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The Digital Imperative: Making the Case for a 21st -Century Pedagogy

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Abstract

In our nascent digital culture, the traditional essayistic literacy that still dominates composition classes is outmoded and needs to be replaced by an intentional pedagogy of digital rhetoric which emphasizes the civic importance of education, the cultural and social imperative of “the now,” and the “cultural software” that engages students in the interactivity, collaboration, ownership, authority, and malleability of texts. My readings of Yancey, Balkin, Vaidhyanathan, Lanham, and Gee have enabled me to reconfigure my composition classroom as an emerging space for digital rhetoric. Through the calculated and sequenced introduction of ePortfolios, digital stories, on line games, Second Life, and blogs, all of which create a new digital infrastructure for my course and assignments, I am working to create a set of practices that work together to explore the ways in which writing instruction can change to meet a new digital imperative; as such, I attempt to use technology in my courses to re-create the

contemporary worlds of writing that our students encounter everyday.



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Keywords

ePortfolio; Digital Rhetoric; Multimodal Composition; Curricular Redesign; Web 2.0; Cultural Software; Habits of Thought

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J. Elizabeth Clark, Professor of English and Co-Director of Composition at LaGuardia Community College, has been active with ePortfolios locally and nationally since 2001. She serves on the Executive Board of the Conference on Basic Writing, is part of the *Radical Teacher* editorial collective, and is AAC&U's local campus Project VALUE Coordinator. Her publications have appeared in *Radical Teacher*, *Peer Review*, *Minnesota Review*, *Journal of Basic Writing*, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, and others.

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