



Writing Programs

Department of English
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Writing Notes

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contents

- 1 Inquiries into Curriculum Design
- 2 Notes from the Director
- 4 National Day on Writing 2011 Celebration
- 4 2012 ASU Composition Conference Preview
- 5 Unplugged: Your Brain on Digital Technology
- 6 I Shouldn't Belong to INK
- 7 Current Research into Portfolio and Programmatic Assessment
- 8 Evolution, Not Revolution
- 9 Welcoming New TAs
- 11 Welcoming New Instructors
- 12 Kudos & Milestones

contributors

- Angela Christie
- Wendy King
- Shirley Rose
- Brent Chappelow
- Shavawn Berry
- Richard Hart
- Dan Bommarito
- Debra Schwartz
- Alison Sutherland
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In this issue:

As Writing Programs continues to look into the values of our work, we have held group discussions about student writing, the teaching of writing, and the specific skills or classroom practices that help us be effective teachers. By having these conversations, we are turning a critical eye toward the work we do as writing teachers. In recognition of these and other practices that ask us to look at the work we do, this issue of *Writing Notes* focuses on the inquiries that surround the teaching of writing. Some of these inquiries are local while others participate in the national conversations on writing, but all demonstrate that Writing Programs is an active site of research that will help shape our future practices and policies.



Inquiries into Curriculum Design

By Brent Chappelow, Assistant Director of Writing Programs

This fall, Paul Matsuda and Shirley Rose presented “The Rhetoric of WPA-ing” for the ASU chapter of the Rhetoric Society of America. In their talks, Matsuda and Rose discussed the importance of writing program administration in helping develop Writing Programs further. One key area for development that both discussed was enhancing curriculum. By inquiring into the way that our curricula are designed, we can learn valuable lessons about how students respond to and learn in our courses.

Of course, as teachers of writing, we all, I believe, perform some level of inquiry into our work and the design of our classes. When a particular class period goes awry, we work through that class and determine how to resolve that issue for future classes. In that sense, we are all performing inquiries into the way our curriculum is designed. My focus in this article is to discuss some of the work of “disciplined inquiry” and the research projects that have developed from that inquiry. “Disciplined inquiry” in this article refers to formal curriculum designs that draw upon important theories and scholarship on the teaching of writing in order to develop new course designs.

In “Infrastructure Outreach and the Engaged Writing Program,” Jeff Grabill (2010) argues that writing programs can be defined by what they do. Writing programs, he believes, are uniquely suited to conduct inquiry and foster innovation. With the support of Director of Writing Programs Shirley Rose, the guidance of other graduate faculty members, and cooperation with other Writing Programs teachers, four research initiatives were developed to inquire how we can change the ways in which writing is taught. The four projects help illustrate the work that is possible in a program where inquiry, especially disciplined inquiry, is valued.



Notes from the Director



By Shirley Rose, Professor of English

Last spring, in this column I wrote about the importance of “showing up,” writing about the ways participation in events and activities is necessary to our being “visible” to others. This is true for Writing Programs teachers as individuals who participate in the program’s work, as it is true for the program as a whole. Our shared belief in this principle is also expressed in our Writing Programs policy on class attendance, the focus of my column for this issue.

In May of 2011, I asked all Writing Programs teachers to complete a survey about the Writing Programs attendance policy and its effects on students’ completion of the course. I developed the survey for a number of reasons, but a particularly important one was that I wanted to know how many students were failing our courses due to excessive absences, compared to the number who failed because they had not completed required coursework or because their completed coursework had been below course standards.

That is, I wanted to know whether our attendance policy was contributing to students’ lack of persistence because students who had excessive absences were receiving failing grades or were dropping or withdrawing from the course. What we’ve learned is that, from the teachers’ perspective, our attendance policy contributes to student retention because it helps to ensure students’ participation in class activities that are critical to their learning and to their timely and successful completion of required coursework.

Survey questions asked Writing Programs teachers (115 of 165 teachers completed the survey) to indicate 1) the total number of students on their rosters at the beginning of the semester, and 2) the total number of students who failed, dropped, withdrew, or quit attending as a result of the Writing Programs attendance policy for each of the First-Year Composition courses they taught. Overall, according to the participating teachers’ reports, of the 3227 students on their course rosters at the Spring 2011 semester start, 398 or 12.3% failed, dropped, withdrew, or quit attending as a result of the policy.

At first, it might appear that our program-wide attendance policy is responsible for a large number of our students’ failing to successfully complete the course, which could presumably contribute to their not continuing their studies at ASU in future semesters, which would in turn be reflected in the university’s retention rates. However, a review of participants’ free-text responses to survey questions indicates that in many teachers’ experience, the attendance policy helps to ensure that students not only meet the course learning outcomes for writing but also develop some of the habits they will need to successfully complete their college educations, such as self-discipline, responsibility to self and others, planning, and time-management. Here are a few excerpts from survey respondents’ comments:

“It’s perfect—fair and easy to enforce. It is also extremely effective at ensuring student attendance and resulting success.” - Survey Participant

The incoming students need to be acquainted with the rigors of college work and this policy proves to be a good disciplinary model for them.... These courses also heavily rely on in-class group activities and peer feedback. Without a student’s regular attendance these activities can be easily disrupted.

If students were allowed to miss more classes, more of my time would inevitably be devoted to repeating lessons for absent students in order to make sure that the class as a whole is able to run efficiently. Additionally, it would waste the time of those students who were engaged and putting forth the effort, especially during group activities.

Given the collaborative nature of my classes (peer review workshops, etc.) consistent participation is crucial. Honestly, if students didn’t have the threat of failure (or low participation grades) for non-attendance, I wouldn’t be able to structure my class the way it is.

An emphasis on process-based pedagogy requires that students participate in the process of developing and shaping ideas in the classroom.

[This policy] keeps the majority of students in class and participating with their classmates and current with their work.

Continued on p. 3

In brief, the Writing Programs’ attendance policy, which is included in every teacher’s syllabus for every Writing Programs course, is the following: **“Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Because Writing Programs courses incorporate frequent small- and large-group activities into lessons, students who are absent affect not only their own learning, but that of their fellow students. Therefore, only two weeks’ worth of absences will be allowed for the semester, regardless of reason, including documented illness or emergency. Students who exceed two weeks’ worth of classes will fail the course, unless they withdraw.”**

Rose, cont. from p. 2

...In a class that is based on creating writing communities, the student who chose to come to class whenever not only would learn little from the class, but he/she would create a negative learning atmosphere for other students in the class and make teaching difficult.

