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Andrea Lunsford’s research shows that students are writing more than ever—in classrooms, workplaces, and social spaces. *The Everyday Writer*, Fifth Edition, is the first tabbed handbook to help the participants in this “literacy revolution” build on the smart decisions they make as social writers—and use their skills in their academic and professional work. With new chapters on public writing, critical reading, and understanding how and why to use documentation, *The Everyday Writer* gives today’s students the information they need to be effective, ethical writers.

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“This best handbook on the market — still.”

— Tom Amorose, Seattle Pacific University
From the Editor

Speaking Methodologically

Dear Colleagues and Friends ~

This month, I’m very pleased to introduce the third of our five annual special issues. As readers will remember, the first such issue, in September of 2010, addressed the future of rhetoric and composition; the second issue, in September 2011, focused on indigenous and ethnic rhetorics; and in this issue we consider the methods and methodologies that do and can support our research and define the field. In this introduction, then, I contextualize and then quote briefly from each of this issue’s articles as a means of summarizing the issue overall; announce the next special issue of CCC; and say goodbye to one CCC editorial assistant as I welcome another.

Let me begin the introduction to the articles and the review essay by providing some background as to their selection. To compose this special issue, we announced a call for proposals, in this case defining research methodologies capacious and welcoming a diversity of approaches:

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• Retrospective accounts of ways that research has informed the field
• Discussion of what counts as methodology and of the relative merits of various methodologies, especially as keyed to different research questions
• Methodological “borrowing” from other fields and ways that such methods have assisted us
• Explication of a specific methodology and its value in a specific context and/or for specific purposes
• The role of research methods in undergraduate classes, including in FYC and in the major in rhetoric and composition
• The type and nature of research course(es) in graduate education
• The PhD in rhetoric and composition as a research degree
• Ways that research activity has/has not defined faculty in rhetoric and composition
• Differences and similarities in research methods as used in rhetoric and in composition
• Models of successful inter-institutional research projects
• Issues in research ethics
• Issues pertaining to new media, online, and Internet research
• Issues pertaining to global and international research, and transnationalism as another lens for understanding research methodologies
• The use of “gray literature” in our research efforts, both actual and potential
• Research specifically focused on diversity and/or social justice
• Differences and similarities between research and advocacy
• Ways of sharing our research with different audiences, ranging from various academic audiences to various public audiences
• A research agenda linked to future of the field

In response, we received over eighty proposals. All proposals were reviewed; manuscripts were invited, reviewed, and responded to before being accepted
YANCEY / FROM THE EDITOR

for publication—all of which involved considerable effort by members of the CCC Editorial Board as well of many reviewers in the field.

We begin the issue with four articles speaking to archives, a subject of increasing interest in the field, and what we see here is that they both reward our efforts and challenge them, and in very specific ways: in terms of representativeness; methods and methodologies; ethics; and sustainability. A second set of articles extends familiar methodologies: critical discourse analysis and ethnographies of institutions. The third and last set of articles introduces us to new methodologies: eye-tracking methodologies and purposes for them; data mining; and graphing of large data sets. We then have a wide-ranging review essay by Becky Rickly, who considers six volumes locating methodologies in a diversity of subfields: composition, rhetoric, English education, digital ethics, and technical communication. And we conclude with a poster page, this one explaining the concept of discourse community.

If these articles provide an accurate index, the field’s theorizing and practice of research is substantive, exciting, provocative, and useful—in a word, impressive.

In our first article, “Remapping Revisionist Historiography,” David Gold theorizes historiography in rhetoric and composition, arguing that our inquiries into the past need to meet a set of new criteria and noting exemplar studies that point us toward a more sophisticated and sensitive research practice.

I argue that rhetoric and composition historiography must not simply recover neglected writers, teachers, locations, and institutions, but must also demonstrate connections between these subjects and larger scholarly conversations. Further, we must better incorporate recent advances in recovery work, thus beginning with the assumption of a complex, multivocal past as our starting point for historical inquiry. Finally, we must recognize a more fluid interaction between ideology and pedagogy, resisting the temptation to reinscribe easy binaries, taxonomies, and master narratives, even when countering them.

