**Jennifer Falcón**Department of English
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The most rewarding part of teaching is witnessing students’ progress throughout a semester. To help facilitate students’ growth as writers, researchers, and communicators, I approach teaching with an eye on three things: draw from theories and concepts in digital composition, digital rhetoric, and create opportunities for meaningful collaboration.

**Digital Rhetoric and Multiliteracies**

I define digital rhetoric not only as the application of rhetorical theories and practices in digital environments, but as a relationship between the composer and device, platform, network, or software used to compose. Students’ rhetorical choices speak to their understanding of digital tools, and their effectiveness as much as a final project.

I use the first-year composition classroom as a space to introduce theories and practices in digital rhetoric. I scaffold assignments so concepts that first appear as minor or low-stakes assignments before they explore practices in major assignments. In professional writing classes I require students to compose brochures, presentation aids, or slideshows as supplemental material to enhance their presentations. This urges students to continue to think about the relationship between their audience, the genre they are composing in, and the constraints and benefits using specific software, platforms, and devices to compose.

**Creating an active and engaged learning environment**

To make students feel more at ease with the rigors of writing I begin the semester with a discussion of the writing process. I ask them to describe their own writing process. This helps them to better understand that everyone’s process is different. Understanding what works for them and repeating it can help them become more efficient writers. I’m open about my struggles with sitting down to write, and stress that finding what works best helps them stay organized, and improves their writing process. Discussions of writing process, and using humor to share my experiences help keep the mood light, but productive by creating a supportive learning environment in order to build a strong classroom community.

**Collaboration**

In first-year composition courses, students may view collaboration as a group project or peer review. Students work together, but may not always see the real-life application of this group work. Whereas in workplace writing I use collaboration as an opportunity for students to collectively demonstrate their knowledge of genres and audience expectations as they attempt to effectively deliver a message, and/or their research much like they would in the workplace.

One-on-one conferences allow me to provide feedback and discuss each student’s project. Much like students will mix and use modes in collaboration with each other; they will collaborate with their peers, their audiences, and me. Creating a learning environment where students are comfortable to write, and eager to collaborate is an important component of my approach to teaching writing.

I believe in the universal necessity of writing, and I teach writing because it is a large part of our communication both inside and outside the classroom. Writing is difficult to do, difficult to teach, but rewarding on both ends when you see students’ progress throughout a semester.