Rebecca Rickly

Review Essay

Making Sense of Making Knowledge

The Changing of Knowledge in Composition: Contemporary Perspectives
Lance Massey and Richard C. Gebhardt, editors

Lynée Lewis Gaillet and Winifred Bryan Horner, editors

Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies
Eileen E. Schell and K. J. Rawson, editors

The Ethics of Internet Research: A Rhetorical, Case-Based Process
Heidi A. McKee and James E. Porter

Becoming a Writing Researcher
Ann Blakeslee and Cathy Fleischer
The esteemed Geoff Sirc began a review essay recently by asserting that “[t]eaching writing is impossible” (508). He supports this assertion by noting that, in the span of ten to fifteen weeks, the instructor must cover content, genre, invention, organization, and the plethora of pedagogical goals that may or may not be teacher generated, all to teach the one course almost every student in a college or university is required to pass. In a similar vein, I’m going to assert that teaching research is impossible. 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.

Being able to articulate what I was doing as a researcher was a turning point for me, and one of the key texts that helped me reposition myself was Stephen M. North’s *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*, published in 1987. Working from Paul Diesing’s book *Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences*, North looked at questions that guided researchers and then “clustered” these into “rough groupings.” His classification of Practitioners, Historians, Philosophers, Critics, Experimentalists, Clinicians, Formalists, and Ethnographers helped me to see where my research interests fell; in essence, it helped me to form a research identity. That’s not to say, however, that I remained happy being defined by North. It was this first step that allowed me to articulate—and re-articulate—who I was and, more importantly, to articulate what I was doing in ways that made sense, both to me and to the field at large. So, too, Lance Massey and Richard C. Gebhardt, in their revisiting of North’s book, found that North’s momentous, lasting work needed to be revisited—re-articulated.

When North’s *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* was published, it literally became a game changer in our field, particularly in the area of research methods. It gave us language to articulate what it is we do when we conduct research (paving the way for the excellent work by Lauer and Asher that would be published the next year, and works by Kirsch and Sullivan as well as Porter and Sullivan that would be published in the next decade); it helped us to organize these articulations in terms of what researchers did; and it lent power to (and encouraged our field to continue in the conduct of) research. In an era when composition studies was coming into its own, identifying its own value apart from literary studies in English departments, this book (and others influenced by it) helped our discipline to become an identifiable, legitimate area of expertise.

Twenty-five years later, Lance Massey and Richard C. Gebhardt have edited a volume that once again looks at how knowledge is made—and how this knowledge making has changed—in composition studies or, as our field moves forward, perhaps to a writing studies model. Beginning with Stephen North’s musings on his groundbreaking work, each of the chapters uses *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* as its base, to situate itself.
The book begins with Personal Responses to the original book. Edward M. White writes perhaps the most informal and familiar recollection of the book’s influence (and he has the best subtitles—his first one is “The North Pole,” and it makes ultimate, practical sense in several ways). I think that North and White are cut of the same cloth. White notes, “The power of North’s approach to research lay in his willingness to ask probing questions” (19). Rather than accepting common knowledge as “truth” or, worse yet, placing his heroes on a pedestal, North took to task the giants of the field at the time: Witte, Flower and Hayes, Connors, Perl, Sommers, and a score of others. White asserts that one of the greatest strengths North brings to methodology is his “pattern of interrogating the assumptions behind the various methodologies he described” (20). Going further than simply describing or recasting these methods, North begins with “reality taken for granted by the methodology” (21). I love the idea about looking at the assumptions behind methods and reality taken for granted. It’s how we should be articulating our methods, even those we borrow from other fields, if we are to make them our own.

Not everyone, however, was (or is) enamored by North and his work. Lynn Z. Bloom describes how North’s book became a map for subsequent scholars and reminds us that “Mapmakers control our view of the world—if we let them. Too often we forget the arbitrary nature of the configuration, its underlying intellectual, political, and linguistic constructs” (28). She notes that until Shirley Brice Heath published her work, those who were drawn to ethnographic approaches toward research in composition were “flummoxed,” because there were no charted terminologies and parameters for such research (29). North helped compositionists reach beyond their comfort zone, embracing new methodologies. However, North was particularly negative in his assessment of almost all of the researchers he describes; in fact, Bloom claims that “North’s take-no-prisoners approach and language seem more to abuse his subject than enlighten it” (38). Her revisiting of North’s work echoes several of the mixed reviews he received when the book first came out, and these critiques were (and still are) valid on many levels. However, we need mapmakers. Perhaps it’s we who need to learn to see them not as gods but guides.

