

Rhetorical Savvy as Social Skill: Modeling Entrepreneur Identity Construction within Educational Content Management Systems

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The recent outcropping of Centers for Entrepreneurship (and Innovation) across the country's colleges and universities provides writing pedagogues a unique opportunity to inculcate rhetorical savvy in nascent entrepreneurs. Since 2003, the Kauffman Foundation has worked tirelessly to forward its mission of entrepreneurship in Higher Education, continually supporting universities through its Campuses Initiative. The cross-disciplinary nature of this initiative "seeks to transform the way colleges and universities make entrepreneurship education available across their campuses, enabling any student, regardless of field of study, to access entrepreneurial training" (Kauffman Foundation). The programs and courses resulting from the Kauffman Initiative (among other, non-Kauffman-sponsored entrepreneurship programs) open doors for a variety of stakeholders to play a role in the education of aspiring entrepreneurs—stakeholders with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, training, experiences, and skill-sets. It is now, when institutions are investing time, money, and resources into entrepreneur education, that we must reassess what it means and takes to be a successful entrepreneur—and a writing instructor of that student population.

In the 2007-2008 school year at Purdue University, David Blakesley, head of the Professional Writing Program, with the assistance of John M. Spartz, proposed, designed, and implemented *English 420E: Business Writing for Entrepreneurs*. This course, now a regular offering (3 sections per semester) in the Department of English, is an elective for students studying to attain a Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation from the university's Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. It was in this course (and through its development) that the concepts and strategies discussed herein were theorized, introduced, refined, and employed. In this type of institutional setting—one that organically leads to a broad range of educational experiences—academics in rhetoric, composition, and professional writing, especially, are uniquely positioned to play a key role in educating this country's next generation of rhetorically savvy, burgeoning entrepreneurs. In such courses, instructors have an occasion to champion the fundamental role that rhetorical acumen plays in the success of nascent entrepreneurs. Rhetoric, then, has the potential to function as a unifying force in the training of these students who come to our classrooms from myriad university disciplines.

This article, then, focuses on one aspect of rhetorical training that we, as writing instructors, have an opportunity—if not an obligation—to inculcate (or at least introduce) in students studying to be entrepreneurs and taking our writing classes. Specifically, through the use of an open source Content Management System (CMS) (e.g., Drupal or Moodle), instructors are able to model, foster, and provide a safe place for students to practice constructing or cultivating [1]^[15] an *ethos*, an entrepreneurial identity(ies) in response to the social demands of the course, its projects, and this disruptive technology itself. For me, and for my students, the discussion and understanding of *ethos* "necessarily assumes some notion of the self and . . . any notion of the self is necessarily reflected in how one approaches *ethos*" (Rivers 286). As part and parcel of a comprehensive course curriculum, *ethos*/identity education in the writing classroom that is managed through a CMS provides these aspiring entrepreneurs an opportunity to contextually practice creating "the narrative[s] that he or she is" (Corder 16) or might be as an entrepreneur. Ultimately, this article will explicate the relationship between *social skills* and entrepreneur success, its inextricable link to *ethos*/identity construction, and ways in which a CMS plays a role in the practiced cultivation of said *ethos*.

Social Skills and Entrepreneur Success

Historically, both popular and academic writing on entrepreneurship has been prone to romanticize individual founders and CEOs when entrepreneurial ventures are successful. Academic researchers, journalists, venture capitalists, and writing-entrepreneurs have "expended much time and text in a quest to predict who will succeed as an entrepreneur and who will fail," emphasizing that "personality, along with other individual characteristics like demographic and cultural background, will predict who will become an entrepreneur, and which entrepreneurs will succeed" (Byers et al. 2). Thus, according to existing belief, in order to be a successful entrepreneur, one must possess a certain (a priori) personality or come from the proper lineage. According to this theory, people can't "learn" how to be a successful entrepreneur; they either "have it" or they don't.

