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In 1999, two years after finishing my PhD, I sent the first full article that I had ever written to *College English*. I did so without seeking any mentoring or advice, and without a clear concept of how writing, submitting, or publishing a journal article actually worked. I just knew I had something I wanted to say (in this case, about teacher training in PhD programs in creative writing) and hoped this journal would be interested in hearing it. About four months later, editor Jeanne Gunner wrote to tell me that the reviews on my piece were divided, but that she wanted to publish it, not insignificantly because the article made at least one of the reviewers angry. That’s a rough paraphrase of her exact words, but it encompasses what I admired about Jeanne and the journal then, and what I hope to carry into my editorship today: a willingness to provoke discussion, test boundaries, and play with the expanse of scholarship and criticism that is English studies. When I happily saw that article published (after considerable, patient guidance from Jeanne through the revision process, for which I will always be thankful), I did not in any way imagine that some thirteen years later, I would be editing the journal myself. So I come to you humble, grateful, and ready to give back to the very publication that helped to launch my scholarly career in this field.

Partly due to that lucky break—which communicated to me that flagship journals could, in fact, have an interest in issues such as pedagogy and the development of teachers—I aim to continue this privileging and honoring of the various subfields of, and labor within, English studies. I will continue to highlight the interconnectedness of our work as scholars and writers within English, writing, and humanities departments and divisions, and how our work as teachers is informed by and creates that scholarship. The wide readership of this journal includes rhetoricians, linguists, ethnographers, theorists (literary, pedagogical, cultural), historians, essayists, journalists, poets, fiction writers, literary generalists, dramatists, and teachers—who may also define themselves via any of the above. This is not, however, an easy group to please. A readership as broad as that of *College English* is always subtly shifting toward
and away from various areas of interest and field trends, mirroring the volatility of the profession itself. So the best I can do, I think, is simply to publish the very best work that I receive that speaks to these myriad interests in some measure, and hope that all of you, as potential contributors, will aid me in this endeavor by submitting your very best work representing those many corners of our field.

Indeed, *College English*—as I have come to understand it as a reader, contributor, and now an editor—is the journal for the postsecondary scholar-teacher in English studies. This label of “teacher” itself is at the core of our mission, and contains multitudes. Our readers are teachers of first-year composition, advanced writing, rhetoric, basic writing, second language writing, linguistics, literature, literary theory, creative writing, professional and technical writing, film studies, gender studies, ethnic studies, cultural studies, and disability studies. They teach undergraduates at two- and four-year colleges and universities, graduate students, and other students who learn outside the confines of the formal institution (such as community literacy centers, prisons, and nonprofit agencies). They teach anywhere from one to six courses per semester, on a full-time or part-time basis, and they may also be administrators inside or outside their departments. And they all come to the pages of this journal looking for scholarship that speaks *to* them and *for* them, if not *about* them.

That, in fact, seems to be my biggest challenge as I begin this editorship: how to satisfy the intellectual and professional needs of all these readers, without sacrificing editorial or intellectual integrity in the process. I have a daunting task, one made simpler by fine submissions such as those you’ll read in this issue, and which I’ll talk more about in just a moment. The need to balance both sides of that teacher-scholar dichotomy in our field’s publications is real, and important. But the need to represent the very best in English studies scholarship today is also just as important.

So, I’ll be keeping in line with past editors in being highly selective regarding the work we publish in the journal. That means that, like other publications and other editors, I’ll be sending out a lot more rejections than acceptances, and I hope you—as a current, future, or past contributor—will understand that practice, and work with me to sustain it.

Even as I emphasize quality and selectivity, however, I want to address a concern (or is it a commonplace?) that I’ve heard voiced in more than one professional venue. This is the idea that our leading journals, *College English* included, are not welcoming sites for new or younger voices—that they are closed shops, as is sometimes the case with prestigious journals in particular subfields of English (and other disciplines). This perception leads many new scholars subsequently to believe that they should not aim high, as it were, in sending out their work. I want to say unequivocally that no one in our field should feel this way, and I am sorry if past experiences (or the power of lore) have caused this widespread reticence. I do not care whose name is on
a good piece of scholarship; if it is good, and if our journal reviewers find it worthy of publication, I will publish it. It may take a round (or two) of revisions, or it may take very little revision at all. But good work will get published, whether you are a Venerable Name with a curriculum vitae thick as a book, or an unknown looking to publish her very first article—like someone I know pretty well. There may be journals out there that make an author earn her disciplinary keep before she is published in them, but College English is not one of these.

