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Dear Colleagues and Friends~~

Where do we write? And what difference, if any, does the location of our writing make? How does our location influence what we write and how we share our writing? And what about our own located-ness?

In this month’s issue of College Composition and Communication, our fifth special issue—and divided into two parts, this issue and the December issue—we take up questions such as these as we begin an inquiry into the relationship of location to composing, as plotted through vignettes and analyzed in articles. In this introduction to the September issue of CCC, then, I begin by thinking briefly about multiple locations of writing as context for your reading of the narratives, articles, and review essay that all—in various and diverse genres and ways—help us understand the importance of Locations of Writing. In addition, I also say thanks and goodbye to my last CCC editorial assistant.

As preparation for this special issue, we announced a call for proposals defining the potential of locations of writing and welcoming a diversity of approaches.
and two principal genres: the articles familiar to readers of *College Composition and Communication* and small-scope vignettes (introduced a year ago, in the September 2013 issue focusing on The Profession). Prompting invention, we listed several dimensions of the topic that might be addressed:

- Historical locations for writing classes
- Historical locations for other curricular writing activities: e.g., writing centers
- Writing across different institutional locations: e.g., community college/four-year college, private/public, WAC, and WID
- Connections across sites of writing
- Historical locations for out-of-school writing events and activities
- Contemporary locations for out-of-school writing events and activities
- New locations for writing, including programs and departments
- The relationship between writing locations and the profession
- The influence of location on curricular and pedagogical practices
- The role of locations in an era of mobile technology
- Student work on websites, portfolios, and other digital sites conceived of as locations
- Advantages, disadvantages, and opportunities linked to relocating writing
- Location as metaphor: space, place, and geography as compatible and/or alternative metaphors
- Location as site of knowledge, especially regarding issues of difference
- Location and its relationship to faculty status
- Location as a metaphor for a career trajectory

In addition, we welcomed “completed vignette[s] or ‘small scope narrative[s]’ of our lived experience in a given location in writing.” In response to this prompt, we received over two hundred submissions, fifty-two of which were “small-scope” narratives complete at the time of submission, the remainder proposals for articles: all of these were reviewed. In addition to accepting many vignettes, we encouraged manuscripts from over twenty authors. Full manuscripts arrived on September 3, 2013; all were sent out to readers from the *CCC*.
Editorial Board and the field; seven articles were accepted, and we decided, with the consultation of the CCC Editorial Board, to offer this final special issue as a double special issue, the first part in September, and the second in December.

As submissions arrived, it became clear that the topic Locations of Writing provided a portal into a particularly rich set of observations, accounts, and studies—of writing past, present, and (even) future; of writing in multiple curricular sites, including those in US high schools and colleges as well as in university sites around the world; of workplace, informal, and hidden sites of writing; of online and virtual sites and sites of sites, each one a site of invention—of writing for and, often, with others.

Indeed, as this issue and the December issue attest, our historical focus on a single site—that of first-year composition—has expanded and diversified; we have a more complex and nuanced sense of where we write, be it, as articulated here, on bathroom walls, on a laptop inside a police car, in a high school student’s notebook, in an attic, in text messages, at the Cherokee National Female Seminary, inside a largely Latino/Latina high school, on a blog, in a set of dissertations—or elsewhere. Collectively, the writers whose work we read here begin to make visible the many places we write and to discern something about what that writing looks like and what it means.

We begin our consideration of Locations of Writing with vignettes collectively providing both a wider sense of the places (in which) we write and a closer look at and consideration of them.

Joy Santee’s “Writer in the Attic: Place-Based Constraints on Research Writing”:

I wrote in my attic bedroom, an unheated space on the cold north side of an old farmhouse. With a single bare bulb and just a small bed and dresser, I didn’t realize the trope I was re-creating—poor student, cold, writing in solitude in an attic in winter.