More recently, though, research into the relationship between nascent entrepreneur behavior and entrepreneurial success has indicated that social capital, driven by the acquisition of *social skills*, is a significant determinant of greater financial and entrepreneurial success. Over the course of several years and multiple articles, Baron, Markman, and Tang have identified and empirically established a particular set of *social skills* that lead to entrepreneurial financial success. These include *social perception* (the ability to perceive others accurately), *expressiveness* (the ability to express feelings and reactions clearly and openly), *impression management* (skill in making favorable first impressions on others), and *social adaptability* (proficiency in adapting one's actions to current social contexts) (for further discussions see

Ferris, Witt, and Hochwarter 2001; Wayne and Liden 1995) (283). According to Baron and Markman, “Because *social skills* can readily be enhanced through appropriate training, entrepreneurs who take advantage of such opportunities may reap important benefits” (106). In this (re)vision of what determines entrepreneurial success, these compulsory skills *can* be learned—and taught.

The schism between previous (and, to some extent, still commonly-believed) and contemporary theories for predicting entrepreneur success is summarized by Goss:

Orientating so strongly towards the individual has resulted in entrepreneurial theory’s neglect of a crucial dimension of human experience—that associated with “the meaning, experiential content, and behavioural consequences of the primary condition of ‘being with others’” (Bauman 179). This missing dimension—the ‘*social*’—involves intersubjectivity and interaction. (618)

The recognition that entrepreneurship is embedded in discourse, channeled and facilitated (or inhibited) by a person’s position in a social context, in society at large—which is dependent upon one’s *social skills*— facilitates a rhetorical approach to training/educating these budding entrepreneurs. It is in these *social skills*, ‘the social,’ the intersubjectivity, that the relationship between *ethos* and identity becomes manifest for entrepreneurs—and writing instructors. And, as is suggested by Rivers, as a field, we need to “teach an *ethos* that is in line with more rhetorical and less foundational conceptions of self [identity]” (286). It is these rhetorical conceptions that I work with and through in this article—and in my entrepreneurship writing courses.

Ethos/Identity Construction as Social Skill

In order to illustrate the proposed existing association between *ethos* and *social skills*, I must first address the relationship between *ethos* and identity (i.e. self, à la Rivers), or identity construction (i.e. narrative creation, à la Corder). Working from Nathaniel Rivers’s “*I told U So: Classical and Contemporary Ethos and the Stabilization of Self*” and Jim Corder’s “*Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love*,” I posit an *ethos* that cannot be added to or presented discretely from a stable self or identity, but “emerges in the ethical cultivation of unstable, compromised selves that exist between and among the speaker and the audience” (Rivers 286). For me (and my students) *ethos* and identity emerge “in the moment of contact and through the conversation” in what might be called “self-cultivation,” forwarding the notion that identities are not “*stable through* discourse, but *constituted in it*” (283). We do not invent or discover our *ethos* or identity, but, rather, “cultivate it from within a matrix of other forces and agents” (283). That is to say, *ethos* and identity are contingent, dynamic, and malleable—depending solely on the rhetorical situation, on the demands of the social circumstances in which the actors find themselves. Corder’s ideas regarding the relationship between *ethos*, identity, and argument are much the same, albeit, with different terminology. Corder discusses “creating a narrative” that is our self, our argument (18). This narrative, as it is for Rivers, is emergent and conditional; the situation (which is always social) establishes the identity that is cultivated, emergent, and argued for by the speaker, the aspiring entrepreneur. In a traditional conception of *ethos*, “*ethos* becomes the tool of revealing the writer’s self as stable—a way of bringing a stable ‘I’ to a group of stable ‘Yous’ . . . it is assumed that readers’ ‘minds’ and ‘concerns’ are capable of being grasped, ahead of time, by the speaker” (Rivers 284). It is this second, more traditional notion of *ethos* that students are challenged to wrestle with and eschew in developing their rhetorical savvy as both class members and future members of their greater business communities. Accordingly, these entrepreneurs *cannot* simply pre-package themselves, their *ethos*, their identity in preparation for an elevator pitch, a business plan, or a meeting with a venture capitalist. They must develop and embrace a more flexible (and sophisticated) understanding of and practice in *ethos* than has been traditionally prescribed. When “in the moment,” entrepreneurs, particularly, must be able to draw upon and interpret all of the nuanced cues that the social situation provides. Within the “matrix of forces” available, they must cultivate or create the *ethos/identity* that is most appropriate—providing an implicit argument for its appropriateness—to succeed in the communicative act. Creating a context-specific, emergent, cultivated identity for entrepreneurs is tantamount to creating an argument as to why they will be successful, deserve the money, or be a great boss. In order to be successful in creating this emergent and contingent *ethos*, entrepreneurs require the very *social skills* that make for a financially flourishing nascent entrepreneur.