The second section examines knowledge-making communities since the publication of North’s seminal work. From “Lore” to historiography, from physical spaces like writing centers to the more theoretical space of rhetoric and racism, the authors ask, “Does North’s work still stand? How can it/should it be revised?” The authors take to task not just North, but those writers from which North drew (for instance, Richard Fulkerson encourages us not to cling
to outdated assumptions such as that case studies and lore are only “propositional”). We once again see the categories that North first presented, but we complicate them and situate them to help us see how they work (or don’t work). My only complaint here is that the knowledge-making communities included are limited; I’d like to see this section expanded.

The next section looks at undergraduate and graduate education. For me, the most interesting chapter in this section was the final one, authored by North himself, entitled “On the Place of Writing in Higher Education (and Why It Doesn’t Include Composition).” His experience in developing and administering and teaching undergraduate writing taught him four lessons: (1): “I learned that I wanted to teach in a writing curriculum that is an extension of the faculty’s scholarship” (198). Just like students, faculty are more engaged in teaching something in which they’re interested. (2): “I learned that I want to teach writing to people who are self-selected” (199). If students decide that writing is valuable (rather than being required to believe that writing is valuable), they are more likely to put forth effort. (3): “I learned that I want to teach writing in a context where there is both curricular and developmental continuity” (200). Rarely do teachers of writing work with the same students for more than a class, and even more rarely do they do so in an organized sequence. North described his experiences doing just that—and how he was able to actually make a difference in the students’ writing ability because of this time spent with the same students. Finally, (4): “I learned that I want to teach writing in an enterprise where goals are commensurate with resources” (201). These two are, as North notes, “rarely on the same planet.” In fact, the program that North described (which led to the four lessons above) was cut a few years after it launched. His “take away”: Writing instruction should be housed in departments of writing, with faculty from diverse fields. His ideas are good, but institutions move at a snail’s pace, especially when budgets are a factor. I fear we’ll be seeing “robo-grading” sooner than we see departments of writing.

The final section looks at the disciplinary challenges to composition. David Smit, long heralding the “end of Composition as we know it,” assesses North’s impact on modern-day composition. He comes to the conclusion that writing/research are “without paradigm hope” (in spite of the fact that we are now “localized, historicized, and contingent”), suggesting that perhaps we need to embrace one theoretical point of view (which would, of course, spawn controversy). In “Are We There Yet?” Kristine Hansen uses North’s own criteria to determine if composition is, in fact, a discipline (we’re a lot closer,
but not quite there yet). Brad E. Lucas and Drew M. Loewe encourage us to use methodologically sound methods to assess how works like North's have been received. Patricia Webb Boyd looks at space—that is, ecologies of discourse and environments—and larger geographies of writing as the field becomes relocated into independent units and more diverse locations. Finally, Lance Massey echoes North's initial ending; while composition is better off now, it's still a dangerous place to be, in the midst of English departments, budget cuts, and methodological inconsistencies.

Not as provocative or “game changing” as North’s original work, this text nonetheless gives us the opportunity to do what we as a field do well: to reflect on who we are, what we’ve done, where we’re going, and how we make meaning. When we make meaning, however, we need a place to start. In most cases, we start with finding out what’s been done—what has come before. To this end, one of the most incredible resources we can have on our shelves is the newest edition of *The Present State of Scholarship in the History of Rhetoric*. First published in 1983, then revised in 1990, this edition, edited by Lynée Lewis Gaillet and Winifred Bryan Horner, is perhaps the best compendium of primary and secondary information about our field. I love how this edition, rather than merely building on previous ones, has “adopted the research methodologies of revision and recovery” (from the book blurb) in re-envisioning the important works. While still organized chronologically rather than thematically, what is most telling is each chapter’s headings; from these we get a sense of what has changed since the previous editions. Each contributor addresses the “globalization and expansion of rhetoric, seen clearly in the inclusion of . . . rhetorical practices outside the academy and in discussions of nonwhite and non-Western rhetorical practices” (80).