Laura R. Micciche’s “Girls Writing in Spirals”:

As objects, friendship notebooks were remarkably beautiful things. Passed between hands, they provided surfaces on which we documented transient but pressing realities. That sense of wanting to say something to a real audience of peers was powerful, as was the ultimately random path that led us to one another—a path shaped by immediacy and randomness, like being in class together or passing one another in the hallway at the same time every day.
Leslie Seawright’s “Night Blind: The Places of Police Report Writing”:

It is 2:00 a.m. Officer Jacks and I sit in a deserted parking lot listening to the calls coming in over his police radio. He turns the laptop sitting between us toward me.

Michael J. Faris’s “Coffee Shop Writing in a Networked Age”:

But I do not find myself isolated, alone, or lacking a sense of place in coffee shops; instead, I feel camaraderie with fellow laptop workers, and I delight in hearing others’ conversations and having the occasional interaction with someone else.

Lisa Lebduska’s “Finding the Metaphor”:

Location, location, location: in real estate, a reassuring truism. In writing, though, destinations change. Sometimes the one who loses her way is the one who can’t decide where she’s going. But sometimes the one who gets lost is the one who refuses to let go of the plan.

Michael McCamley’s “Magneto and Me: Invisibility and Passing as a CNTT Compositionist”:

So, when I get the seemingly unremarkable question, “When are you going up for tenure?” I sometimes feel like a member of the X-Men, a new evolutionary branch of academic labor that my colleagues both at my institution and in my discipline do not quite yet understand.

Nancy Wilson’s “Making Space for Diversity”:

Two weeks earlier I had launched a new writing center website, my goal being to create a more inclusive virtual space. I had begun with the “waiting room,” so to speak, replacing the picture of the blue-eyed, freckle-faced European American “receptionist” on our home page with images of different writers, including individuals of color speaking about the joys and woes of writing. They spoke in a variety of languages, including African American English, which made sense given that our writing center is heteroglossic, with tutees and tutors from all around the world.

Doreen Piano’s “Writing in the Cone of Uncertainty: An Argument for Sheltering in Place”:

For most of my adult life, I had left one state for the next, worked abroad for a few years, and moved in with family or friends during transitional periods. My late-bloomer academic trajectory only served to justify what had become, by the time I turned forty, pathological.

Peter Wayne Moe’s “Of Ballparks and Battlefields”: 
The first bomb threat appeared in February, scrawled in felt pen in a women's restroom stall. In mid-March came another, now in the men's room. Soon emails and text messages bore the threats, sent to local newspapers, the student newspaper, the Police Department, university administration and faculty and staff, and television and radio stations.

Marcia Bost’s “Writing in and for the Cloud”:

Yet the words that I write at this location are likely to be shot toward the Cloud—a lesson posted to the server, an email sent, a paper deposited in a box for later retrieval and revision. The words that appear on my screen are encoded as on and off pulses, pushed somewhere, there to be decoded and read, and possibly for new meanings to be made.

We continue with articles focusing on other Locations of Writing, beginning with Alexandria Peary’s “Walls with a Word Count: The Textrooms of the Extracurriculum,” which theorizes places of writing that are similar despite their distance in time of over a hundred years.

Moreover, physical space does not unilaterally define textual production: influence can flow the other direction such that discursive spaces impact traditional education. As Tom Reynolds argues, popular early twentieth-century magazines sponsored the classroom by increasing public interest and attendance in college. Consequently, we need to redefine the location of writing instruction to include the convergence of learners and instructors in textual spaces alongside three-dimensional ones to gain a fuller understanding of how individuals learn about writing.

Emily Legg, in “Daughters of the Seminaries: Re-landscaping History through the Composition Courses at the Cherokee National Female Seminary,” cites the writing work of the Cherokee National Female Seminary in arguing that the places of composition have always been more numerous and diverse than our master narratives suggest.

