled through a computer terminal exclusively. This is not a course that teaches HTML or encourages hyper-text composition. Nor is the objective of this course to produce "electronic portfolios" where the technology available overtakes and dominates the composition process. In its innovation, CAI Portfolio English 111 is rather traditionally-minded in that its focus is always composition-process-oriented. Although the specifics dealing with course description and requirements are detailed through an accompanying web page (more on that later), students also receive course information-syllabus, schedules, essay guidelines, etc.-in hard copy. Their drafts, too, may be submitted at different stages, not only electronically, but on paper as well. Thus, this is more like the "transitional classroom" Mayers discusses in his article, "classrooms where electronic (screen-oriented) literacy is draped over, and supports, print (page-oriented) literacy" (147).

How, then, does our transitional classroom work? How does each of the portfolio program's components implemented at MTSU benefit in the computer-assisted classroom? From the first day, in addition to becoming aware of the specifics involved in the portfolio system, students are instructed on the protocols to be followed in order to complete their work successfully in the computer room. Details include the type and number of disks required (one to turn in with all other course materials at the end of the semester and one to use as a back up), the organizational naming of documents for each essay and its components (i.e., essay 1 inventions, essay 1 rough draft, essay 1 peer draft, etc.), the required use of word processing programs compatible with the computers in the Ginanni Classroom, and a series of common sense do's and don'ts. Many of these practical concerns were adapted from suggestions offered in "Portfolio Assessment and Computerized Composition Instruction: Combining the Best of Both Worlds" by John H. Paddison of Yavapai College in Arizona (4-5). Because CAI Portfolio English 111 is also not a beginning computer literacy course, introductory material presented early in the course cautions that students need to have at least rudimentary word processing knowledge; most problems along this line are averted because the course is listed as a computer-assisted offering in the University's scheduling booklets.

In the early stages of composition, students should be required to engage in invention strategies-freewriting, brainstorming, cubing, reporter's formula, etc.--tools that help unlock the writer's ideas and allow for the transfer of those ideas to some medium outside the brain. Whether onto paper or onto computer terminal, the exercise of ascertaining possible topics and what might be said about them is critical. In this way, writers allow themselves time to compile possible details, points, issues, etc. necessary to present as insightful an essay as possible. Portfolio requires this creative stage, and computers make the process easier and more inviting. They invite students to participate in invention strategies (1) by making the putting down of ideas easy and (2) by reinforcing the student's process, allowing the otherwise messy activity to have a neat appearance. One traditional invention strategy enhanced by the computer is freewriting. In From Disk to Hard Copy: Teaching Writing with Computers, James Strickland comments, "Freewriting with a computer encourages a free flow of words on the screen-words easily correctable, easily expendable, and easily rearranged if not in quite the right order" (14). With this strategy, as well as with others like clustering, brainstorming, etc., regrouping of material is made simple, as is making connections between points, through ready use of boldening, italicizing, selecting of different fonts, cutting and pasting to name of a few of the tools.

Hand-in-hand with the initial emphasis on process afforded by invention strategies comes the prevalence of audience crystallized for the writer by the multiple feedback opportunities built into the course. Often overlooked by inexperienced writers, audience is an ever-present concern in the composition process of portfolio students. From the moment they begin their invention strategies, through the multiple drafts, audience issues are kept to the forefront. An essay coversheet, which accompanies every draft, forces students to designate their targets clearly and to determine what the piece's objectives are in terms of that audience; writers are even asked to anticipate the desired response and possible benefits resulting from the audience's reading of the essay. Such an "in-your-face" emphasis demands that writers who might possibly have been oblivious to audience previously come to terms with making writing decisions in order to meet those needs and expectations as closely as possible. Taught in the

computer classroom, the coversheet document can be copied from the web page to the student's documents as the opening page of each draft and becomes an easily adaptable, reflection tool that can accommodate commentary and inquiry from the writers' immediate audiences-peer and teacher.

Another way in which the computer-assisted classroom promotes audience lies in the public nature of materials that could be potentially read by anyone. This realization brings with it a sobering impact on the decisions the writers make during the process. In essence, what is achieved is what Watkins calls "authentic writing. . . composed primarily for an actual audience (in addition to the evaluator) and composed with the functional purpose of materially affecting that audience" (222). I find this a welcomed and most useful dimension.