There is a direct correlation between students who have absences and poor performance in my writing courses.

Do attendance policies make students better scholars? Probably not. Do they help with enrollment retention? I think so, as even unmotivated students who are forced to come to class or risk failing the course learn something by being part of the class community.

These responses serve to clarify and reinforce our reasons for developing and following the attendance policy we have in place.

The survey questionnaire also asked survey participants to indicate their own level of satisfaction with the policy. Regarding the “clarity of the policy” 93.8% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied and 4.5% indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Several of those calling for greater clarity suggested that in addition to being included on all course syllabi as is currently the case, the policy statement should be easier to locate on the writing program website; others indicated that more clarity was needed regarding how tardiness contributed to calculation of absences. A few respondents noted that it was often difficult for students in Internet-based iCourses to grasp that failure to contribute to online discussion or upload drafts for peer review is effectively equivalent to a class absence.

In regard to the “fairness of the policy,” 86.7% of respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied, whereas 10.7% indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Since the policy is intended to ensure fairness to all students by following a uniform program-wide policy, this level of dissatisfaction, although low, is of particular concern. Several respondents explained in their free-text comments that occasionally students who had completed excellent work in a timely way and had attended class faithfully throughout the first 12 weeks of the semester fell ill or had family emergencies that came up in the last few weeks of class. Assigning a failing grade to that student might be an equitable enforcement of policy, but seemed unjust to these respondents.

It is possible, also, however, that some teachers’ concerns about the fairness of the policy were prompted by their perception of other teachers’ compliance with the policy. When asked about “compliance with policy by all Writing Programs teachers,” only 41.4% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied; 19.8% indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Of the remainder, 16.2% said they were indifferent and 22.5% indicated the question was not-applicable. In their free-text comments, several respondents indicated that they had no basis for judging other teachers’ compliance; however, several others noted that they were aware of one or two teachers who did not keep attendance records or occasionally departed from the policy on a “case-by-case” basis. In order to judge teachers’ perceptions of Writing Programs’ administrative staff’s assistance with compliance with the policy, survey participants were also asked about the “enforcement of policy by Writing Programs”; 81.1% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied; 3.6% indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Of the remainder, 7.2% were indifferent and 8.1% indicated the question was not applicable.

“An emphasis on process-based pedagogy requires that students participate in the process of developing and shaping ideas in the classroom.” - Survey Participant

Survey participants were also asked about the “overall level of satisfaction with policy.” Although 14.4% indicated they were indifferent, and 6.3% indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, 79.2% said they were satisfied or very satisfied. Respondents gave a variety of reasons for their satisfaction, though most indicated that the issue was far more complex and enforcement of the policy was more nuanced than the simplicity of the policy statement itself might suggest. Perhaps one respondent spoke for many in

saying, “I hate the attendance policy, but what I really hate is that an attendance policy is necessary to encourage students to come to class.”

Judging from survey participants’ responses, it appears that most Writing Programs teachers do not think that a change in ASU Writing Programs’ attendance policy is warranted. The policy and our consistent implementation of it communicate not only our commitment to fair treatment of all students, but also our pedagogy’s grounding in attention to students’ writing process and their engagement in the work of attending to one another’s writing. As one respondent put it, quite succinctly, *“It’s perfect—fair and easy to enforce. It is also extremely effective at ensuring student attendance and resulting success.”*

Thank you to all Writing Programs teachers who participated in the survey. We are considering asking academic advisors to share their views on our attendance policy. Please suggest additional questions we should ask advisors and let me know if you are interested in assisting with the process of developing the survey and analyzing the results.

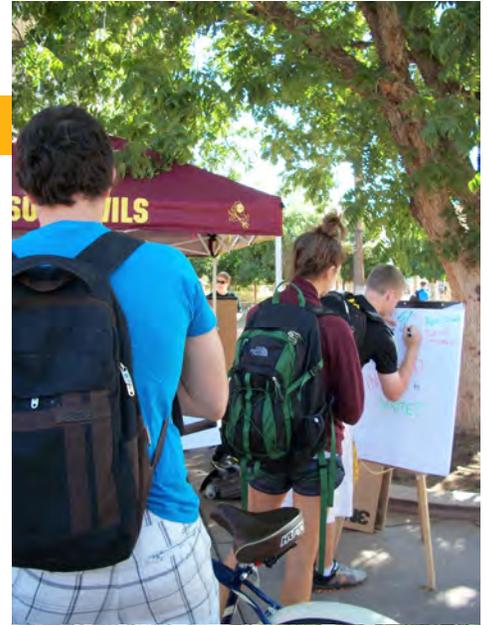
National Day on Writing 2011

By Dan Bommarito, Assistant Director of Writing Programs

On October 20, Writing Programs celebrated the Third Annual National Day on Writing. Writing Programs sponsored a “write-in” near the Cady Mall Fountain and asked passersby to write responses to prompts related to this year’s theme: “writing takes place.” In recognition of the multiple places and forms in which “writing takes place,” participants in the write-in were asked to write about the places that inspire them to write, their favorite places to write, and places they like to write about. Writers used a variety of media to record their responses, including posters and sidewalk chalk. Additionally, participants could use Twitter to share their responses, and tagged their submissions with #ASU4NDOW to produce a searchable string of responses to the prompts, which were also projected in front of the Language and Literature building.

Additionally, Writing Programs presented the Behind the Scenes Writer Award to Colin Boyd from the W. P. Carey School of Business. Each year, the Behind the Scenes Writer award recognizes a writer whose work is important to the university but whose byline is usually hidden. Boyd was presented the award during an afternoon ceremony at the Cady Mall “write-in.” Later in the afternoon, visiting scholar Carolivia Herron worked with participants to construct a “kinetic poem,” for which participants each wrote a single word on a placard, which they held while Herron lined them up to to compose and original poem on the spot.

The National Day on Writing was also Writing Programs’ first official “blackout day” in which instructors and staff wore their official Writing Programs T-shirts with the slogan, “writing takes place,” on the back. We estimate that nearly 200 participants took part in the day’s festivities. Many thanks to the National Day on Writing committee for their hard work in preparing for this successful event.



ASU Composition Conference 2012 Preview

By Wendy King, Instructor

Join us for a fun-filled day of learning and good food at the 2012 Arizona State University Composition Conference which will be held on the Tempe campus on Saturday, March 3, 2012, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. As in years past, the conference will be free of charge for all attendees and will include a complimentary continental breakfast and full lunch. The goal of this conference is to provide a site for faculty from ASU and other colleges in the greater Phoenix community to share practical teaching ideas that attendees may implement in their own classrooms. Participants from previous years have often remarked that attending this conference proved well worth their time.