Beyond the museum displays, what I knew of the seminary was grounded in the stories about my great-grandmother, who had been a student there. Each time I saw her faded diploma and other papers from the seminary, I understood that documents like these were kept long after she had passed as a source of pride for our family. These moments and stories kept coming back to me as I made this particular drive. With the stories of my great-grandmother close at hand and the familiar landscape out the windows, I came to the archives with a desire to research hints of a story that spoke to the histories of rhetoric and composition as well as challenged the historical narratives in our discipline that have structured our familiar locations of writing today.
In “Here They Do This, There They Do That: Latinas/Latinos Writing across Institutions,” Todd Ruecker finds the location of first-year composition instruction—high school, community college, and university—is all but determinative:

Schools like BCC are allotted and spend less per student than counterparts like BU, which contributes to the situation we found at BCC: overworked full-time faculty, dependence on part-time labor, limited disciplinary expertise, and limited material resources. Even though Dr. Thompson expressed ambivalence with the modes approach and had a PhD in rhetoric and composition from a respected program, he lacked time to innovate. He also had reservations about not incorporating more technology in the classroom but identified time and inconsistent availability of technology in classrooms as the primary culprits.

The difference in high school and college writing locations also gives rise to differences in language, as Mark A. Hannah and Christina Saidy observe in “Locating the Terms of Engagement: Shared Language Development in Secondary to Postsecondary Writing Transitions”: in high school, they found students often used institutionally specific language such as 5 Starts and SAPs (summary analysis paragraphs) [which were] often teacher-, class-, or school-specific ways of describing writing types required for a particular teacher or class. Furthermore, a large number of students reported doing bellwork, a catch-all term used to describe short writing assignments that teachers use to begin class or that students should be doing when the bell rings, hence the name bellwork. As we worked with Karen’s classes, we learned that the SAPs and the language used to discuss parts of a paragraph were part of language adopted school-wide, or institutionally, to discuss writing.

Benjamin Miller then examines disciplinary locations of writing in “Mapping the Methods of Composition/Rhetoric Dissertations: A ‘Landscape Plotted and Pieced,’” finding that we have more locations of doctoral activity than has heretofore been understood.

Strikingly, there are no visible doctoral institutions without at least one comp/rhet dissertation. True, one or two dissertations in ten years is hardly a concentration; even so, the data testify to a more successful diffusion of interest in the legitimacy of writing and rhetoric as a subject of graduate study than has been documented before.

In our review essay, “Locations and Writing: Place-Based Learning, Geographies of Writing, and How Place (Still) Matters in Writing Studies,” Katrina
M. Powell reviews five books, each of them making a different case for the role of location in writing, each of them in relationship to what Powell calls our own located-ness.

This attention to our environments, whether it be literal physical space, the seemingly ephemeral space of the Internet, or the places we create in our classrooms, remains an important avenue for understanding the role of composition studies in the classroom, the role of writing across locations, and the ways our locatedness impacts these roles.

And not least, we conclude with a poster page on voice.

The introduction to this issue concludes with appreciation for Bret Zawilski, our CCC Editorial Assistant for 2013–2014. Bret’s experience as CCC Editorial Assistant was likely the most varied, given three sets of activities: (1) our routine activities like writing to authors and fact-checking articles; (2) our transitional activities like sending on manuscripts in process to Jonathan Alexander, incoming editor of CCC; and (3) our culminating tasks like thanking all 338 reviewers for College Composition and Communication for their assistance, designing the last editor’s introduction, and being sure that all publishers received a copy of book reviews. In completing all these tasks, Bret has been efficient, prompt, and helpful—and a delight to work with as we continued to steward CCC. While we will miss Bret, he is focusing now on his (very smart) dissertation, which theorizes material composing knowledge as one piece of the larger transfer of writing knowledge and practice puzzle.

The next issue of College Composition and Communication will, of course, be the last of my editorship; in that issue, I’ll be pleased to introduce the second half of this special issue on Locations of Writing, which includes as well Howard Tinberg’s CCCC Chair’s Address, and to offer my reflections on the experience and privilege of editing CCC.

Until then, I hope you find the pages within as provocative, thoughtful, and rewarding as I do.

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