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Colleagues,

I am delighted to present you this latest issue of *College Composition and Communication*, whose articles focus on what we do—that is, how we mobilize our research and pedagogies for specific action in the world. I have long been inspired by the Buddhist concept of “right livelihood,” the notion that what we actually do in the world as labor and practice should be motivated by our concern and care for all beings and things. While we might have different versions of such a concept, approaching it with various values and emphases, we likely all agree that reflection on what we do—and what work we imagine writing doing in the world—is a crucial dimension of our personal and collective labor as scholars and teachers of writing.

With such thoughts in mind, we begin this issue with Laurie E. Gries’s essay, “Writing to Assemble Publics: Making Writing Activate, Making Writing Matter,” in which Gries superbly brings together new materialist approaches to assemblage, community, and “rhetorical responsibility” to consider the pedagogical possibilities of campaign organizing. At stake is a way of conceiving writing as action in the world by offering an invitation to students to consider themselves as agents—even within the increasingly complex rhetorical, political, technological, and material realities in which...
We are all embedded. As Gries puts it, “In order to take themselves seriously as responsible rhetorical beings, students must come to believe that they are viable agents in this complex, organic process—as citizens constantly assembling in response to various concerns but also as assembling beings—as rhetors with the ability to assemble and distribute discourse that can, in turn, assemble and reassemble bodies around a shared concern.” Complementing Gries’s approach, Jerry Stinnett argues in “Using Objective-Motivated Knowledge Activation to Support Writing Transfer in FYC” for greater attention to how much work in the world, including that engaged in by students, is often indeed motivated by “activity-specific objectives.” Reflection on such motivation can extend far beyond the teaching of writing.

In “Relive Differences through a Material Flashback,” Zhaozhe Wang returns us to materialist considerations as a way to engage the personal and rhetorical efficacies of differences. Using an ethnographic approach to an archive of his writing, Wang critically examines his own experiences to help us understand how “texts do not merely materialize difference; they also enable us to perform difference as affordance, as they become rhetorical during the process of emergence and circulation.” Broadening out to curricular concerns, Julie Lindquist and Bump Halbritter ask us in their essay, “Documenting and Discovering Learning: Reimagining the Work of the Literacy Narrative,” to pay more critical and pedagogical attention to the role of the literacy narrative in helping students and faculty understand student writers’ various literate moves. Their move “from teaching narratives to learning via narrativizing” offers an intriguing take on the relationship between narrative and knowledge building in the field—and in students’ conceptions of their own writing development. Such close attention to texts moving in the world also characterizes the work of Tricia Serviss and Julia Voss as they consider programmatic concerns in “Researching Writing Program Administration Expertise in Action: A Case Study of Collaborative Problem Solving as Transdisciplinary Practice.” In their case study of an initiative at Santa Clara University, Serviss and Voss turn our attention to how an analysis of WPA methods and practices can and should form an important body of knowledge and disciplinary expertise. Action in the world is content, and how we do our work—and how we invite students and others to consider the work of writing in the world—deserves critical reflection.

Finally, we conclude this issue with a symposium, masterfully assembled by Chris W. Gallagher. In “Standardization, Democratization, and
Writing Programs,” scholars consider a crucial question facing contemporary education: “How does standardization within and across writing programs enable or constrain our democratic aspirations?” If we have any pretensions, much less aspirations, about connecting what we do in the classroom and as scholars to furthering the democratic project, then considering impulses toward standardization, aided and abetted in part by the assessment movement, is a crucial task for reflection. Put another way, we might ask how does doing our work, particularly when we attempt to standardize such work by scaling up curricular values and practices, both promote and occlude important ways of thinking about writing, considering what work writing does in the world, and valuing the knowledges of difference that writing might open up for us? With such questions in mind, I wish you all good reading.

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