Keynote speaker and ASU Assistant Professor, Dr. Alice Daer, will discuss her fascinating research into the intersection between social media and classroom learning. Concurrent sessions throughout the day will feature presentations and panel discussions by faculty and resource personnel from all the ASU campuses who will share their best practices in teaching composition and English as a Second Language. This year, we will enjoy sessions on topics ranging from negotiating audience to multimodal discourse and working with second language writers in 101 and 102.



At lunch, Dan Brendza (DANIEL.BRENDZA@asu.edu) will host an open mic for participants to share readings and music. Those who want to participate in the open mic should notify Dan two weeks prior to the conference.

If you have questions our conference website cannot answer, please contact Wendy King, the conference chair (Wendy.M.King@asu.edu).



Unplugged: Your Brain on Digital Technology

By Angela Christie, Instructor

Understanding just how technologically-wired modern society has become is never clearer than when one is surrounded by a deafening silence. Yet, days of winding down a river in total isolation without an iPhone, Internet, GPS, Gmail, Facebook, or Twitter would not be a story of survival for many educators, but a lesson in withdrawal. Digital technology is like nicotine, and while it may not blacken the lungs, science is discovering that regular and compulsive use is impacting the brain and its ability to reason.

Five neuroscientists took a rafting trip through isolated canyons in Southern Utah to contemplate and discuss their research on the benefits of unplugging from digital technology and plugging into nature (Anger 1). One of them, psychology professor David Strayer, expressed that “[a]ttention is the holy grail. . . . Everything that you’re conscious of, everything you let in, everything you remember and you forget, depends on it” (Anger 1-2). While uncovering the mysteries of the over-stimulated brain remains in its infancy, Strayer seems confident that certain cases of depression, attention-deficit disorder, and schizophrenia are likely rooted in daily digital overload that has somehow shifted a normally-functioning brain into the danger zone (Anger 2). Therein lies a cautionary tale, and particularly for those who spend much of each day embedded in a digital world.

Modern classrooms are becoming virtual at an astonishing pace—one university student in four takes an online course (“More”)—and many classes contain a Web-based component. Now both teachers and students find themselves strangely anxious when the keyboard gets a short night’s sleep. In addition to round-the-clock use of social media, ASU students access digital libraries, podcasts, videos, and blogs while flipping back and forth between digitalized mail and the mad tap-tapping required to send around two hundred text messages per day. Students now appear to check—and perhaps even *complete*—their homework on matchbox-sized screens, highly suspicious given educators’ observations that some online students consistently overlook anything appearing after the first paragraph.

However, when it comes to critical thinking, neuroscientists theorize that essential *working memory*, the gem that accommodates storage and manipulation of ideas, may be impacted by all of this digital dallying. Science suggests that heavy taxing of the brain leads to fatigue and the inability to pay attention, and even a simple walk in an urban setting may result in overstimulation. A groundbreaking University of Michigan study reveals that people learn better after meandering in nature than after strolling down a bustling city street (Anger 4-6), perhaps even accounting for a shortened attention span seen in some urban children.

Today, behavior scientists observe deterioration of performance during multi-tasking, with brain imaging lighting up like a pinball machine as attention shifts. They have also discovered that even the *expectation* of digital stimulation such as a text message appears to demand and deplete working memory (Anger 5). Working memory might initially resemble computer RAM, for without it, people cannot adequately process information. However, unlike a computer processor, the human brain relies on the “mixed analog-digital nature of communication,” Yale School of Medicine released; it is an extremely complex process using multiple approaches to communication that must be understood in order to treat brain-related disorders and more common problems related to attention and memory (“Human Brain” 2).

Science suggests that heavy taxing of the brain leads to fatigue and the inability to pay attention, and even a simple walk in an urban setting may result in overstimulation.

One thing is already clear: with more working memory available, storage and processing of ideas and the ability to reason are improved. To resolve the problem of brain-drain from the constant use of digital technology, there is fortunately a promising response: *unplug*. Perhaps it is time for ASU teachers and students alike to retrieve that old fishing pole or dust-laden bike and head for the great outdoors in order to replenish working memory. In fact, why not invite someone to join the endeavor and unplug, too, reconnecting with the fine art of face-to-face dialogue? A topic of discussion might even be what lies in store for a society that does not—or cannot—kick the digital habit.

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I Shouldn't Belong to INK (And So Should You!)

By Richard Hart, Instructor

I Shouldn't Belong To INK (And So Should You!). That's the working title that's been swimming about my synaptic fluids ever since I was asked to write a piece about Instructors Networking Knowledge, a coalition of colleagues who have as their goal the advancement of the Instructor rank. The problem, though, is that my working title, with its obvious stylistic nod to Stephen Colbert's *I Am America (And So Can You!)*—and with very little of its wit—is more than a bit problematic, not just because of its excessive length, but because I'm really not certain that I should be focusing on that which the working title would beg me to focus—that is, the absurdity of my belonging to INK (and I'll spare the reader the obligatory Groucho Marx quote, but had I been even a wee bit less considerate, that quote, I swear, would have gone right about *here*).

What this piece really needs to have as its focus is the *what* and the *why* of INK, so here it is—the what and the why: INK was born in 1994, the brainchild of Instructor Judith Van (now retired), who felt that, by unifying her colleagues and by “professionalizing the role of contract faculty,” the quality of life for educators, as well as—of course—their students, could be raised. INK, then, became, in spirit at least, an ersatz union (*ersatz* being the keyword); and by way of colleagues working together, Judith Van thought, the rank's voice could become louder, and that which would be articulated more loudly would truly be that which represented the collective aspirations of the entire rank. To that end, the first Instructor Proposal was crafted.

Much more recently (November 8, to be exact), carrying forward the work of Judith Van, Instructors Jan Kelly and Rossana Lhota, with English Department Chair Maureen Goggin in attendance, presented the most recent incarnation of the Instructor Proposal to Deans Robert Page and Neal Lester. At the heart of that proposal was the outlining of a need for an increase of salary and, in addition, the creation of a career ladder for the Instructor rank.

Within hours of that Instructor Proposal presentation's end, details of the meeting were posted to INK's Blackboard site—and that is the second what and why—the *N* and the *K*, if you will—of INK: communication.