Our second article, Lynée Lewis Gaillet’s “(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies,” complements Gold’s in showing how work in both methods and methodologies comes together, in the process outlining the field of archival studies in rhetoric and composition and emphasizing the role of the researcher’s ethos in this research practice.
A dual archival/social remapping of rhetorical terrain depends upon shifts in researchers’ integrated goals and practices. Increasingly, scholars interested in primary investigation are (1) revisiting primary and canonical materials with a new set of research questions in mind, (2) mining a broader range of archives than heretofore considered, (3) viewing (and adding to existing) archives in ways that make knowledge rather than simply finding what’s already known, and (4) taking advantage of new technologies to expand the scope and possibilities inherent in archival investigation. It is imperative that readers trust the ethos of the archival researcher, given that triangulating archival data is often difficult to do, and understand what the researcher “counts” as evidence. Because archival researchers are only now consciously examining the interplay of method and methodologies, along with trying to make their goals and practices transparent, this essay doesn’t presume to offer a prescriptive portrayal of archival research. Instead it raises both methodological and method questions and issues for consideration, looks to the insights of experienced archival researchers on these matters, and suggests areas for future research.

As both Gold and Gaillet observe, we are working with new archive materials; and as Heidi A. McKee and James E. Porter explain, we are thus in need of a new ethics for such work, particularly when we consider the human dimension—one might even say the humanity—of archival materials. In “The Ethics of Archival Research,” McKee and Porter outline a set of scenarios and a set of questions that make visible concerns emerging from this research and that help us begin to make sense of them.

In this article, we explore questions such as the following: What are researchers’ ethical responsibilities to individuals and communities represented in the archives and to their descendants? With whom should archival researchers consult when addressing ethical issues? What are the rights of the dead and living people represented in the archives? How do issues of consent, particularly considerations of how materials got in the archive in the first place, impact how and whether archival work should be conducted? And how might different understandings of time affect ethical considerations? These are questions that undergird much research in the field of rhetoric and composition—not only the research of self-identified “archival researchers” but also the research of anyone who works with unpublished historical writing, writing collected in digital repositories, and collections of student writing.

And the last article in this section, Shannon Carter and James Conrad’s “In Possession of Community: Toward a More Sustainable Local,” emphasizes yet another dimension of archival work: the need to make it sustainable. Using their work on oral interviews as examplar, Carter and Conrad demonstrate not only that we draw on archives, but also that we can and should contribute to
them, especially in cases of underrepresented groups, and that in doing so, we are helping create and support a sustainable history.

Throughout, we are guided by the following questions:

1. How might rhetoric and composition scholars cultivate field-specific archives that are sustainable and generative enough to support our field’s future?
2. How might we further ensure these archives are likewise responsible to the principles of ethical representation and reciprocity regarding the communities with whom we are creating new knowledge?
3. How might we approach our use and development of interviews to provide future researchers access to first-person accounts in local sites that can inform our understanding of rhetorical choices among people historically excluded from public spaces?

Thomas Huckin, Jennifer Andrus, and Jennifer Clary-Lemon open our next section of articles focusing on extensions of current research practices. In “Critical Discourse Analysis and Rhetoric and Composition,” Huckin, Andrus, and Clary-Lemon show how CDA offers a way into multiple texts and contexts centering on a single question or set of questions. As useful is the set of examples showing how CDA can help read across varieties of data.

As the research discussed above shows, in current trends in rhetoric and composition scholarship, we are seeing changes in the types of text and contexts being studied that require new methods of data collection and analysis. It is increasingly common in writing studies to study a large corpus of texts and to use ethnography to study a community and the texts circulated or circulating in that community, rather than a static text or an isolated community. This shift to more complex contexts comes with a few complications, one of which is how to manage a large and heterogeneous data set that includes speech and text. CDA provides resources for dealing with the complications that arise when working with unplanned speech. Bringing together rhetoric and composition and CDA allows scholars to analyze new and expanding contexts and texts, while paying attention to the ways in which structures of power that are hypostatized and circulated in everyday texts and discourses are manipulated or used to manipulate.

The second article in this section, Michelle LaFrance and Melissa Nicolas’s “Institutional Ethnography as Materialist Framework for Writing Program Research and the Faculty-Staff Work Standpoints Project,” locates ethnography inside of institutions. Through IE, these coauthors claim, we are able to trace
ways that seemingly normalized everyday practices are shaped by institutional hierarchy and mission.

