



Teaching and Evaluating Writing in the Age of Computers and High-Stakes Testing

Carl Whithaus

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This book takes on a daunting task: How do writing teachers continue to work toward preparing students for academic and real-world communication situations, while faced with the increasing use of standardized high-stakes testing? Teachers need both the technical ability to deal with this reality and the ideological means to critique the information technologies and assessment methods that are transforming the writing classroom.

Teaching and Evaluating Writing in the Age of Computers and High-Stakes Testing serves this dual need by offering a theoretical framework, actual case studies, and practical methods for evaluating student writing. By examining issues in writing assessment--ranging from the development of electronic portfolios to the impact of state-wide, standards-based assessment methods on secondary and post-secondary courses--this book discovers four situated techniques of authentic assessment that are already in use at a number of locales throughout the United States. These techniques stress:

- **interacting* with students as communicators using synchronous and asynchronous environments;
- **describing* the processes and products of student learning rather than enumerating deficits;
- **situating* pedagogy and evaluation within systems that incorporate rather than exclude local variables; and
- **distributing* assessment among diverse audiences.

By advocating for a flexible system of communication-based assessment in computer-mediated writing instruction, this book validates teachers' and students' experiences with writing and also acknowledges the real-world weight of the new writing components on the SAT and ACT, as well as on state-mandated standardized writing and proficiency exams.

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