For entrepreneur students (as well those in other writing classes), the process of cultivating an *ethos/identity* that fits the social-rhetorical situation, requires a certain rhetorical savvy, a savvy that is reliant upon—in great part—one’s possession of *social skills* and the facility with which those skills are employed. Baron, Markman, and Tang’s four aforementioned skills for entrepreneurial financial success are part and parcel of this cultivation equation. The acquisition of the first skill, *social perception*, allows an entrepreneur to “read” the rhetorical situation in

preparation for action. Baron, Markman, and Tang define this skill as “the ability to perceive *others* accurately” (283, my emphasis). For the current purposes, this is only a portion of the skill as it pertains to *ethos*/identity cultivation; not only will students need to be able to perceive other *people* accurately, but also other aspects of the social situation (e.g., *kairos*, the modality, the economy, the market, the setting, etc.). This skill, then, is paramount, as it precipitates the *ethos* that will spin out of that particular social context.

The remaining three *social skills*—*expressiveness*, *impression management*, and *social adaptability*—are directly related to establishing an appropriate *ethos*, as all three facilitate the act(ion) of cultivating, creating, and arguing for a particular notion of self, one that is ready and willing to be amended at a moment’s notice. In being socially adaptable, nascent entrepreneurs can read a situation “on the fly” and behave accordingly, expressing themselves clearly and openly while maintaining or amending the impression (identity) that they made from the outset of the social interaction. Possessing (or acquiring) these *social skills* and applying them efficaciously in cultivating an *ethos* that corresponds to the social-rhetorical situation is the hallmark of the rhetorically savvy, the sure-to-be-successful, nascent entrepreneur. It is this process, this skill set, this rhetorical sophistication that I introduce to my writing entrepreneur students and model through the use of a Content Management System.

Salient CMS Components

Before delving into the pedagogical import of CMSs for writing entrepreneur students, some clarification and definition of educational CMSs may be useful. Lurie (2002) defines a Content Management System (CMS) as necessarily consisting of three distinct components: *content*, *process*, and *technology*. *Content*, then, is comprised of text, graphics, animations, sounds, video, and any other media which make up the basic features of the system. *Process* is defined as the array of activities which require one or more inputs and execute actions to produce outputs that can be performed by the system, the user, by someone else entirely, or by a combination of actors (e.g., download, view, publish, comment, share). Finally, *technology* (software) is necessary to perform the processes and to control the content over the Internet (2). Implicit in this definition, made explicit in Altun, Gulbahar, and Madran’s (2008) summary of CMS workflow in Figure 1, a CMS has no meaning or function without people—without users:

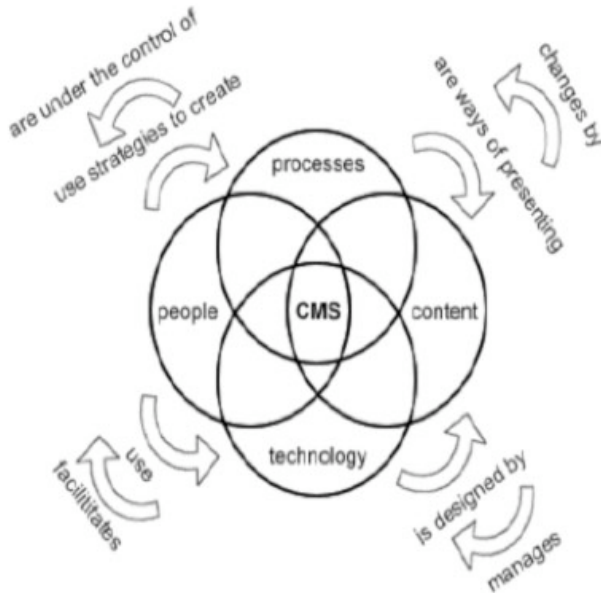


Figure 1: The Workflow in CMS (Altun, Gulbahar, and Madran 139)

