

Memorable Rhetorical Performances: Reflections on *Kairos* and “Great Debating”

The open-access academic journal [Kairos](#) continues to perennially offer the most technologically innovative scholarship in the field of Writing Studies. I became aware of *Kairos* around 2008 in New Haven, CT from my close friend and colleague (the award-winning techno-teacher) Will Hochman.

My first real foray into teaching with technology began when I started researching and using ePortfolios with colleagues at the University of Washington, Seattle in 2005 (see [Mapping, Re-Mediating, and Reflecting](#)). While researching and experimenting with ePortfolios, I was also honing my use of peer review and response groups in the classroom. Debates proved to be one of my most exciting and successful peer review activities.



engaged in lively debates in the classroom.

So, when I started thinking about ways to represent my in-class debates, I decided to produce a webtext for *Kairos*. The result, “Great Debating: Combining Ancient and Contemporary Methods of Peer Critique” [PraxisWiki | Great Debating](#) involved a collaboration with students at Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, to produce a series of videos and transcripts showcasing students

Embedded video, via webtext capability and accompanying transcripts, allowed for a far richer reader/ viewer experience than could have been achieved via text alone. (Although most of the videos are outdated these days, you can still view a production of a full forty-minute debate via the accompanying YouTube link and transcripts [English 200W Great Debating](#) or view a condensed fifteen-minute version [Great Debating](#).) It was also the inspiration for further open-access webtext and online/ print hybrid productions (see [Create, Perform, Write](#) and [Writing In and About the Performing and Visual Arts](#)).

Viewers can still witness students taking to debating enthusiastically and with much engagement, focus, and passion in their efforts to perform and enact all they’d learned about rhetorical analyses, peer review and response, and argumentation throughout the term. At the click of a button, viewers can experience students enthusiastically dancing attitudes, and my goofy efforts to choreograph this dance (gradually and strategically ceding



authority and control), that moved them in thought and action closer to responsible, authoritative, and confident team co-teachers.

These memorable rhetorical performances might have enabled students to successfully internalize useful habits of mind and writing strategies and moves they carried with them into other communicative situations *and that they can still revisit at any time*.