We are drawn to IE because it takes into account this situated variability of experience within institutions, casting individuals as active and interested, mindfully negotiating the competing priorities and material conditions of their work day. IE allows us to ask how the shape of work practices for one employee may be dramatically different from the practices of another due to numerous personal, institutional, and cultural factors that arise out of the categorization of their work within a hierarchical system of labor. IE, in a sense, allows us to explore a landscape through the perspective of an individual whose work is institutionally shaped toward quite specific ends. Further, IE’s concern for how things happen—that is, how practices are taken up and for what reasons—enables us to think through how the discourses of educational sites bind individuals to particular workplace and educational philosophies, coordinating their actions and organizing their daily lives around key notions of the value of labor, access, and institutional mission. While our initial conversations originated within the context of writing centers, we quickly realized that our central question resonates not only in writing studies but also in the academy at large.

Our last set of articles in this special issue points us toward future practices that are already in play. The first article in this section, Chris M. Anson and Robert A. Schwegler’s “Tracking the Mind’s Eye: A New Technology for Researching Twenty-First-Century Writing and Reading Processes,” connects the research on reading conducted via eye-tracking to writing, making plain how helpful this technology can be for those of us studying writing, especially as we compose in electronic environments.

At this moment, you’re engaged in astonishingly complex processes as you read this text—processes that include everything from recognizing minute aspects of letter fonts to applying discursive, disciplinary, and world knowledge to construct meaning. What you feel (or have been taught to feel) is a sort of flow, one word yielding to the next, sentences building on each other, understanding emerging from broad sweeps of your eyes from left to right and back again. In reality, the process is anything but smooth: a series of jerky, erratic movements filled with pauses, false starts, backtrackings, and a lot of guesswork. If we could capture the movements of your eyes across this text, we’d see something more like a subway map than a neat zigzag. The result would suggest not that the text is smoothly offering up its meaning but that you’re doing most of the work, actively constructing meaning from the words to create a coherent mental representation.
Thanks to new technology, today we can create more accurate maps of what we look at while working with text, with the technology itself helping to alter our understanding.

A second article in this section responds to the observations about large data sets appearing in nearly all the articles in this special issue: Susan Lang and Craig Baehr’s “Data Mining: A Hybrid Methodology for Complex and Dynamic Research.” It’s a truism that we have more information than the world has ever seen; what “Data Mining” contributes is showing us how to begin to make meaning with it, especially in contexts calling for research that is replicable, aggregable, and data-supported.

One of the most substantial contributions to research that computers are capable of making to research—their ability to assist with the mining and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data—has to this point been underserved in research in rhetoric and composition. A better understanding of data and text mining is needed throughout our fields to assist us in responding in productive ways to calls for an expanded research agenda. Data mining is loosely defined as the process of finding interesting information in large amounts of data; while becoming more common in fields from marketing to library science, it has yet to be widely used or discussed in our field. Data mining can help us create studies that follow a RAD (replicable, aggregable, and data-supported) approach. It can also help us conduct research of a more exploratory nature, providing windows into the data that we can use to determine what questions to ask of that data. We explain how this underused methodology can respond to some of the concerns voiced by Fulkerson, Haswell, and Anson, among others, through a discussion of what data mining is (and isn't) and how one might begin a research project using data mining. We then illustrate how we might apply data mining in our research, in writing program administration and in assessment activities, via a walk-through of one recent project. Finally, we consider some of the limitations and implications of using this methodology.

And not least, Derek Mueller works with a large data set and with digitally based graphing technology to illustrate, literally and figuratively, what a relatively new methodology can help us learn, in this case about our own field's publishing practices. In “Grasping Rhetoric and Composition by Its Long Tail: What Graphs Can Tell Us about the Field’s Changing Shape,” Mueller shows how mapping can help us depict the dynamism and complexity of our field.

Rather than characterizing at the outset the consequences of specialization and interdisciplinary borrowing as generally positive or negative, I seek to demonstrate how graphs can function as a productive, suasive abstracting practice that will allow us to look more carefully at what has happened to citation practices in CCC from
1987 to 2011. Toward this end, first I say more about the studies using graphs and relevant quantitative methods to understand journals and the fields sponsoring them. Doing so highlights two principles of distant reading that graphs foreground: 1) deliberately altering scale allows us to see aggregate patterns linking details and non-obvious phenomena, and 2) the systematic compilation of replicable data may empirically corroborate local, tacitly felt impressions about changing disciplinary conditions. The second half of this article adopts as an exploratory framework Chris Anderson’s work on long tails (Pareto distributions) and presents graphs drawn based on a compilation of 16,726 citations in 491 journal articles published in CCC over twenty-five years. Departing from studies of citation that have focused exclusively on the most frequently referenced figures, I argue that graphing the relationship between the most frequently cited figures and the changing distribution of infrequently referenced figures produces a unique perspective on a changing disciplinary density of great relevance to specialists, generalists, and initiates alike.