A 1989 analysis by George deMare illustrated that, no matter the quantity of an employer's official communications—meetings, memos, e-mails, et cetera—“nearly 70 percent of all organizational communication occurs at the grapevine level.” Grapevine communication, however, does have its hitch. It's not always accurate. It *is* accurate 75% to 90% of the time, but that means, conversely, that it's *in*-accurate as much as 25% of the time—which still might be pretty good odds for most things, but when it comes to one's profession—one's livelihood—there's no real acceptable degree of error. One needs to know for absolute certain the status of one's profession, one's employment. Because of that, a way to sift through and disseminate grapevine communication, to raise the odds that the information will be accurate and then to broadcast that information efficiently, becomes essential.

And that's how it came to be that I, a “just do my job to the very best of my ability and then go home” kind of guy, became a part of INK. Quite frankly, I had been reluctant to join; but Judith Van requested my assistance with the communications aspect of INK, and I agreed to help. Since then, however, I've stayed on, and not just out of a sense of responsibility, but because the importance of INK has become obvious to me, because I have come to see quite clearly the strength that results from colleagues being engaged in communication, from being connected. And all of that is why, when it comes right down to it, it really is undeniably true—I really *shouldn't* belong to INK—but it is also why that, if you are an Instructor, it's just as undeniably true that so should you.



Current Research into Portfolio and Programmatic Assessment

By **Shavawn M. Berry, Instructor**

As Writing Programs prepares to launch its collection of program-wide portfolio archives this fall, Dr. Ed White's 2009 portfolio assessment research came to mind. The McGraw Hill Assessment Research Project (MARC) spearheaded by Dr. White used the McGraw Hill Guide's (Maid, Roen & Glau) portfolio project assignment as the basis of norming sessions here in the Valley in January 2009. Since Dr. White has retired, when I contacted him to follow up on his research, he referred me to Dr. Norbert Elliot at New Jersey Institute of Technology. In talking with Dr. Elliot, he indicated that, like Dr. White, the "validation of the WPA Outcomes Statement," was at the center of all his work. Dr. Elliot also encouraged me to investigate the assessment work of Dr. Diane O. Kelly-Riley, Director of Writing Assessment at Washington State University and co-editor of *The Journal of Writing Assessment*.

During my interviews I asked both Dr. Kelly-Riley and Dr. Elliot about the challenges presented by assessment – whether on an individual or program-wide basis. I asked how we might 'norm' the process without adding additional work to already overburdened teachers, as well as how we might most effectively assist our students in meeting the WPA Goals and Outcomes in the limited time we have. Dr. Kelly-Riley laughed and said, "You've asked the ultimate question regarding assessment!"

Dr. Elliot said, "First off, in a program as large as Arizona State's, you would not need to assess all individual portfolios. All you would need is an acceptable measure of reliability." He talked about the need for summative and formative assessment as well as the need to "define what validates the criteria for assessment." He stipulated that even in a program where we have as many as 10,000 individual portfolios to grade, we could collectively assess only about 800 of them, and still have a significant enough sample of student work to know whether or not our program was meeting the WPA Outcomes Statement. He felt that such a norming session could be done in "just a couple of days" and that it "might even be fun!"

Although as teachers we often tend to feel overwhelmed when handling the assessment goals within our programs, current research into assessment is encouraging in terms of its breadth and focus.

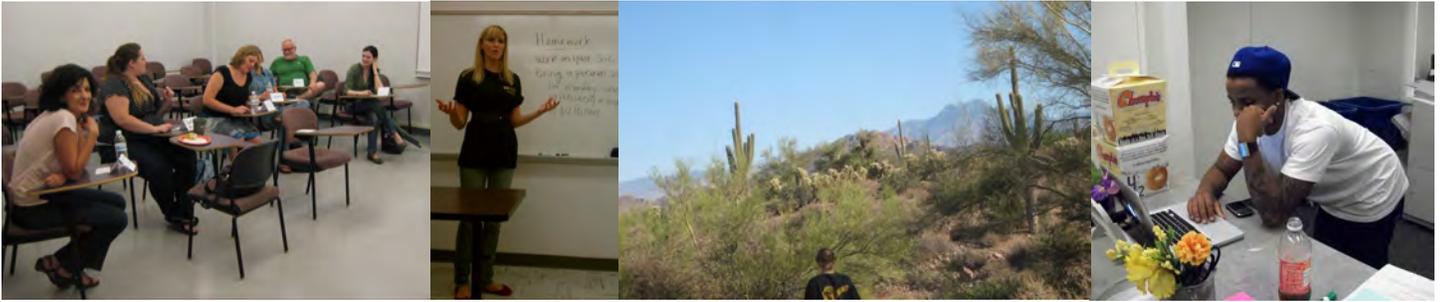
In contrast, Dr. Kelly-Riley's work is currently focused on the Southern California Outcomes Research in Education (S.C.O.R.E) using a "12 dimensional rubric" that she indicated, "allows teachers to tailor the emphasis of their assessments." She went on to say that, "S.C.O.R.E. is actually using *trait analysis based on a focus on revision* (as opposed to our tendency as teachers to immediately move toward editing)." I asked her how can we allow teachers to have the freedom to teach in their "own way" while at the same time setting up a framework to make sure that assessment is (at least) somewhat consistent between teachers of the same course. "That is the challenge of doing assessment," she said. It must be comprehensive, consistent and *flexible*. She feels that McGraw Hill's Connect Composition platform

(the platform being used for the study in California) offers a good option for streamlining the assessment process while also allowing all teachers the freedom to assess work in a way that works for them. She indicated that the composition platform gives instructors the ability to "focus on several aspects of the WPA Outcomes Statement," as well as, "how [each individual instructor's] students were [or were not] meeting those outcomes." The system does this in a way that is easily implemented. To set it up, a teacher simply chooses from a wide range of assessment statements, depending on what sort of course is being taught and how the teacher wants to assess whether or not students are meeting the course outcomes and goals.

Dr. Kelly-Riley liked the fact that the platform is online and that collection of portfolios is built in. The platform's rubric "draws directly on classroom papers and student learning outcomes." She's excited to see how the S.C.O.R.E. study impacts the use of similar teaching platforms in the college writing classroom. McGraw Hill (which owns Blackboard) is committed to the development of a variety of teaching tools that will assist teachers in more easily and consistently assessing student work. There are other platforms (Cengage's *Enhanced InSite* and Pearson's *MyCompLab*, to name two) that also offer similar assistance. Although as teachers we often tend to feel overwhelmed when handling the assessment goals within our programs, current research into assessment is encouraging in terms of its breadth and focus. Any tools available to assist us with the assessment process are definitely worth investigating and possibly implementing.