Of course, any discussion on audience and coversheets overlaps issues that involve the drafting process. Once the student has completed the invention strategies and set down preliminary ideas on the coversheet, the drafting stage begins to take shape. For the invention document, students can proceed to add, delete, move about information to form natural groups or chunks that eventually become the paragraphs in the essay. This is easily achieved on the computer, as writers are able to space-between, tab-over, cut-and-paste at will while grouping material in the most obvious arrangements. Without having to start over on clean sheets of paper, unsatisfactory arrangements can be easily undone. This flexibility does pose some concern about the drafting process because computers seem to blur the lines between the stages in the writing process that could pose a pedagogical drawback for many instructors. Strickland responds to that issue saying that "word processing can make a significant contribution to having writers conceive of the writing process as fluid and ever-changing" (10). By using portfolio in conjunction with computers, this concern is even further minimized because portfolio emphasizes the different stages of the writing process, thus, maximizing the computer's strengths.

Since I began my involvement in the portfolio system, one of the components that interested me the most was peer response, that part of drafting in which students respond to each other's writing. My interests centered on devising a system that would promote the use of our informative, productive guidelines presented in Portfolio (Cantrell and Oswal 3-4) and facilitate this most important component of the process. What first came to mind was to attempt to make it easier for students to have access to each other's work and to each other as a source of feedback. As in the case with most other programs which implement this merger, e-mail connections were the first, logical response. But e-mail alone would not satisfy the needs of portfolio. In our peer method, writers receive feedback from first-line audiences in two venues-one from an oral reading of the essay by the writer, the second, from a silent re-reading by the respondent (10-12); it was important that both aspects of the process be maintained.

As CAI Portfolio English 111 progresses this semester, my students and I will have implemented a variety of feedback methods, in order to accommodate portfolio requirements and move students gradually into the use of computers for this step of the process. For each writing assignment, the essay is read orally from the writer's terminal as respondents listen or look on. Next, respondents make comments on the "Notes for Peer's Oral Response" (95) and give feedback orally to the "Writers Questions for Peer Group Response" (83). After the initial round of responses, the peer group process takes on more clearly online features as students share their drafts via e-mail in order to complete the second portion of the process, individual reading and responding to the writer's essay, "Peer Feedback Sheet" (Cantrell and Oswal 127). Even after the two-step, in-class process of response is completed, the feedback scenario can continue outside of class as changes and adjustments are made, or as further questions arise from participants. Because of the potential for so much interaction among writers, I decided to limit peer groups two students on a rotating basis. This much more personal arrangement has proven to be of great benefit for students, particularly because of time constraints. However, because they are linked to each other via an e-mail list-serve, they can contribute comments not only on each other's writing, but on their process of responding to each other--whether part of the writer's peer group or not. This makes for an expanded audience.

Instructor feedback can be received at all points of the composition process as students are required to share via e-mail invention strategies, preliminary drafts, revised versions for submissions prepared for peer response, etc. Even their exchanges with each other are copied to the instructor, so I can offer comments on the nature of their feedback if needed. This hands-on approach need not be overwhelming, as my responses are formative in nature and intended to offer direction and suggestions rather than evaluative assessment. I very quickly overcame the tendency to include myself in all transmissions.

Yet another dimension afforded by the computerized classroom involves the students saving drafts to the teacher's computer for immediate instructor feedback during class while they are working or for retrieval the next time they

log on in the Ginanni Classroom. Students in both of my sections, as well as other instructors and their students who have access to the local area network (LAN) in the classroom, now become part of our extended audience as well. This scenario, as well as the one relying on e-mail, lends itself to using all or portions of any student's writing for the purpose of class instruction on any important issues in composition-invention, effective thesis and topic sentences, sentence structure, etc. Documents viewed on the instructor terminal can be displayed as an overhead presentation in which all can participate-expanded audience, indeed. The opportunity for more formal instructor feedback comes when the teacher's draft of each essay (third draft) is submitted in hard copy. Students receive teacher commentary on the essay and on a "Teacher's Feedback Sheet" (Cantrell and Oswal 151). Since no grade is assessed, the teacher-as-coach's remarks are intended as formative, constructive guides for revision.