Learners /users in this equation are essential, as—in true socioconstructivist fashion—they are the locus of all that is produced/cultivated in the classroom (CMS) setting. Accordingly, for the most effective learning to take place, knowledge should be shaped by learners, not by instructors. (McGill et al. 2005). The CMS allows for, and, I would argue, forces its users to negotiate what constitutes knowledge within the context(s) of the course, its projects, and participants. As knowledge creation, acquisition, management, and publishing processes continue to become increasingly more complex (if not potentially more efficient) in today’s classrooms and workplaces, web-based Content Management Systems—as is argued herein—facilitate a more successful, prepared, and savvy learning community. The amount of content the community “owns” and negotiates, including the number of texts, modifications, and updates that

the community coordinates during a semester of coursework, will be managed more easily, effectively, and efficiently through a CMS (Boiko 2005). And the success or failure of that community's endeavors correlates directly to its members' ability to cultivate appropriate identities within and without the confines of the CMS.

Purdue University's Department of English takes advantage of one particular open source CMS, Drupal, which is "software that allows an individual or a community of users to easily publish [sic], manage and organize a great variety of content on a website" (qtd. in Tirrell). This invaluable resource—especially for modeling *ethos*/identity cultivation in the entrepreneur writing classroom—allows class members to collaborate and share information, materials, and insights in one, dedicated, continuously available space. Through this CMS (there are any number of available CMS platforms that share many, if not all, of the features of Drupal), students are able to blog (in forums, wikis, and individual blog spaces), hold both asynchronous and synchronous chats, post images, videos, and documents, and interact within a discourse community to create "a small culture of shared artifacts with shared meanings . . . with an emphasis on group work, collaboration, communication, sharing, activities, and critical reflection" (Moodle).

These Content Management Systems, among a variety of other technologies, have long been promoted as "disruptive technologies," a term first coined in a *Harvard Business Review* article, "Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave" (Bower and Christensen 1995), and further developed by Harvard Business School professor and author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*, Clayton M. Christensen. For these authors, disruptive technologies lack refinement, and, due to their unproven capabilities, "often perform far worse along one or two dimensions that are particularly important" to their limited number of users (45). Due in large part to the flexible nature of today's student, especially when it comes to technology, these innovations seem to offer potential for pedagogical innovation and are often suggested as acting as catalysts for change (Canole et al. 511) in a learning environment.

The Role of Content Management Systems in the Professional Writing Classroom

As a pedagogical tool, then, CMSs are rife with possibilities for innovation and an enriched approach to introducing rhetoric to our students. This article, while offering theories, strategies, and concepts that might be employed in any number of writing classrooms is, most specifically, related to the use of a CMS in the professional writing classroom. Thus, an address of existing discussion(s) regarding the theory and application of this classroom technology is necessary. The use of CMSs in the professional writing classroom has received little direct attention from scholars and practicing instructors in higher education. But, several fields interested in best practices for teaching and learning have begun to weigh in on the use of [disruptive] technologies in the 21st century classroom. Myriad articles in education, both theoretical and practical, discuss the CMS as a tool for facilitating learning in a way that is relevant to the current discussion. Much of the literature from this camp explains the ways in which CMSs facilitate collaboration in the classroom while modeling it for real-world application. The role of collaboration as a pedagogical and epistemological strategy for learning—not to mention its inherent *social* qualities that precipitate *ethos* cultivation—is well documented (e.g., Brown and Duguid 2000; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and recognized in relation to Vygotsky's (1978) well-known "zone of proximal development" (86). Teresa Hennessy (2009) notes that collaboration is and should be viewed "as one of the most effective tools to harvest the benefits of socially-constructed learning" (99) because it is "the abiding feature of a modern organization" (Turban, McLean, and Wetherbe 144). Thus, collaboration is a skill—clearly *social* in nature—that students need practice in and facility with in order to best position themselves for success as a contributing member of a working society, a success that is contingent on their capacity for and understanding of creating a context-specific *ethos*. This is particularly true for the aspiring entrepreneurs we might encounter in our writing courses. For many scholars, "collaboration takes place when people need to work together in small groups, in order to exchange ideas, challenge their own ways of thinking and create synergy to produce something that goes beyond what any of them could have done working separately" (Graham and Misanchuk 187). Building on traditional pedagogical approaches to and models of collaboration, teachers of today are finding the many benefits that employing a CMS can have for their students, as they seek to "simulate real-life scenarios so that learners reap the greatest benefit" (Bennett 2003).