Dr. Norbert Elliot's research can be found in a number of journal articles including *The Journal of Writing Assessment* <http://www.journalofwritingassessment.org/archives/3-1.2.pdf> and *Programmatic Perspectives - Journal of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication* http://www.cptsc.org/pp/vol2-2/johnson_elliott2-2.pdf. Dr. Diane O. Kelly-Riley's latest research is forthcoming in *The Journal of Writing Assessment* at <http://www.journalofwritingassessment.org>. She also presented a paper on Dr. Ed White's Legacy at the CCCC Conference in March of 2010.





Evolution, Not Revolution: A Conversation on Critical Pedagogy

By **Debra Schwartz, Instructor**

Heavyweight critical theorist James Thomas Zebroski of the University of Houston and budding critical theorist Jeff Pruchnic of Wayne State University in Detroit square off about the liberal bias of composition pedagogy in a call and response conversation begun in 2010 in *JAC: Journal of Advanced Composition*.

The notion of liberal bias is discussed in heady terms, emphasizing that rhetoric and composition pedagogy might better serve students by focusing on the aesthetics of argument more than the argument's content.

"Just so you know, I hate Republicans," an instructor at Pennsylvania State University said in her introduction to her students. Pruchnic offered that example to show the kind of thing feeding student "worries that they would receive lower grades for producing arguments that conflicted with their instructors' beliefs or pedagogical agenda." That is behind the liberal bias notion, which led students at Penn State to protest publically on campus.

Pruchnic, who opened the conversation, uses this and other examples as vehicles for thinking through the relationship between ethics and aesthetics in rhetoric and composition pedagogy along both historical and theoretical lines.

He argues that "if the fundamental challenge of the early days of progressive pedagogy in composition studies was to account for the economics and politics of aesthetics, the challenge of today is to account for what we might call the 'aesthetics' of contemporary economics and politics." At length, Pruchnic defines the context in which he is considering aesthetics, tracing them through values, beliefs and integrities.

Responding positively to Pruchnic for his deeply considered position, Zebroski discusses the merits of using *cultural epidemiology* as a lens for researching rhetoric and composition pedagogy. "Like its biological counterpart," Zebroski explains, "cultural epidemiology would attend to the emergence, circulation and life cycle of cultural violence and dis-ease." This, Zebroski says, is a "vast territory of crucial work that no other discipline or area is currently doing and that our disciplinary knowledge uniquely positions us to accomplish."

He encourages scholars to reconceptualize rhetoric and composition and abandon "over-commitment to being the university's writing skills provider."

Both speak to the Post-Modern Era notion that writing is contextual and socially constructed, a concept it can be argued be-

gan with adaptations of classical rhetoric to composition instruction in the 1950s and later, wrote Jerry Nelms, visiting instructional consultant and post-doctoral researcher at the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching at The Ohio State University, on the WPA Council listserv last July.

Nelms cautions against reconceptualization. He writes, "In the study of literature, changes tend to be the result of disciplinary 'violence' – that is, labeling movements and then rejecting a current movement for a new movement by denying virtually any connection with that current movement. Other disciplines frame change in disciplinary knowledge as expansion and revision of past knowledge, more an evolution than a revolution."

Zabroski sets out to define elements of social construction Pruchnic brings to the surface, including merits associated with engaged citizenry the field of rhetoric and composition aims to cultivate. His call for "reconceptualizing" rhetoric and composition's "unique and long-term contribution to understanding violence and its healing, and drawing on its interdisciplinary nature" positions it well to move cultures forward because it "tracks and studies the forms of structural, systematic violence," he writes.

Pruchnic contends that "contemporary social power is increasingly premised on broad inclusion, and the flexible appropriation of traditionally 'resistant' categories of marginality and difference." He calls for rhetoric and composition faculty to "teach students not only how to account for, but how to participate in, such terrain if we hope to continue composition studies' long history of critical work on politics and power."

For further discussion: Jerry Nelms, nelms.1@osu.edu; Jeff Pruchnic, jeffpruchnic@wayne.edu; and James Zebroski, jzebro-ski@uh.edu.

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Writing Programs' New TAs, 2011-2012



Jeff Albers, MFA in Creative Writing — Fiction

Jeff Albers earned a B.A. and M.A. in English from California State University, Fullerton and is currently a first-year fiction candidate in the MFA Program in Creative Writing. He has contributed humor pieces to *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, music reviews to *LA Record*, and his fiction and poetry have appeared in *DASH Literary Journal*.



John-Michael Bloomquist, MFA in Creative Writing — Poetry



Monica Boyd, PhD in Literature focusing on British fiction during the long nineteenth century

Monica Boyd earned her B.A. from Indiana University and her M.A. from Arizona State University. Her focus is feminist and queer theory and British fiction during the long nineteenth century. Her Master's project analyzed Jane Austen's use of humor in *Pride and Prejudice* as a tool for the disempowered. She presented an article on the commodification of nineteenth-century pornographic texts at the National Victorian Studies Association conference in 2011. In 2008-2009 she served on the Southwest English Graduate Symposium (SWEGS) organizing committee and chaired the committee in 2009-2010. She has been the Graduate Scholars of English Association treasurer since 2010.



Karen Carter, PhD in Rhetoric, Composition, & Linguistics



Katherine Daily, PhD in Rhetoric, Composition, & Linguistics

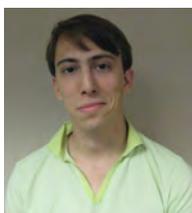
Katherine Daily (or Kat, if you prefer) is a first-year PhD student in Rhet/Comp & Linguistics. She graduated with an MA in English Linguistics & TESOL from the University of WI-Milwaukee and a BA in English Secondary Education from Carroll University in Waukesha, WI. For the past three years, Kat has worked as an adjunct instructor at Carroll University, Mount Mary College, and Gateway Technical college, teaching a wide range of courses including first year composition, linguistics, ESL/EFL, freshman seminar, and critical reading/thinking for college. When she's not teaching or reading for her own classes, Kat loves to exercise, bake and cook, and throw back a few beers. Kat also loves to hang out with her family and misses her loved ones back in Wisconsin... GO PACKERS!