And in her review essay, “Making Sense of Making Knowledge,” Rebecca Rickly identifies and comments on other resources we can tap as we research and as we work with others in designing and carrying out research. To so help us, Rickly brings into dialogue six different book-length treatments of research, considering both what they tell us about our methods and how they can help. The volumes include The Changing of Knowledge in Composition; The Present State of Scholarship in the History of Rhetoric and Composition; Rhetorica in Motion; The Ethics of Internet Research; Becoming a Writing Researcher; and A Research Primer for Technical Communication. As interesting, in identifying four reasons why conducting research is so challenging for students, she paints a portrait for us all.

First, students must learn to “consume” research, to read it critically, to situate the information within a larger disciplinary discourse, but also to assess the quality of the research question, the appropriateness of the methods chosen to answer the research question, the subject selection and treatment, the rigor with which the treatments were applied, the analysis, and the conclusions, as well as the ethics surrounding the research. If the students want to learn to conduct research, they must first familiarize themselves with the methods prominent in the field: what they are good for, how to employ them systematically, and so forth. Later, once students feel confident about knowing the boundaries of these methods, they will need to learn to blur the boundaries as they apply them—what Kristie Fleckenstein, Clay Spinuzzi, Carole Clark Papper, and I referred to as “rhetorical rigor” in “The Importance of Harmony”: applying methods rigorously, yet contextually, aware of the constraints that local situations might include, and altering the application of the method in a manner that allows for rigor even if it means altering the method. In essence, the researcher follows the “spirit” of the method rather than the “letter” of the method.
Then, students need to learn to analyze the data they’ve collected, which is often a daunting task; too often students collect fantastic data, then stall out, because they simply don’t know where to start. Finally, students need to be taught to represent the research they’ve conducted so they might obtain the cultural capital of our field: articles, chapters, presentations, books. Yet representing research is something, too, with which students often have difficulty; they produce seminar papers and even dissertations, and then many don’t go further than that because they simply don’t know how to turn this scholarly, academic project into a more “consumable” product. Often, this is, in part, due to the lack of ability to articulate what they’ve done in terms that the field (or even a particular journal) values.

And last but not least is this issue’s poster page, this one defining discourse community.

Our next special issue, for 2013, will focus on The Profession. And our last special issue, addressing Locations of Writing, will anchor the 2014 special issue of CCC. The CFP for the special issue of 2014, published in this issue and on the CCCC website, invites 250-word proposals addressing a range of topics, such as new locations for writing, including programs and departments; historical locations for writing classes; writing across different institutional locations (e.g., community college/four-year college, private/public, WAC, and WID); contemporary locations for out-of-school writing events and activities; the role of locations in an era of mobile technology; student work on websites, portfolios, and other digital sites conceived of as locations; and location as metaphor: space, place, and geography as compatible and/or alternative metaphors. In addition, as was the case for the 2013 CFP, we are also inviting a second kind of submission: a completed vignette or “small scope narrative” of the lived experience reflecting on, illustrating, or expressing locations of writing. This submission is limited to 1000 words and must be complete at the time of submission. The deadline for both kinds of submissions is Monday, January 7, 2013, sent to cccedit@yahoo.com.

The introduction to this issue concludes with applause for Matt Davis, who has worked for all of us this year as the CCC editorial assistant. Thoughtful, witty, multilingual, and savvy, Matt has been a wonderful assistant. In addition to communicating with authors, fact-checking articles, and managing the tasks
that assure responsible publication (coordinating consent-to-publish forms, for example, and bibliographies that are accurate), he has helped me in more substantive ways as well, identifying possible reviewers and helping create ensembles of books for our review-essayists to address. While we will miss Matt, it’s for a good reason: he has completed a fine dissertation on multimodal composing and is joining the faculty at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Replacing Matt is Jennifer O’Malley, another fine doctoral student in rhetoric and composition at Florida State University: she has been working with us since May to effect a seamless transition. We are fortunate to have both her good work and her good cheer as we move forward.

*Kathleen Blake Yancey*
*Florida State University*