The carefully thought out sequence that forces students to solicit, receive and provide feedback is a marvelous exercise in consciousness raising about the writing process for students and instructors alike. Just as Beverly C. Wall and Robert F. Peltier of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, I find that peer opinion, particularly approval, takes on as much importance as completing course assignments (216). The sequence makes it impossible for students to fall back into the old cradle of composition and pull over themselves the worn and tattered security blanket of writing as a one-step-process. Perhaps it makes it impossible for instructors to rely solely on the outdated, in-class writing assignment. As Roemer, Schultz, and Durst put it, "Grading students' work in pieces, product by product, or making significant judgments of students' writing based on one writing sample produced under timed circumstance, has come to seem a violation of the very things we teach about writing" (455). In portfolio, students and instructors are forced to face and accept the recursive nature of solid, valid writing. The computer format brings this realization into a more tangible, physical dimension, thus facilitating the process further.

However, nowhere is the contribution of the computer classroom felt more dramatically in the composition process than in the finishing stages-revision and editing. Strickland comments, "the combination of the technology of the computer and the strategies for moving words, sentence, and paragraphs, and adding and deleting text helps writers see global revision in action" (49). His From Disk to Hard Copy has been a valuable resource for suggestions on incorporating "the computer as an instructional tool rather than just a production tool" (35). He offers a wide range of suggestions, for example, deleting all text in an essay except for paragraph topic sentences (easily achieved on the computer) to ascertain that, in fact, there are topic sentences and to facilitate determining whether the essay's organization is sound (39-40). Another useful revision suggestion is the insertion of extra spaces between the essay's sentences to allow for further elaboration, not at the end of paragraphs or the entire essay as students are prone to do, but within the points in the paragraph themselves (41-42). Of all his suggestions, these are the two my students have felt the most comfortable implementing. As the course progresses, I plan to introduce "Windowing [which] allows the writer to compare two versions of the same assignment. . . " (40). Whether to compare a sentence outline and draft, an early draft to a revised version, peer comments and a draft, the possibilities of windowing are numerous and all potential enrichments for sound revision efforts. Of course, one obvious benefit the computer brings to revision is the time-saving element of not having to copy over any changes such as segments that are moved about or expanded. This is of particular importance to portfolio students.

Editing efforts, too, are facilitated through the implementation of the computer. Because of the heavy emphasis on audience in portfolio composition, "a correctly edited piece of writing [that] helps a writer express thoughts clearly and in a way that is 'reader friendly'" (70) is critical to the essay's success. Editing suggestions may come from peers and, of course, from the teacher, but ultimately, the writer faces the draft alone for final decisions. The fact that the computer allows the viewing of a "clean" copy is regarded by some as a danger in lulling the writer to feel all is correct with the piece. However, more likely, the cleanliness of the page makes it simpler for the writer to find errors in diction, punctuation, general clarity, etc. than when faced with a hand-written page full of markings, arrows, write-overs, and other techniques that might be used to make corrections. Tools like spell checkers allow writers to focus on the composition process rather than be concerned with the mechanics of spelling ; spell checkers do not teach spelling rules, but they do reinforce the proper spelling of words as the writer makes choices from the options provided. By the way, as Strickland points out, "Dictionaries are less than helpful for spelling, unless you already know how to spell a word" (71). While I do not encourage my students to use other tools such as grammar checkers and style checkers because I feel they have not reached state-of-the-art status, I do make them aware of other means for improving the readability of the essays, such as search features. Whether to replace every instance of a word with a corrected version or simply to find multiple uses of the same word to avoid excessive and ineffective repetition, search features help the writer envision the process of editing for the purpose of strengthening diction.

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The one area of the MTSU portfolio program that the computer classroom has not been an asset to yet is the collaborative norming of grades. Non CAI portfolio teachers meet in teams to read essays they have selected from their students' submissions-one sample each of A, B, C portfolios and all failures (there are no D's awarded in Freshman Composition at MTSU). In an enriching spirit of collaboration, teachers help each other ascertain the validity of their assessments. Much is learned and shared during these sessions; all of it enhancing each instructor's assessment ability. Although I have no other CAI Portfolio teacher with whom to confer, once other portfolio teachers utilize CAI, I can see how the exchange of student essays for the purposes of norming will be facilitated through the use of e-mail. Participants could avoid the difficulties of scheduling constraints for norming sessions and could extend the impact and usefulness of the sessions by continuing to dialogue electronically.