In the preface to the 1990 edition, and reprinted in this edition, Walter Ong wrote that “[t]he emergence and continued presence of rhetoric as a subject of academic study and as a focal point for academic and para-academic life is one of the central features of Western civilization” (location 150). He encourages us to study this field, because “[l]ike all developments deeply embedded in human existence, the new ‘art’ of rhetoric faced into the past as well as into the future” (location 190). While “the usual suspects” are here in abundance, we see new faces and new ways of seeing, though still almost as an afterthought. At least this afterthought is manifest, though, moving from “thought” to “reality.” Traditional understandings have transformed with more “nuanced, layered interpretations of rhetorical action,” and this collection is probably the most
interdisciplinary of the series. Whether it is including new primary sources, or citing the important work in other disciplines, or citing issues of historiography and methodology, this edition sits proudly on the shoulders of the giants who have come before.

Each chapter contains an essay of the historical central works, then sub-sections with various aspects of these works. For instance, in the first chapter, “The Classical Period,” Lois Agnew explains how these works differ from those in the previous editions. Her sub-sections include both Primary Works and Secondary Scholarship, including Historiography; Women and Classical Rhetoric; Sophistic Rhetoric; Revisiting the Canon; and Embodying Ancient Rhetorics. In “The Middle Ages” chapter, Denise Stodola notes that in the years since the previous edition, medieval rhetoric “as a field has seen a period of transformation and potential redefinition” (location 1159). It includes broadening the purview of medieval rhetoric; expanding the rhetorical context of the Middle Ages; and focusing on education, pedagogy, non-Western rhetoric, and the role of women. Her sub-sections include, for example, Reference Works and Basic Resources; Texts and Translations; Sermons and Sermon Theory; The Relation of Rhetoric and Grammar to the *Ars Poetriae*; Women and Gender; and Non-Western Rhetoric. In “The Renaissance” chapter, Don Paul Abbott also sees his field as exploding since the publication of the previous edition. Noting that the study of rhetoric in the twentieth century onward has been, of necessity, interdisciplinary, he moves his chapter beyond the primary texts available to readers to the reception and critical study of those texts, as well as to studies in culture, gender, and non-Western influences, manifestations, and critiques. Among his sub-sections are Old Texts and New Databases; Rhetoric and Humanism; and Rhetoric, Logic, and Philosophy.

Linda Ferreira-Buckley writes in her chapter, “The Eighteenth Century,” that “the long-held view that Western rhetoric atrophied in the eighteenth century has given way amid an abundance of new scholarship” (location 2934). And among her sections are The State of Primary Texts; The Scholarship; Aesthetics; Oratory; and Future Directions. In “The Nineteenth Century,” Lynée Lewis Gailet asserts that until the late twentieth century, “histories of rhetoric either collapsed discussions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, characterized the nineteenth century as a stagnant era of imitation, or dismissed the period as vacuous” (location 3857). But at the turn of the century, this area underwent a drastic re-envisioning, as “revision and recovery research methods resurrected primary works and yielded secondary information” about figures,
places, ideas. Her subsections include, among others, Writing Instruction; Scottish Influences; African American Rhetoric; Asian Rhetoric; and American Indian Rhetoric. In Krista Ratcliffe’s chapter, “The Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries,” she notes all of the many disciplines that rhetoric has permeated, and her chapter “focuses on the diversity of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship that informs rhetoric and composition studies” (location 4692). Some of her divisions: “Traditional” Twentieth-Century Rhetoric Theories; Contemporary Receptions of Histories of Rhetoric; Rhetorical Criticism; Rhetoric and Poststructuralist Studies; Rhetoric and Cultural Studies; Rhetoric and Literacy Studies; Rhetoric and Latino/a Studies; Comparative/Contrastive Rhetorics; Rhetoric, Technology, and Technical Writing; Visual Rhetoric; and Rhetoric and the Teaching of Composition.