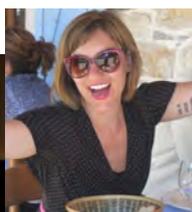
Naomi Danton, PhD in Rhetoric, Composition, & Linguistics



Kaitlin Gowan, PhD in Literature



Spencer Hanvik, MFA in Creative Writing



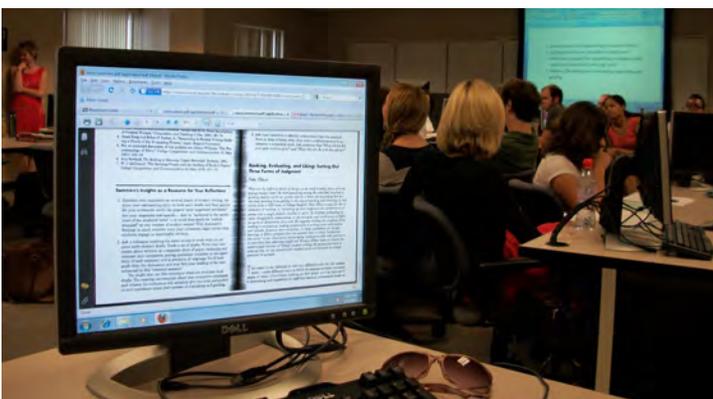
Christine Holm, MFA in Creative Writing — Poetry

Christine graduated with a BA in Psychology and English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She worked for the State of Wisconsin for several years following her undergraduate schooling.



Eliza Horn, MFA in Creative Writing — Fiction

Eliza Horn is from Cincinnati, Ohio and just graduated from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. She is excited to be part of Writing Programs!



Writing Programs' New TAs, 2011-2012 (cont.)



Kathrine Keller, MFA in Creative Writing



Kacie M. Kiser, Ph.D. in Rhetoric, Composition, and Linguistics (interest areas: second language writing and writing program administration)

Kacie is a first-year Ph.D. student in the Rhetoric, Composition, and Linguistics program with specific interests in second language writing and writing program administration. She earned her B.A. in English in 2007 from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. After teaching English at the high school level for a year, she returned to Old Dominion University to earn her M.A. in Rhetoric and Composition. During this time she worked as a writing tutor in the university's Writing Tutorial Services and also conducted several workshops on writing throughout the academic year. While in the master's program, Kacie focused much of her work and research on second language writing, as well as writing program administration, resulting in the successful completion of her thesis titled *Writing Program Design for ESL Students*. A lifelong resident of eastern Virginia, Kacie is excited to be living in Arizona and attending ASU.



Robert LaBarge, PhD in Rhetoric, Composition, & Linguistics



Kerri Linden, PhD in Literature



Kent Linthicum, PhD in Literature; Interest area(s): 19th Century American Literature and Ecocriticism

Kent has spent most of his years in the central valley of California. He was raised in Oakdale, on eleven acres at the end of a dead end street. He attended the University of the Pacific in Stockton, which has the distinction of being the oldest university in California. After transitioning through multiple majors, including music history and international relations, and spending half a year in Santiago, Chile, Kent graduated with a degree in English. Unsure of his next direction, he spent a few years as a retail bookseller and research assistant. Kent realized, then, that he had the most fun learning and teaching. He applied to Arizona State University, on the recommendation of his Pacific mentors, and is both humbled and honored to be here.



Sam Martone, MFA in Creative Writing—Fiction

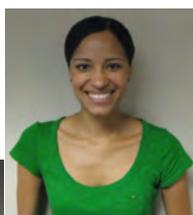
Sam Martone grew up in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and studied creative writing at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. He will DJ your party for you, if you want him to.



Katie McNamara, MFA in Creative Writing



Rebecca Robinson, PhD in Rhetoric, Composition, & Linguistics



Tina Santana, PhD in Rhetoric, Composition, & Linguistics



Samyak Shertok, MFA in Creative Writing

Writing Programs' New TAs, 2011-2012 (cont.)



Nathan Slinker, MFA in Creative Writing—Poetry, interested in contemporary and 20th century American poetry
Nathan Slinker has been living in various deserts for the past eight years. He received his B.A. in Journalism and Creative Writing from the University of Nevada, Reno. In 2010 he took a sojourn to the high desert in his home state of Oregon, and he now lives in South Phoenix. Nathan is currently pursuing his M.F.A. in Poetry here at A.S.U. He enjoys swimming, slicing cucumbers, and hoppy IPAs. Some of his published work can be found in recent volumes of *the Meadows*, a literary journal.



Yuching Jill Yang, PhD in Rhetoric, Composition & Linguistics
Interest area: Second language writing.
Yuching Yang is a doctoral student in Rhetoric, Composition and Linguistics, in the Department of English. Her research interests, in the area of second language writing, English for Specific Purposes, genre theories and pedagogies, writing across curriculum (WAC) and writing in discipline (WID) from a more social-political perspective. She has taught at National Taiwan University and National Tsing Hua University, offering a variety of courses such as Freshman English, composition, academic English writing, and research writing in various disciplines. She obtained her B.A. in Foreign Languages and Literature and M.A. in TESOL from National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan. She has presented at several local, national and international conferences and serves as a reviewer and an Associate Chair at Symposium for Second Language Writing (SSLW) 2011 in Taiwan.



Wendy Williams, PhD in English Education (studying arts and creativity in the high school English classroom)
Wendy taught English in Arizona schools for nine years before joining ASU's TA program. She also studied at Scottsdale Culinary Institute, cooked at Gregory's World Bistro, and wrote for Arizona Food and Lifestyles magazine. Her husband, Ian, is a professor at ASU's Polytechnic campus, and their daughter, Sophia, is four. Wendy loves to cook, travel, and read. She is excited to be in the TA program at ASU!



Tong Yu, PhD in Literature



Writing Programs' New Instructors, 2011-2012

James Berry, PhD (May 2011) from ASU in RCL (emphasis linguistics)

I'm originally from the South (mostly Texas and Florida) but I've lived in Arizona long enough to reach near-native status. My BA is in English Literature from the University of Florida, and my MA and PhD are from ASU in Linguistics. My research interests include historical linguistics, syntax, and social uses of language. In my former life before grad school, I was a professional proofreader. I try to bring all of my interests in language into play when teaching classes in writing. When not working, I love to read and haunt used bookshops

Valerie Finn

Shreelina Ghosh, M.A. English (Calcutta University, India); PhD Candidate (Michigan State University)

I am an Indian classical Odissi dance performer, and Instructor of Writing at Arizona State University. I am pursuing my Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Writing from Michigan State University. I teach professional/technical/business writing as well as composition courses. My research interests mostly center at the intersections of cultural and digital rhetorics, and performance. My dissertation is entitled "Dancing Without Bodies: Pedagogy and Performance in Digital Spaces". Hailing from the east Indian cultural hub, Calcutta, I received my BA in English from Presidency College (Calcutta University), and an MA in English (Post Colonial Literature) from Calcutta University. While my artistic pursuits provides sustenance for my soul, my culinary explorations have helped me discover smells and tastes from cultures across the world.

