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From the Editor
The (Continuing) Wisdom of Students

Dear Colleagues and Friends~~
Welcome to 2013 and to our first issue of the year. As you’ll see, we have here a bounty of reading: three articles, our CCCC Exemplar Remarks, a round-robin review, a review essay, and a poster page. In addition, I conclude this introduction with some thoughts on two topics—our continuing interest in students and the need for new and fresh perspectives on higher education—and say goodbye to four departing CCC Editorial Board members and welcome to four new members.

Our first article, Staci M. Perryman Clark’s “African American Language, Rhetoric, and Students’ Writing: New Directions for SRTOL,” traces the experiences of three first-year writers as they study and explain their own writing practices. In this study, we see two phenomena: a classroom where language, and language practices of African Americans in particular, are at the heart of and the support of writing development; and the accounts that writers provide of their own language practices—both inside and outside school—that result from intentional decisions and that show their awareness of and ability to move from one linguistic community to another—and back.

CCC 64:3 / FEBRUARY 2013

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Our second article, Michael Bunn’s “Motivation and Connection: Teaching Reading (and Writing) in the Composition Classroom,” takes up our neglected R: the role of reading in writing classrooms. In addition to examining how a group of teachers designs reading into FYC curriculum, Bunn also shows us what students make of their reading practices in this context. As important and based on this research, he shares best practices for incorporating reading into writing classrooms.

And our third article, Kristine Johnson’s “Beyond Standards: Disciplinary and National Perspectives on Habits of Mind,” takes the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing as its focus, arguing that with its habits of mind, the Framework has the potential to reinvigorate “historical and traditional frames for writing instruction—ancient rhetoric and the liberal arts tradition.” At the same time, Johnson observes, there are dangers: the Framework can be seen as a set of outcomes or as a set of intellectual practices. Put simply, Johnson advises the latter and links it to research documenting how we support students’ transfer of writing practices and knowledge across the curriculum.

We then have a text familiar to those who were in the audience at the opening session at CCCC in St. Louis: Mike Rose’s remarks accepting the CCCC Exemplar Award, here reprinted for all to read. With his own life operating at the intersection of the academic and the public, Rose encourages all of us to join him as exemplar: “Be an exemplar of a big-eared, grounded and relevant, accessible public writing about the topics you know best. Be an exemplar. Be an exemplar of that.”

Our next set of texts speaks to one of the testiest issues (and yes, there is a thinly disguised pun there) in the current political landscape—higher education—especially relative to the value of a liberal arts education in the context of a society that seems ever more interested in equating college with job offers. As Kevin Kiley puts it, on this topic those of us committed to the writing and reading characteristic of a liberal arts education are losing the “message war”:

One of the aspects always touted about a liberal arts education is that it teaches students how to muster diverse forms of evidence to make a compelling case in favor of a position through written, verbal and other mediums.

It would logically follow that if any group were going to dominate the conversation about the role and purpose of college, it should probably be those in the liberal arts.

Yet it’s safe to say that, for the past few years, liberal arts colleges and the idea of liberal education have been losing the message war about the purpose of a college
education, what a good education looks like and how education should fit into the fabric of the nation. (np)

These remarks capture the concerns motivating our round-robin review of two books speaking to higher education and its purpose(s): Andrew Delbanco's College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be and Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh's We're Losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education. Beginning our multiple reviews, Dominic DelliCarpini suggests—bringing together two themes from earlier texts in this issue—that we use the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing as a possible entrée into public discussions of higher education and its purpose(s). In the second review, Rita Malenczyk also calls on Mike Rose and on Linda Adler-Kassner in urging us to behave as public rhetoricians, perhaps most especially when the climate is bleak. And in our third review, Marlene R. Miner sums up by tilting in favor of Delbanco's view:

While perhaps easier in theory than in application, Delbanco's ideas may inspire those in community colleges and four-year institutions alike to reconsider education in more expansive ways than either current consumer demands or accountability strategies can lead us to imagine. In pondering the right questions, we and our students may discover the answers for ourselves. Given the time and opportunity, the American public just might, too.

Our next entry is Asao B. Inoue's review essay, "Diversity, Language, and Possibility: Four New Studies of What Might Be," which begins with Inoue's own very powerful literacy narrative as context for the four volumes, each of which comes to diversity, language, and possibility from distinct vantage points: Keepin' It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric; The Cherokee Syllabary: Writing the People's Perseverance; Diverse by Design: Literacy Education within Multicultural Institutions; and Code-Meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance. As Inoue notes, these volumes “coincide” but are not identical, and all of them are worth reading:

these books offer valuable discussions with which all of us should tangle—because in the wrestling and tangling, we may find as teachers and scholars that, as disparate as these books may seem to our own interests and pedagogies, they likely will open new and better ways to do what we do in our classrooms and in discourse.

And last but not least is our poster page, this one taking WAC/WID as its focus.
This issue of *CCC* interests me for several reasons, three of which I speak to briefly here.

As I indicate in the title of this editorial, students have a kind of wisdom, one that has informed the field since its modern inception began in the twentieth century; indeed, a good deal of what we know about composing, certainly in school, derives from what our students have shared with us. In this sense, they have been both informative and generous, benefiting the field, of course, but benefiting countless students as well. I’m pleased, then, that we continue to learn from our students, as we see in the research of both Perryman-Clark and Bunn, and that we continue to think about our students, as we see in the article by Johnson.

I’m also pleased that three of our colleagues accepted my invitation to provide the round-robin review published here. *Academically Adrift*, which we reviewed last year, has exercised considerable influence, it’s true, but it’s hardly the only volume speaking to higher education, so to review that and fail to include others misrepresents views of higher education. Moreover, it’s important to hear about other ideas, especially when they can be helpful, from our own colleagues playing various roles—faculty and administration—at various kinds of institutions. We’re fortunate that they found time for this task.

And not least, I have the bittersweet task of saying goodbye to *CCC* Editorial Board members and of welcoming new members. *CCC* Editorial Board members—whose names are on the masthead—serve for a three-year term; during 2012, we worked with members to create staggered departures so that the Board will continue to retain institutional memory while also welcoming new views. And we are beginning that process now. We thus have said goodbye—and thanks!—to Damián Baca, Joe Harris, David Holmes, and Shirley Logan, and we have said welcome aboard to Lena Ampadu, Anis Bawarshi, David Jolliffe, and Erec Smith.

I’ll look forward to seeing readers at CCCC in Las Vegas and to talking to you again in June, but in the meantime, happy reading.

**Work Cited**


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