For a student trying to situate her research in the very big, very diverse field of composition and rhetoric, this book is perhaps the place to start. I’m thrilled at its inclusiveness, and I appreciate the work these scholars have done to compile the most important works in our evolving, globalized field—which will, of course, lead to more works not listed here. I’m a bit disappointed that several areas have been overlooked, however: disability studies, medical rhetoric, and the rhetoric of science are all very powerful areas of study that need to be included in the next manifestation of this text.

Another form of research gaining ground today is feminist research, and while there are more works than ever to choose from when trying to figure out exactly what feminist research is (or what makes research feminist), Eileen K. Schell and K. J. Rawson’s edited collection *Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies* is a fantastic place to begin. Like many great works today, this one grew out of a graduate seminar, where the students wished for a book like this one. This book is divided into two main parts, with a meaty introduction and “Pedagogical Postscript.” Kate Ronald notes in the foreword that Rhetorica has grown since her first appearance in 1995 in *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition*. She has infiltrated our canonical reading, our graduate classes, and our knowledge of the traditions (and nontraditions) on which we base our knowing. Dame Rhetoric, who C. Jan Swearing calls a “shapeshifter” in the afterword to the former volume, ranging from a seated “learned lady,” a queen bearing a sword, to a tall, powerful, self-confident warrior woman, able to defend herself, wound her enemies, and move people to tears, anger, or frenzy. She continues in her metamorphosis in this text.

Questions guiding this volume include:
• How do feminist researchers make decisions about what to study, and under what conditions?
• How does one undertake the work of feminist rhetorical analysis?
• What counts as feminist rhetorics?
• How should feminist rhetoricians combine rhetorical methods, feminist methods, and methods from other disciplines?
• What difficult choices do feminist rhetoricians face as they navigate the uncertainties of working across disciplines or at the edges of multiple disciplines?
• How does one engage work that is truly interdisciplinary and at the same time maintain ties to a home discipline?
• What might constitute a productive attitude and practice toward questioning and being self-critical about one’s own methods and methodologies? (1–2)

In part one, “Theoretical and Methodological Challenges,” the authors interrogate and problematize feminist inquiry, beginning with disability studies, which, according to Jay Dolmage and Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, “ought to be powerful allies” (23). The authors question normativity, in both rhetorical and disability studies, encouraging researchers to do the same. K. J. Rawson believes that while feminist methodologies have allowed us to see beyond the “canon,” we haven’t gone far enough. By queering our research, we move beyond “male/female” to the entire gender spectrum. Other chapters look more closely at movement—our own, our cultures’, and our national identities.

The second section, “Reflective Applications,” illustrates how feminist researchers have “found their voice,” so to speak, in articulating what it is they do. Kathleen J. Ryan, for example, discusses the difficulty she had as a nontenured faculty member articulating her feminist textual analysis methods. Other authors look at how place and materiality affect their research. Frances J. Ranney introduces ethical issues associated with the “ethic of care,” arguing that the process is what needs to be valued and critiqued as “ethical.” Other authors encourage us to re-examine current practices in research, both traditional empirical and now online, to re-imagine how we collect data and treat subjects.

While I think this book serves as a sound introduction to feminist rhetorical methodologies, it is only one book, and the realm of feminist theories and research are broad. Nonetheless, the editors focus this text well:
In short, we wanted to create a volume that would demonstrate how feminist scholars develop, question, and modify their research methods and methodologies as they sustain scholarly work through various stages in their careers. . . . We were interested in the process of doing feminist rhetorical research: how does a scholar unfold a research project over time, deepen a research inquiry, navigate and negotiate multiple fields of inquiry, address particular ethical challenges and struggles specific to feminist research, and possibly question the received wisdom of some of the field’s ways of engaging research in feminist research. (3)

Dedicated to exercising a “critical self-reflexivity and questioning” associated with feminist research, the editors recognize how feminist research can be anything but “seamless or familiar”; in fact, it can be “radically defamiliarizing.” We are reminded that the work of feminist research is constantly in motion across time and space, across disciplines and communities, and across borders of all types. Like Rhetorica, we must have movement, blur our boundaries, and shift our shapes.