Andrea Lewis

Writing Programs' New Instructors, 2011-2012 (cont.)

M. Whitney Olsen, Ph.D. in progress, Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences, Utah State University; M.A., English Literature and Writing, Utah State University, 2009; H.A.A.S. Culinary Arts, Johnson and Wales University-Denver, 2007; H.B.A. English, University of Utah, 2006

Research areas/interests: Human information behavior, especially information-seeking behavior (ISB); first-year writers' ISB; e-learning; digital composition; undergraduate information needs; instructional scaffolding; academic and professional writing; writing across the curriculum (WAC); blended learning; computers and composition; educational technology; hybrid learning; instructional and curriculum design; philosophies of technology; critical theories (esp. of technology, e.g. Feenberg, 2002); constructivism; connectivism; food writing (esp. poetry).

I am interested in the intersections of the fields of technology and English and the implications of those intersections. Currently, I research, publish, and present on where information science and undergraduate writing and composition overlap. I enjoy writing food poetry. I am a professional chef, though I cook professionally only occasionally these days, usually for demonstrations. I run an online business called IndriVanilla (<http://www.indrivanilla.com>), where I sell inexpensive fair-trade, organic vanilla beans. I make an effort to cook something from scratch every day and could talk about food for hours. I don't like cheap chocolate, Arizona heat waves, second-person voice, or comma splices. I like eating out—especially to try new restaurants—cooking, boating, wakeboarding, crocheting, volunteering, and exploring the community. I also like meeting people, so if you like any of the above, I hope you'll e-mail me or stop by my office in LL 3.

Iliana Rocha

Debra A. Schwartz is a veteran news and feature reporter and editor specializing in the environment, medicine and science. Major news outlets including ABCnews.com have carried her work, and helped her develop as an editor. Award-winning Chicago Tribune editor Scott Fincher mentored her in the art of editing. She has lunched with Frederick Wilhelm de Klerk, covered former Czech President Vaclav Havel and reported about travel from the South China Sea. Her research into investigative reporting about the environment and advocacy evolved into the book, "Writing Green: Advocacy & Investigative Reporting About the Environment in the Early 21st Century." The recently-released text, "The Responsible Reporter: Journalism in the Information Age," includes her perspective about writing national news. ABC-CLIO/Greenwood Press currently carries her work in reference encyclopedias about Social Policy and U.S. Environmental Policy. Debra also writes Chick Lit, creative nonfiction, is a published poet, composes music on piano and guitar and loves to go kayaking, camping, skiing and swimming.

Dana Tait, Ph.D. in English (Literature).

Interests: nineteenth-century British literature, esp. aestheticism, cultural/historical rhetoric and poetics

Dr. Dana Tait is a new instructor, but is anything but new to Arizona State. She has been associated with ASU in various capacities as a student and employee since 1994. Originally from Georgia, Dana has lived in Arizona for more than 20 years, and her husband, Timothy, an ASU alumnus and a native Arizonan, has influenced her gradual love of the desert landscape that is now her home. Their home is "run" by their retired racing greyhound, Strider, the eternal puppy that refuses to act retired. Dana's non-academic passions are many, but are focused on knitting, weaving, photography and increasing an already healthy collection of vintage and modern fountain pens.

Paulette Zillmer

Kudos! Compiled by Egyirba High, Instructor

Dan Bommarito and **Brent Chappelow** presented "Writing-about-Writing in the First-Year Composition Classroom at Arizona State University" at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Conference in Scottsdale, in October. Also, **Brent Chappelow** and **Ryan Shepherd** gave a panel presentation with Niki Graham Pfannenstiel on "Establishing Place in Blackboard" at the Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference in Tempe, in October.

Tom Bonfiglio published several short stories including: "Long Enough and Hard Enough" *Flatmancrooked*, March 2011, "Hidden Away" *Wag's Revue*, Issue #9; May 2011, "Hairless" *Unlikely Stories*, May 2011, "Suicide Pose" *Mixer*, June 2011, "Long Enough and Hard Enough" *Mixer*; June 2011, "When Janie Gets Her Baby" and "Long Enough and Hard Enough" both were published in the print anthology *Of Love and Death: Heartburn, Headaches & Hangovers*, "The Jewess" *Evergreen Review*, Issue #128; Fall 2011, "The Telling Kind" *Unlikely Stories*; September 2011. Tom also appeared in interviews in *Fiction Daily*, May 2011 in *Mixer*, August 2011.

Sarah Duerden recently co-presented, *Engaging Students: Alternative Rhetorics for Writing Classes* at TYCA-West with two former ASU teachers, Christine Helfers (instructor now full time at Mesa CC) and Jeanne Dugan (senior lecturer now full time at Mesa CC).

Chappelow, cont. from p. 1

Passionate Affinity Spaces in First-Year Composition (Cindy Cowles and Emily Hooper)

This ENG105 curriculum is designed to empower students to take ownership of their own education. The digital platform Google sites gives the students the freedom to configure their own learning space. James Gee's and Betty Hayes' theories of passionate affinity groups provide the curriculum scaffolding arranging students into groups that spend the semester focused on seeking out the stakeholders and arguments of the "big C" conversation of a particular area of interest, whether it be networked video games, American religious cultures, social media, TV fandom or the American obsession with sporting in the great outdoors. Projects are designed to provide students with as close to real world opportunities as possible to practice their rhetorical skills around core concepts of team design work and collaborative writing. Toward that end, students are encouraged to struggle through a variety of technological, logistic and peer issues written into the assignment prompts to foreground the process and practice of composition.

Social Media and the Rhetorics of Identity (Ryan Shepherd)

This hybrid ENG 101 class this fall focused on online writing and was designed to connect writing done in academia to writing and activities students do outside of class, to get students to see the value in the composing and literacy practices that many of them take part in every day, and to get students to connect lessons learned in these spaces to activities in the classroom. The major projects included an exploration of online identity, a mini-ethnography of an online community, and a break down and re-creation of an online meme. Class activities took place in Blackboard and on Facebook.

