PEG _ PRE-DMAC

(0: 00:00)
FACILITATOR: Good afternoon. I am Nicky Adams, I'm a lecturer here at U.D. in the English Department and I am pleased to be here speaking with Dr. Margaret Strain, also known as Peg. Is it okay if I call you Peg for the interview?

PEG: Absolutely.

(0: 00:25)
FACILITATOR: Peg, if you would before we proceed, could you share a little bit about your teaching and scholarship focus and research focus?

PEG: My research and teaching right now?

(0: 00:29)
FACILITATOR: Yes, please.

PEG: At this point, my research and teaching goes in several areas. I teach all levels of writing instruction from first year writing to argumentation, style, composition theory. We also have a graduate program here so I regularly teach courses such as rhetorical criticism, introduction to graduate studies. I taught a course last fall that I designed, Reading and Writing the Body. So, my courses have to do with teaching of rhetoric, that of writing instruction and some literature. As far as my research interests, those are equally sort of diverse. I was trained as an Historiographer so some of my research still has a historical bent to it. I'm also interested in issues of literacy and a more, not emergent, but certainly a more, an area that I've become interested in is that of computers and composition and using multimodal means to teach writing.

(0: 01:54)
FACILITATOR: Describe your current technological skill level.

PEG: I always feel as though technology is something I'm trying to keep up with, for a number of reasons. Number one, because of my awareness that students use various technologies and I think it is important to be aware of what those are. My own life professionally and privately, such things as telephones, email, computers are a daily part of my life. So, I think I am competent

with the things that I use because they're needed but there are a number of areas which I always feel pressed to try to keep up with. I am, for example, I work with an online journal, Kairos, it is an online journal of technology, pedagogy and rhetoric and I'm always, in working with a diverse group of individuals, aware of the vast amount of knowledge that my colleagues bring to the publication of the journal that I do not have a good working knowledge of. So, if you say where am I with technologies, I would put myself in the middle somewhere.

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FACILITATOR: Sure. You've mentioned your involvement with Kairos, the online journal, in what other ways do you employ technology in your scholarship?

PEG   Oh, gee. I'm currently working on a project that I'm very excited about and that is, we are bringing a book exhibit to The University of Dayton in the fall of 2014. Stewart Rose has generously allowed the university to exhibit 50 rare manuscripts and artifacts and so as part of that, I'm working to mount a kind of a short video that I'm doing for a website that one of my colleagues has designed and that's going to require that I learn a new technology and employ it with some amount of facility to get that mounted.

(0: 04:32)
FACILITATOR: When did you start using technology in teaching?

PEG: I consciously began using it in the mid-90's. I went to The University of Louisville and graduated in '95 and at that time they were beginning to use and open what they called CAI, classrooms Computer Assisted Instruction and I was drawn to that. It made so much sense to me to have students in the writing class actually doing the writing right there. It just seemed like a natural segway into that's the way writing should be taught. So, I began teaching while I was a doctoral student in the writing lab and I designed, I actually piloted a course, it was called Writing About Literature in which they were trying to get faculty, students to design writing intensive courses for literature classes or courses that would lend themselves to be writing to have a heavy degree of writing. So, I was aware then that that seemed a natural point and I actually was hired in '95 for this position to be a computers and writing person. When I think about that now, it makes me smile because I came

with not a whole lot of expertise that one might be expected to have today.

FACILITATOR: Were you aware at that time, in '95 for example, of the earlier name for what we now know as DMAC? Computers and writing intensive classes? Had you heard of that at CWIC at that point?

PEG: No. It wasn't really until my work with Kairos and the fact that there were Kairos staff members who had come out of Michigan Tech that I knew that they were these summer seminars where technology was the focus.

FACILITATOR: What inspired you to attend DMAC and when did you attend?

PEG: Actually, I was working on a book collection and I was writing an essay with a group of students on the professionalization of graduate students and I had taken a group of graduate students to Four Seasons, Chicago one year and we gave a polylog presentation, or they gave a polylog presentation and I wanted to interview them and put it on video and, ideally, my idea for this book was to have had a print article, conventional, but have some sort of links in it that then a reader could go to a website that might have interviews with these students and so I realized that my ideas for doing things were far exceeding my ability to make them happen and so I asked the then Chair of the department if he would buy me an Adobe Suite to work with and I was really, really ambitious and I thought I'd be able to teach myself this material which, of course, I realized you need some hands-on engagement with people who are already pretty adept. So, when I realized that I began designing projects that I didn't have the wherewithal for and I knew that I needed a block of time to be able to learn this and I had, by this time, heard about DMAC and I thought, it's in Columbus, Ohio, it's fairly close, I saw lots of ways that it could enrich my teaching as well as my research.   *END OF AUDIO.*