Many sources have been very helpful in easing some of my concerns during the development of CAI Portfolio English 111. My situation was reassuringly similar to that encountered by Roemer as she implemented a portfolio system for her group of practicum students: "Our problems were. . . that we were hammering out the system as we went along, so it was hard to signal all the rules and regulations to students early enough and clearly enough" (458). Thankfully, the portfolio process was expertly and carefully laid out already, so the only tenuous ground lay in tailoring it to the Ginanni Classroom.

A general concern about using computers for writing involves the tendency for computer-assisted classrooms to promote the isolation of the student as he or she faces the computer monitor; it is up to the teacher to implement a pedagogy that will bring the sense of community back (Strickland 11). Portfolio's features accomplish exactly this. Additionally, the Ginanni Classroom is particularly well designed to promote interaction among writers, readers, and instructor. Creating and fostering a sense of community is promoted by the large conference table located in the center of the room and by the low enrollment dictated by the small number of terminals available.

Another helpful source was Judith Boettcher's article "Internet Pitfalls: What not to do When Communicating with Students on the Internet"; in it she offers invaluable, common sense advise that newcomers to the medium can appreciate. For example, she suggests to avoid expecting students' proficiency in any discussion platform right away (in my case, for peer feedback); to be specific about how students are to label documents for clarity and consistency; to set parameters on instructor availability over e-mail in order to diminish frustration for all parties concerned; to avoid being the "gateway for all communication" (Boettcher 46, 50). Despite all this good advise, some minor problems emerged such as students failing to save documents in formats readable by our computers. Thankfully, these types of minor issues were relatively few and rare.

Having discussed how each component of portfolio-based composition can be enhanced through implementation in the computer-assisted classroom and having addressed some of the more immediate concerns, I would like to comment on the accompanying web page that supports and expands the course. Designing the site was made possible by a multitude of sources, primary among them, Larry Mapp, "chief cook and bottle washer" in the Ginanni Classroom. His invaluable guidance and advice were reinforced by sources like Roy Tennant's article, "Web Sites By Design: How to Avoid a 'Pile of Pages.'" Tennant's admonitions to avoid linear thinking, thus allowing each document to "be capable of standing on its own, without any context provided by documents before or after it" (49) reinforced Mapp's instructions for maintaining the integrity and autonomy of each component making up the site. Additionally, "chunkitis. . . in which the sufferer treats every little thing as something worthy of a link"(49), is decried as one of the most distracting ailments that plague novice web site developers. In avoiding this condition, I have prevented distracting students from the task at hand and provided a more efficient experience.

Based in great part on Cantrell and Oswal's Portfolio because it is the department standard for this pedagogy, the web page offers links to detailed discussions on the portfolio system, syllabus, schedule, peer process, general guidelines, writing tools, list-serves (which are not yet accessible through the web site), and the writing assignments. Material is available for study, clarification, refresher and may be printed or copied as it suits the student's needs. Particularly helpful in revision and editing are sub-links available from the "General Guidelines" that offer instruction on using secondary sources, grammar handbook chapters and sections for the twenty-one most common errors, and more. Additionally, the "Writing Tools" offer links outside the site to Online Writing Labs (OWL's) at Purdue University, Wisconsin University, Virginia Tech, and the University of Texas. There, students can obtain remediation, whether on their own volition or as directed by me, on problem areas ranging from comma use to getting started writing. The site has proven to be a rich asset for me and my students; its URL is **http://www.mtsu.edu/~mclayton**.

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Tim Mayers argues that "Composition courses that focus exclusively on print or on electronic literacies. . . do students a disservice" (148). After implementing CAI Portfolio English 111, I am inclined to agree with Mayers. The marriage of these mediums-print and electronic, portfolio and CAI--enhances the strengths of each, what Yancey calls "a kind of cross-fertilization and collaboration, with the online and off-line leading to experimentation, to new texts, to new understandings" ("The Electronic Portfolio" 259). This is exactly the fluid place where instructors, particularly composition instructors, should position themselves. The time is always right to adopt innovations that improve writing instruction. CAI Portfolio English 111 provides a new direction for Freshman Composition at MTSU.

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