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Frank L. Cioffi

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From the Editor

Articles in this issue of CCC comprise a study in persistence—in the ways our field has been steadily developing a body of knowledge while also testing the boundaries of what we know, what we need to know. The CWPA/NCTE/NWP Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (2011, Web) describes persistence as “the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects.” In so many ways we practice what we preach, particularly in how we return to similar objects and occasions of study while also asking how we can know what we know differently.

Fundamental to much of what we do, writing pedagogy remains a concern as we ask how better to teach composing. Meghan A. Sweeney and Maureen McBride return us to some of the basics in their article, “Difficulty Paper (Dis)Connections: Understanding the Threads Students Weave between Their Reading and Writing.” Focusing on a study of student work, they show how we might value difficulty as a way to prompt students to develop awareness of their reading and writing strategies. The teaching that Sweeney and McBride describe often occurs in rich and varied institutional contexts, such as writing programs, and our field understands the administration of such programs as itself an object of scrutiny and study. Faye Halpern, in “Strategic Disingenuousness: The WPA, the ‘Scribbling Women,’ and the Problem of Expertise,” takes a historical approach to exploring how contemporary writing program administrators might engage more effectively in the complex work they do.
We are also well aware of how writing and composing persist beyond the composition classroom, presenting many opportunities to study writing as it moves in the world, both in print and multimedia formats. Ben Kuebrich, in “‘White Guys Who Send My Uncle to Prison’: Going Public within Asymmetrical Power,” examines a localized instance of writing to explore how composers use different rhetorical strategies to understand and address issues of power. Often, writing that addresses important and substantive topics occurs in media-rich composing environments. Preparing students to compose in and through multiple media may be among our most pressing—and challenging—pedagogical tasks. Michael-John DePalma, in “Tracing Transfer across Media: Investigating Writers’ Perceptions of Cross-Contextual and Rhetorical Reshaping in Processes of Remediation,” probes connections between different literacy modalities, arguing that the multiple literacies students are often required to engage may be mobilized to enhance students’ understanding of the affordances of many different communicative practices.

And finally, we offer the second round of responses from the field to the 1987 CCCC Position Statement “Scholarship in Composition.” The challenge presented in most of these meditations is a perennial one: how can we value the knowledges we are developing in our field while also consistently and critically questioning both what we know and how we know it? In a word, the work of persistence continues.

With that question and thought in mind, I wish you all the best for the summer.

Jonathan Alexander
University of California, Irvine