CMSs, as noted in various empirical investigations (e.g., Rudestam and Schoenholtz-Read 2002; Stephenson 2001), are capable of addressing individual learner/worker differences, while broadening the limits of educational opportunities for specific populations (entrepreneurs). In a university setting, the advantages CMSs provide to teaching-learning processes and people alike have been widely discussed and include the ability to

- use similar or related systems to share knowledge;

- collect information like exams, homework, etcetera in a common place;
- give immediate feedback to learners;
- follow learners' performances in detail;
- and improve data-sharing among learners (Altun, Gulbahar, and Madran 141).

While these pedagogical benefits are sure to enrich the experiences of students and instructors in the writing classroom, they are, essentially, general advantages of implementing a CMS (or, one might argue, any of a number of instructional technologies); that is, they apply to a variety of university courses, with no extraordinary benefits to the professional writing student or pedagogue—nor to those involved in entrepreneur education. But, CMSs *do* maintain the qualities for more sophisticated (not simply pragmatic) and rhetorical employment; as a field of study, we simply need to begin working toward an engaged and rhetorically-grounded discussion of the *how* and *why* of using CMSs in our classrooms.

This work—the work of theorizing and discussing CMSs and their potential for the field—has recently begun among members of the PW community. In “Coming to Content Management: Inventing Infrastructure for Organizational Knowledge Work,” Bill Hart-Davidson, Grace Bernhardt, Michael McLeod, Martine Rife, and Jeffrey Grabill (2008)—guided by several scholars in the professional writing community (e.g., Johnson-Eilola 2005; Spinuzzi 2003; Spinuzzi and Zachry 2000) and working from Latour’s (2005) “tracing associations” and “actor-network” approach—purport that Content Management within a CMS “is a deeply rhetorical process for organizations [and students] to undertake and, as such, it has implications for what technical communicators do as well as for rhetorical theory” (14). It is this type of discussion, one that that positions the CMS and the work carried out by and within this technology, firmly in the world of rhetorical practice. For students and instructors of professional writing classes, it is important to “come to content management . . . as a rhetorical problem . . . a problem of organizational identity and strategy—and not precisely as a problem of technique or technology alone (Hart-Davidson et al. 31). This approach calls for, quite specifically, the type of classroom discussions and practices regarding *ethos* and identity cultivation that are advanced throughout this article.

As guest editors for *Technical Communication Quarterly*, George Pullman and Baotong Gu (2008) remark further on the need for academics to enter the discourse:

With users—technical communicators—being at the center of CMS implementations, it is only logical for teachers and researchers in technical communication to join the discussion. With all the buzz from the industry about CMSs and the eventual, and in fact rather urgent, need for us to teach content management in our technical communication courses, it is high time for our field not only to gain a better understanding of CMSs but also to formulate a theoretically sound and pedagogically viable approach to content management (3).

While Pullman and Gu discuss teaching and researching CMSs for its own sake—that is, how to best prepare technical communicators for implementing and working within a CMS in the work place—they also succinctly and aptly characterize the current pedagogical situation in higher education:

We [professional communication pedagogues] have not formulated a systematic conceptualization of and approach toward content management . . . as far as we know, books on content management systems have almost exclusively approached the topic from the practical perspective. In other words, they teach you how to design and/or use such systems without critical examinations of why such systems should be used in the first place . . . what effect working in such environments has on writing as a practice (4).