Connecting SOLS Clusters and Writing Programs (Alison Sutherland and Emily Cooney)

The School of Life Sciences has initiated a cohort cluster that includes ENG 101 here at ASU. Alison's Fall 2011 curriculum initiative for her two SOLS cluster sections focuses on science in the public sphere. Specifically, her pedagogical inquiry asks how

we might compose scientific knowledge for audiences from all walks of life. The class assumes that today's science is everyone's business and everyone's future. She uses Michael Zerbe's composition scholarship on engaging the dominant discourse of science. Emily's section also focuses on science in the public sphere. Rather than approaching the topic from the perspective of science, her course approaches the topic from *public* perspectives. They're looking to better understand why the public needs to know what's happening in science, how the public can interact with science, and how the public can hold science accountable.

Writing about Writing in the FYC Classroom (Dan Bommarito and Brent Chappelow)

This research initiative investigates student attitudes as well as what concepts and writing strategies they adopt as the result of a writing-about-writing curriculum. The study also compares those findings to student attitudes in first-year composition courses not using the writing-about-writing curriculum. For over a year now, we have been sharing their interest in writing-about-writing, and our sharing has been met with realistic concerns raised by our colleagues that have become the driving force behind much of our research. While the study is still in progress, preliminary findings seem to suggest that students find the coursework difficult but manageable. Additionally, findings indicate that many of the course topics help students think about their own writing practices in novel and complex ways.

Outcomes

In order to share the work that has been done so far, to discuss research findings, and to foster a conversation about other curriculum initiatives, these Writing Programs teachers will be presenting at the ASU Composition Conference in February (see p. 4 for more information about the conference). The seminar panel will also cover how other teachers might pursue disciplined inquiry in curriculum design as a part of Writing Programs.

Running and Writing Take Place



In recognition of "writing takes place," several Writing Programs faculty recently sponsored Assistant Director Brent Chappelow's participation in the Hoaloalua Tucson Marathon on December 11. As part of his sponsored run, Chappelow ran the race wearing his official Writing Programs T-shirt. For Chappelow, "writing takes place" in connection with his running in the form of his blog, PhDippides, in which he documents his training.

The race began in the Santa Catalina mountains and proceed downhill through the town of Oracle, Arizona, and ended in Tucson. This was Chappelow's second marathon, and he was honored to be sponsored as a runner by Writing Programs colleagues.

For more information about the Tucson race or Chappelow's training, you can read his blog at <http://phdippides.tumblr.com>.

Writing Programs in Social Media



Like ASU Writing Programs on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter @ASU_Writing

And take part in our weekly hashtag topic:

#takesplacetuesdays to share with other Twitter users where writing is taking place.

(This topic coincides with Writing Programs "Blackout" T-Shirt Tuesdays.)

Kudos! (cont.)

Maureen Goggin did two conference presentations this fall. The first was *Stitching Adversity: The Role of Place in Women's Sampler Making* at the Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference in Tempe, AZ, 21 October 2011. The second was *Suturing Adversity: The Role of Place and Meaning Making in Women's Needlework at the Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference* in Mankato, Minnesota, 13 October 2011. Additionally, she did a local presentation of *Stitching (in) Death: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Mourning Samplers* at the Rhetoric Society of America at ASU in Tempe, AZ, 6 October 2011. (Invited presentation.)

Eliza Horn recently published "Amanda's Garden" in Chamber Four print and online journal, Issue 2. Her piece is published online at <http://mag.chamberfour.com/issue2/horn.html>

Whitney Olsen co-authored a paper titled "Personal Information Management Practices of Teachers" with Dr. Anne Diekema of Utah State University and presented it at the annual meeting of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) in New Orleans, held October 9th-13th. She also co-authored a paper which was accepted for the 2012 American Educational Research Association (AERA), titled "Impact of Scaffolding Characteristics and Study Quality on Learner Outcomes in STEM Education: A Meta-analysis." Her co-authors are Dr. Andrew Walker (USU), Dr. Brian Belland (USU), and Dr. Heather Leary (UC-Boulder). Whitney will also be the first author (co-author Dr. Anne Diekema, USU) of a book chapter tentatively titled "The Information-Seeking Behavior of First-Year Writing Students" for the collection *Researching Research: Expanding the Citation Project's Methods and Findings*, edited by Drs. Tricia Serviss and Sandra Jamieson, related to the recent research of Drs. Rebecca Moore Howard and Sandra Jamieson.

Jennifer Russum presented a paper titled "Mommy Bloggers: Entering the Discourse" at the Internet Research 12.0 conference this past October in Seattle, Washington.

Shirley Rose did five conference presentations this summer and fall. She presented: "Who is the Text in this Class? Graduate Students and Mentors Co-Constructing Professional Identities," as chair, speaker, and discussion leader for panel presented at NCTE Annual Convention, Chicago; "Location, Location, Location: Was the Dispersal and Disposition of John Tinney McCutcheon's Women's Suffrage Cartoons a Feminist rhetorical Practice?" at Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference, Minnesota State University, Mankato; "ASU Writing Programs as a Site for Inquiry," paper presented at Council of Writing Program Administrators' Summer Conference, Baton Rouge, July 2011; "On Location: Using Place-Based Tropes and Topoi to Construct Ethical Practice in Accounts of Archival Research," paper presented at Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference, ASU, Tempe; "Implementing the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing," as a member of a panel sponsored by the Council of Writing Program Administrators at the TYCA West Conference at Mesa Community College—this panel was selected for the 2011 "Virtual Tour of TYCA." She also had an article published with Irwin Peckham and James C. McDonald, "Crabgrass and Gumbo: Interviews with 2011 WPA Conference Local Hosts about the Place of Writing Programs at their Home Institutions," in *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 34.2 (Spring 2011): 126-152.

Julianne White presented "Blake's 'London': Cornerstone of a Poetic Genre" at the Rocky Mountain MLA Annual Convention, in Scottsdale, AZ, October 6-8. She also presented "Email That Gets Results" at the ASU/Commission on the Status of Women Annual Staff Development Day, Oct. 21, the downtown campus of ASU.

Call for Submissions: *Writing Notes* Spring Issue

Writing Notes is looking for contributors for the Spring edition. We invite **book reviews** of approximately 500 words on pedagogical texts of interests to the Writing Programs. Also, we ask for other article submissions or ideas. Also, we ask for 150-word submissions on "**Classroom Strategies that Work**," a continuing segment devoted to sharing the practices we employ in our own classrooms with other Writing Programs teachers. Have any article submissions or suggestions? Please share them with us. And don't forget to submit your **Kudos** and **Milestones** during the next semester. Submission information will be sent out early in the semester. If there is something that we have not mentioned that you would like covered in *Writing Notes*, let us know.

Want to discuss what you've read in this issue? Visit the Writing Programs Blackboard site to provide your feedback/commentary.

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