One of the modern means of shapeshifting is online, and more and more students and faculty are beginning to research online. The problem with researching online is that, until recently, there were very few models. One text that stands out for me is Digital Writing Research: Technologies, Methodologies, and Ethical Issues, edited by Heidi A. McKee and Danielle Nicole DeVoss. This text gives a wonderful overview to the types of research being done in technological environments. However, the book that I think—that I hope—will change the way we think about conducting research in online environments is The Ethics of Internet Research: A Rhetorical, Case-Based Process, by Heidi A. McKee and James E. Porter.

These two scholars gathered information about how recognized researchers went about conducting Internet research. Via a series of interviews with scholars from a wide range of fields (disciplines such as composition, anthropology, education, gaming, psychology, sociology, women’s studies, and more), they examined the parameters of this research, including a range of ethical actions that these researchers have taken that go beyond the demands of their institutional review boards (IRBs). Through a synthesis of these interviews, the authors push toward an understanding of ethics that is more tuned to the specifics and context of Internet research.

They offer a series of heuristics to guide those conducting Internet research that arise from these interviews. These heuristics are based on “real life” experience and are rhetorically situated. Rather than a step-by-step, one-size fits all, container-like understanding of what researchers do when they conduct
Internet research (which is often what local IRBs often want, alas), McKee and Porter encourage researchers to examine the context and participants rhetorically, and this book gives researchers a structure to aid them in their ethical decision making.

In his foreword to the book, Charles Ess, the president of the Association of Internet Researchers, raises several reasons that this book is “essential reading for anyone interested in the multiple complexities of Internet research ethics (IRE), complexities that will only continue to grow and expand as we develop and discover still more ways to make use of the Internet and the web as tools of both communication and research” (xiii). Calling the text an “essential handbook for Internet researchers,” Ess notes that the book represents a significant contribution to multiple stakeholders (researchers, IRBs, ethics boards, and so forth). I concur.

Not only is McKee and Porter’s book the first book-length treatment of IRE, but they deal with multiple Internet domains, including many Web 2.0 venues, which are vital in computers and composition research. Basing their evolving theory on Habermasian and feminist communicative ethics (yet grounded in an Aristotelian definition of phronesis, or practical wisdom), the authors offer insights into the challenges that situations and cases differing from the “norm” include. By analyzing, reflecting on, and using the conceptual frameworks the book suggests, researchers are better able to resolve ethical challenges involved in Internet research.

When I teach the overview to research methods course in my university, I require students to fill out and submit a human subjects form to our IRB. However, my particular institution’s practice is to offer blanket exemption for research involving information available on the Internet. I’ve tried to argue to the students (and to the review board!) that we need to do more to protect our subjects. This book (which will now be a requirement in my course) helps researchers think through the context of their specific research site(s), allowing them to perhaps go beyond what the IRB might require in order to be ethically responsible in their research. If our goal is to train responsible, critical, productive researchers in our discipline (and beyond), as I believe it is, then I think this book will go a long way to aid in the achievement of that goal.

Now we get to the nitty-gritty: getting our hands dirty. It’s my strong belief that we learn by doing, and this dictum is especially true in research. I’ve chosen two books that I’ve either used or considered using in my graduate-level introduction to research methods class. What I’ve learned from an ongoing research project with Carole Clark Papper, Gregory Zobel, and Derek Ross
is that students get a diversity of experiences in this type of course, ranging
from a course on literary criticism to one that still uses North’s original text
to one that is focused solely on ethnography and nothing else. The problem
is that most graduate programs offer only one course, and depending on who
 teaches it or when it is offered, the course can be a replication of the instruc-
tor’s experiences (which happens a lot—students get what the faculty got), it
can be an offshoot of the instructor’s own research, or it can be a considered
indoctrination to reading research. Rarely do students get “hands-on” experi-
ence actually creating a research question, selecting methods, analyzing data,
and representing results until they write their dissertations.¹