In this vein—how CMSs affect, model, and shape the communication practices of professional writers and students—scholars believe that “writing in these electronic environments has been profound . . . rather than thinking of the end product of their work as tangible products or even documents, they are beginning to see their efforts as part of an endless flow of information” (Pullman and Gu 2). And, I would argue, part and parcel of this “endless flow of information” is the process of identity/*ethos* cultivation—and the matrix of forces available (and those with which they *need* to engage) to those both producing and consuming said information. Professional writers [and students] can no longer think in strictly “traditional” terms of texts or publications or identity/*ethos*; they need to think in broader, more all-encompassing approaches like “asset management: the strict separation of form and content to allow for seamless repurposing of content . . . and writing in a collaborative environment with multiple authors and multiple purposes.” In this (re)visionist approach, “CMSs are transforming text into data, and the discipline of technical communication will never be the same” (Pullman and Gu 3).

Thus, we need to urge (and model) students to come to understand “data” in a new way—what

constitutes data must move beyond the textual, the concrete, the overt to an understanding of the complexity of forces at work before, during, and after the communicative event. It is only when professional writers and students come to hold a complex understanding of *ethos*, a rhetorical savvy—one that is both facilitated by and always at play within a CMS—that they'll be prepared for their lives as professional communicators, entrepreneurs being a subset of this population.

The Role of Content Management Systems in the Entrepreneur Writing Classroom

As previously mentioned, in the entrepreneur writing classroom this disruptive technology allows for pedagogical innovation and acts as a catalyst for change for students—change in the way they conceive of the skills necessary for entrepreneurial success. Through the various features of the CMS, students are able to, if not forced to, “try out” a variety of identities in the negotiation of course projects. In *English 420E: Business Writing for Entrepreneurs*, students are asked to perform (practice) all of the duties—and complete all of the projects—that an upstart entrepreneur would need in the search for funding and the commencement of their venture. These projects ask students to interact within and without the classroom (and through the course site) in a variety of modalities, all under the rubric of professional communication, as per the expectations of an upper-level writing and entrepreneurship class. Students are asked to pitch, research, write, design, present, and document in collaboration with the other students in the class, all through the CMS.

In carrying out these projects, students are put in myriad social-rhetorical situations that require them to cultivate an *ethos* that leads to their self-determined success in the class. In each class, students develop individual business ideas that they hope to bring to full business plan by semester's end. Each student endeavors to assume the identity of the solitary entrepreneur, but only a select four or five students have the opportunity to research, draft, design, complete, and present their entrepreneurial idea over the course of the semester. Course “project managers” are selected from the pool of “applicants” near the beginning of the semester. Students vote on the semester-long project managers based on the idea (or, more often, the person [*ethos*]) in response to pitches given to the entire class. These pitches are video-recorded, posted to the course site (CMS), and then reflected upon—formally and informally—by all members of the discourse community in order to determine who will take the lead(s) in the course.

It is in this first project, the *Business Idea Pitch*, where students cultivate their first *ethos*/identity in the class, which happens through and, in great part, because of the Content Management System. These aspiring entrepreneurs not only present their business ideas live to the class—which requires a certain identity construction in order to garner votes—but also have to contend with the artifact that is created and posted on the course site. Thus, the impression they make (i.e., *social skill* practice) must not simply be a first impression or based solely on the idea, but, rather, a lasting “whole package” impression of the sure-to-be-successful entrepreneur. The dynamic nature of the CMS allows students to revisit those pitches before determining who will receive their votes—and throughout the semester as they feel necessary. This has been an eye-opening introduction to *ethos*/identity construction for past students in the course—and a great place to begin the discussion of the contingent nature of *ethos* and the necessary *social skills* with which we work all semester. As we move further into our discussions and “peel back” the layers of *ethos*, students come to realizations about why they made their original selections, often finding their own reactions to the pitches (and people making them) quiet surprising and contradictory to the typically-applied, dogmatic formula for entrepreneurial success.

