

This is a transcript of the video clip "Cindy's Advice to New Scholars" from the interview with Dr. Cynthia Selfe in Samuel Head, "A Scholarly Legacy: Professor Cynthia Selfe and the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives" published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 22(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/22.1/interviews/head>.

Sam:

What advice would you give new scholars in the field of digital rhetoric and composition?

Dr. Selfe:

Well I would tell them, I know that many new scholars are worried about tenure, promotion, and the way digital works are currently valued in departments of English, which tend to be a little bit more conservative, and sort of attached to the notion of the printed book, but they're changing pretty rapidly, and so I would encourage young scholars not to be bounded by the imaginations of the people who went before them, and not to be overly cautious in their approach to digital work. I would say play and invent and experiment and follow your passions in that work, and if the work is good work, it will be valued by the time you get to tenure and promotion. And the more you try and suss out what's going to be the value in six years when you go up for tenure and promotion, the less successful you're going to be. So do the work that you know to be good work, in the form that you know how to do it, and in the environments both digital and non-digital that attract you. And by the time you get to tenure and promotion that work will be valued. Now it might not be valued at the same place you think it's going to be valued, but it will be valued if it's good work and you will find a place where you can continue to do that work and experimentation and make your own contributions.

And I think I would encourage them to be bold. I mean it is -- when Gail Hawisher and I were involved in doing work in digital environments, there were a limited number of people doing that work, and it was a risk. But if we had been too careful and not engaged in that work, I think that would have been a loss to us. If we had decided that the profession was not keen on collaborative work, for instance, and we had done our individual work, that would have been a loss to us. So I think that you can't predict where the values of the field necessarily are going to go, but you can predict where you're going to do your best work and how you're going to do your best work. So be bold and do it and hold yourself to high standards, in doing so.

Here's what I would say to people were starting the profession: the next 10 or 20 years are going to be so totally exciting, so open and full of possibility for scholars. And there's so much to do and so many neat projects to take on, that I would encourage people to dive in, dive in and enjoy what they find and follow their passions and make their contributions that they can be proud of when they turn around and 20 or 30 years and somebody asked them, you know, "What did you do?" I want them to be able to be proud of the projects they've taken on, they've contributed to, and they've done within the profession.

Sam:

Thank you so much for this interview.

Dr. Selfe:

[Moves her hands into the shapes of the letters] O-H-I-O. That's great Sam.

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Sam:

Thank you.