So how can we create “makers of knowledge” when all we have is one
“overview” course? First, we model the ethical conduct of research, just as we
model other professional responsibilities such as teaching, publishing, and
presenting. Second, we critically select the texts we use in this overview class.
My favorite text is John W. Creswell’s Research Design: Qualitative, Quantita-
tive, and Mixed Methods Approaches, but this book was written by someone
in educational psychology, so most people in composition haven’t heard of it.
Closer to home, I’ve used Mary Sue MacNealy’s Strategies for Empirical Research
in Writing, which is clear and easy to read and understand, but dated (the sec-
tion on surveys is especially so; email wasn’t widely used at the time). So I was
thrilled to learn a few years ago that two books would be coming out to carry
the torch. The first to come out was Becoming a Writing Researcher by Ann M.
Blakeslee and Cathy Fleisher. I’d read research written by both of these women,
and I had high expectations as I waited for the book to arrive. I was hoping for a
Creswell-like book for compositionists. These expectations were soon dashed.

I really wanted to like this book. And the book itself is not a bad introd-
to qualitative research (it limits its scope to qualitative research only),
especially for those who are terrified by the idea of research. But as I read, I kept
feeling like I was in some kind of basic writing class; the authors almost spend
more time building up researcher confidence and helping readers identify as
researchers than they do actually discussing what research is and how to do it.
The authors have frequent sidebars explaining how they experienced the topic
of discussion (and I do value their voices—I’m just not sure that this book was
the place for these comments). And while the core information is valuable, I
felt like I had to work too hard to get to it, wading through too many Stuart
Smalley-type affirmations before I got to any content.

I do like the overall structure of this book, which uses guiding questions
as chapter titles: “What’s Your Question?” “How Do I Find Answers?” “What
Do I Do with the Information I Collect?” And finally, “How Do I Present My Research?” These are the topics with which a research class should be dealing. And these are the topics with which Michael A. Hughes and George F. Hayhoe deal in a much tighter, professional, and cohesive manner in their book, *A Research Primer for Technical Communication: Methods, Exemplars, and Analyses*. Not only do they cover both qualitative and quantitative inquiry methods, but they also include “exemplars”—a literature review, a quantitative research report, a qualitative research report, and a survey article—that include the author’s own explanation and critique. Each chapter begins with a bullet list of Learning Objectives, and the examples they use come from technical communication as well as composition—but they cover situations that the writing student might well encounter (how to get permissions, funding, and so forth).

Most of the chapters in this book begin with a gerund, which indicates action to me. After discussing what research is and why we read it, as well as an overview of the research “phases,” the chapters are “Reviewing the Literature”; “Conducting a Quantitative Study”; “Conducting a Qualitative Study”; and “Conducting Surveys.” While they don’t spend time talking about representing research (a failing in my eyes), the analysis of exemplar studies helps the reader to envision how their research might “look and feel” like those they’ve just analyzed.

When I was looking for a replacement for MacNealy’s text, I opted for the Hughes and Hayhoe book. The depth of information on qualitative research (the kind most students in writing studies conduct, at least initially) isn’t as rich as in Blakeslee and Fleischer’s book, but I thought the overall delivery (and the added analysis of exemplar papers) made their book the wiser choice—for me. I am able to supplement what students don’t get here; if a teacher isn’t as confident, he or she might opt to use the Blakeslee and Fleischer introduction, at least initially, since its focus on just composition studies will be more comfortable.

I would love to see us go beyond looking only at books in our discipline, however, when we’re teaching students to research. The source of my epigram, John Law, whose book *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* articulated what I and several of my colleagues were feeling in our own work and teaching, is a professor of sociology and technology studies at Lancaster University. Creswell’s work comes from educational psychology. We have incredible resources in our discipline, to be sure—but I hope we are confident enough and concerned enough to look beyond these self-imposed boundaries to see how research is being done and taught and evaluated and represented in other disciplines as well.

236
Note
1. In our five-year study, we are examining the confidence level of graduate students and new faculty in composition and technical communication based on the instruction they’ve received as graduate students, the experience writing their dissertations, and the support they receive from their institutions. We ask students and faculty what they found most helpful, what challenges they experienced, and what advice they would have, based on their experience.

Works Cited

Rebecca J. Rickly
Rebecca J. Rickly is a professor at Texas Tech University. At the center of her work is what she calls “applied rhetoric,” which includes such diverse applications as technologies, pedagogies, feminisms, methods and methodologies, and administration.