

Comp Wiki

Problems with Composition Handbooks

1. Composition handbooks are expensive
2. Handbooks do not emphasize what our CCOGs and Comp/Lit faculty want emphasized
3. Discussions of rhetoric in our choices of handbooks are inadequate for WR 121 and 122
4. Handbooks are often difficult-to-use “kitchen sink” compilations of unnecessary material
5. A lot of faculty aren’t using handbooks
6. Students without handbooks have no recourse
7. A handbook get boring quickly—it’s always the same each time you open it
8. Handbooks offer no exercises to engage students

A Solution: A PCC Comp Wiki—like Wikipedia Devoted to comp at PCC

1. Wiki: a collection of web pages that allows anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content using a simple web browser
2. Wikis have a lot of topic associations linked words throughout a page just require a click
3. A wiki is “not a carefully crafted site” (says Wikipedia) but an ongoing process of creation and collaboration
4. A wiki can create targeted pages that don’t yet exist, so visitors can see what’s missing and supply it

What a Comp Wiki Could Do for Us

1. Creation of a comprehensive, dynamic, user-friendly and free online writing handbook to help students on all aspects of essay writing—from invention to grammar to MLA documentation.
2. A keyword-searchable online handbook accessible to every PCC student through MyPCC
3. Handbook explanations tailored to PCC’s CCOGs and the PCC Composition program and individual faculty needs
4. Embedded explanations of expectations in WR 115, 121, 122 and explanations about having conferences, using PCC tutoring centers, writing centers, libraries, advising, etc.
5. Broad financial savings on textbook costs for potentially thousands of PCC writing students otherwise required to purchase writing handbooks that cost forty or fifty dollars and are quickly outdated.
6. Increased collaboration among English faculty district wide as they work over time to expand and develop the wiki.
7. A far more overall uniform approach to Composition district-wide
8. A far more diverse set of approaches to composition and rhetoric, with every faculty member able to contribute to any wiki entry, making apparent to students how intellectual life works on the college level
9. We’d be free of handbook costs

Our Plan

1. Request content from faculty, such as thoughts on “thesis,” grammatical usage items, rhetorical items.
2. Over the summer create a structure and embed content
3. Have a skeletal wiki by fall term, continually added to and altered by interested SAC faculty

Sample Sites

Rhetoric and Composition Wiki on Wikibooks, from St. Cloud State University, Minnesota

http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Rhetoric_and_Composition

Composition Wiki at Miami University of Ohio

<http://www.units.muohio.edu/composition/teachers/wiki.html>

A Faculty-based Wiki about Composition at University of California—Riverside

<http://ucrcomposition.pbworks.com/>