**Paper #2: Helpful Hints and Tips on Writing an Essay for the Web**

On the surface our second paper project *looks* like the traditional research assignment. You have located outside, critical sources and you are doing your part to weave together aspects of these texts to create your own “state of the field.” However, what sets our assignment apart from the more traditional research projects is that instead of writing this paper for me—your professor—I want you to compose this with your classmates and fellow Dickinsonians in mind. This essay is designed to educate a public audience about what is going on in the field of web writing and digital learning. Plus, it creates a space where you have the chance to voice your ideas and be creative about what digital writing offers students like you.

In his essay entitled “What Makes a Good Web Essay,” Jack Dougherty[[1]](#footnote-1) urges his students to “blend textual narrative and digital evidence for a public audience.” In the essay, he then poses a series of questions to help his students as they compose and revise their essays. I have slightly edited/altered his questions to better suit our needs this semester, but they are as follows:

1. Does your web-essay present a compelling argument or story about a significant aspect of engaging students in web-based learning? Does it inspire the reader to think in new ways?
2. Are the claims supported with appropriate evidence and is the reasoning well developed? Is counter-evidence fully considered?
3. Does it make effective use of web-essay format by integrating narrative text with appropriate digital elements (such as links, photos, charts, maps, videos)?
4. Is the web-essay organized and well written?
5. Does it include sufficient background for audiences unfamiliar with the topic?
6. Does it cite all sources in an appropriate format that future readers may find?

Finally, this weekend marked the inauguration of Dickinson’s 28th president. During the ceremony’s speeches President Roseman and others turned again and again to the value of a liberal arts education. Possibly some of her words will resonate with you as you try to articulate your own thoughts about learning here at Dickinson College. You can watch her speech (<http://dickinson.edu/inauguration/>) or read a transcript (<http://dickinson.edu/about/28th-president/Inauguration-Address/>). I also suggest you take a look at the remarks made by Morton Schapiro, president of Northwestern University, which begin at 43:30: <http://dickinson.edu/about/28th-president/Inauguration-Live-Stream/>.

Good luck and happy writing!

1. You can find the full text here: <http://webwriting.trincoll.edu/good-web-essay/>. Also, you should recognize this name as the editor of *Web Writing,* our online textbook. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)