In project two, the newly-established project managers are charged with “hiring” employees (i.e., form groups for the semester) in a comprehensive *Job Application Project*. Here, members of the class are asked to take on different roles and craft and negotiate texts (documents, videos, web pages, etc.) to reflect their ability to carry out those roles. Project managers create and post to the course site both a required entrepreneurial resume (to illustrate, beyond their persuasive pitch, why they would make a good semester-long project manager) and “job ads” which advertise for the positions they hope to fill in their group (e.g., researcher, designer, market analyst, writer, copy editor), along with any other “texts” to further represent themselves. The remainder of the students read and respond to two of these job announcements with a mandatory resume and cover letter of their own, plus any supplemental material(s) requested by the project manager. It is in this process, in the negotiation of creating groups, that students are asked again to cultivate a multifarious *ethos* based on the complex social-rhetorical situation—the writing, the job, the project manager, the application process, and the public nature of the CMS. Early on, students learn that how they present themselves, to whom, and for what job—reading correctly the social cues and applying the proper skill set—determines their success or failure in the process. Again, by having all class correspondence occur through the CMS, there is a heightened and complex need for the aforementioned model of identity cultivation.

Once groups are established, students are put in a variety of situations using the CMS technology that force them to constantly negotiate their *ethos*/identity in the course. Whether it be through their diligence (and writing) in documenting their group's progress, their research and cataloguing skills (including annotations, links to sites, and uploading of documents) on the class wiki, their communication with group members via their dedicated group-forum or during synchronous chat, or through the drafting, designing, and group presentation of their business idea, students consistently work within the matrix of forces at play in the course to establish the appropriate *ethos*.

While it may seem that, once groups have been established, so, too, have their basic identities for the semester. This is far from the case. Not only are groups holistically assessed on all projects (both formatively and summatively), but each member is given an individual grade, based in large part on the feedback they receive from their group members. Thus applying their *social skills*—their rhetorical savvy—in creating, reassessing, and tweaking their emergent identity(ies) is an ongoing, sixteen-week process.

The culminating project, one that functions as yet another opportunity to exercise their rhetorical savvy, is the *Elevator Pitch Competition*, during which *each* student (not each group) in the class performs a two-minute elevator pitch on the business plan on which they have been working for the entire semester. Again, this pitch is recorded and posted to the course site, where voting occurs and the top three pitchers are rewarded. Ultimately, this final use of the CMS in the course forces students to take a semester's worth of social-rhetorical context into consideration, cultivating and culminating in a "final" contingent identity in the hope of being selected as a successful entrepreneur (or, at the least, elevator pitcher). This project, and the subsequent student reflection, is possibly the most telling of the semester; essentially, students draw from a shared body of knowledge created in the CMS and in their respective group's business plans. Yet, the interpretation and presentation of that context is extremely varied, paving the way for further and enlightening discussion of our overarching course concept(s). In the end, the success or failure of these students is inextricably linked to their ability to successfully navigate the social aspects of the course, the group work, the projects, the course site, the *ethos*/identity construction. Those that have or acquire the *social skills*, the rhetorical savvy that determines entrepreneurial success, also find greater success in the course—one that has given them ample opportunity to practice social-rhetorical, contextual *ethos* cultivation within and without a Content Management System.

Conclusion

For nascent entrepreneurs, rhetorical savvy is concomitant with the acquisition of *social skills*, and significantly correlated with future entrepreneurial financial success. The relationships between these skills, *ethos*, and identity converge in the use of the Content Management System in the writing entrepreneur classroom, where writing instructors are uniquely positioned to provide the rhetorical training that most effectively prepares the next generation of entrepreneurs. By asking students to wrestle with and gain invaluable practice in cultivating context-specific *ethos*/identity—an *ethos* that is contingent upon the social-rhetorical situation(s) in which these aspiring entrepreneurs find themselves—writing instructors make clear the role that rhetoric can play in entrepreneur education.

Notes

[1] [22] For a detailed treatise on *cultivation*, see Rivers, Nathaniel A. *Cultivating Rhetorics: Exploring and Exploiting the Emergent Boundaries of Nature and Culture*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Purdue University, 2009. West Lafayette: Proquest Dissertations & Theses @ CIC Institutions. (Publication No. AAT 3379719).

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