To better help all of you to see yourself as potentially being part of this journal’s future tables of contents, and thereby help me showcase the very best scholarship in English studies today, I am instituting two new features in the journal. The first of these speaks directly to my previous point about authorship. It is our “Emerging Voices” (EV) feature, in which I will showcase an author who has not published an article in a major, nationally refereed journal in English studies, including but not limited to College English. With this EV feature, I am hoping to put a spotlight on truly emerging authorial talent—not just authors of merit who have not published in our journal in particular. I am so pleased to be able to include such an author in this inaugural issue of my editorship, and I look forward to featuring one EV writer per issue for my term as editor, wherever submissions allow. I believe having a feature like this is important to a major journal such as College English, as avenues for publication shrink and tenure cases become increasingly dependent on visibility in publication. I want to call attention to our best new voices—whether these are graduate students, new faculty, or established faculty who are now finding themselves newly interested in research and publication on a national scale—and remind us that sometimes the best work comes from the least-recognized places.

The second feature that you will see in coming issues is the “What Is College English?” section. This feature can be a traditional article, an interview, an essay, or even a review essay, the main criterion being that the piece interrogate the notion of “college English” as a concept, a discipline, or (self-reflexively so) a journal. The purpose of this feature is to push the boundaries of our nomenclature, or to continue to challenge and test the ways in which we talk about “English” at the college level. With the rapid morphing of English departments over the last four decades—and the splitting off from those departments into independent formations by such disciplines as creative writing, rhetoric and composition, and speech communication—it seems prudent to take this opportunity to ask ourselves, what is it that we do/think/believe/demonstrate when we partake in “college English” in our teaching, research, or even service? What defines this field, and what does not? What characterizes its presence? Who speaks within it, and who is spoken for? These are some questions that submissions to this feature might consider. Authors may indicate their interest in being part of this feature when they send in manuscripts, or I may choose to label
existing, accepted submissions as such with the author or authors’ consent. Our first appearance of “What Is College English?” will be in the next issue (November 2012), and thereafter, I hope, on a regular basis.

To make room for these new features, two others that have been staples in College English will drop away. The first of these is the “Texts of Our Institutional Lives” feature, and the second is the “Opinion” feature. I find both of these features very valuable and often among the most engaging contributions in any given volume. But their titles, potentially, signal a lesser review process than readers—again, those pesky tenure and promotion committees—might be looking for. Many if not all of the articles published in our journal are concerned with the classroom in some way (large or small), and all scholarship—at least in my view—has to encompass opinion at its core, alongside evidence and research. So I am suspending these features, and will look to all of you to let me know of any strong disagreements with this decision as my editorship goes forward.

You will also notice—when you submit your work to us for publication consideration—that our submission system has changed effective with my editorship. NCTE has purchased an electronic manuscript tracking system called Editorial Manager (EM), which I began using when I started transitioning into this position back in October 2011. EM allows us to take in manuscripts through a website that assigns manuscript numbers; provides me with an electronic database that includes names of reviewers, their specialties, and their contact information; and tracks submissions for both me and my staff, and for authors and reviewers. Those of you who have worked with other online submission systems (for example, Manuscript Central) will likely find EM easy to work with and helpful in speeding and easing the review process. To those of you used to submitting work via paper or regular email, I encourage you to check out the EM system—which you can find at www.editorialmanager.com/colleng. My favorite aspect of this system is its transparency: when I send the accept, revise and resubmit, or reject notices to authors, reviewers’ comments are included alongside my decision, and reviewers themselves receive copies of the decision for their records. NCTE is not yet using this system for all of its publications, but for the term of my editorship, we will use it for College English. As you interact with EM as an author or reviewer, I welcome your feedback on it, including areas where it might be tweaked or improved. You can send your feedback—as well as your general questions about the journal, or about specific submissions—to us at collengsubs@gmail.com.

Finally, in terms of individual issues, you will notice that each year, there will be one special issue of College English. These special issues will be chosen by me (in consultation with my assistant editors, and sometimes with the editorial board) and will be guest-edited by one or more scholars with expertise in the topic at hand. As those issues draw nearer, I’ll preview their contents in this editor’s space. Suffice it
to say that I aim to feature topics of broad interest to a wide swath of our CE readership, preferably topics that cut across one or more subfields of English studies.

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Now let me turn your attention to the work featured in this issue. I think you will find an exciting array of scholarship that engages us in timely issues of pedagogy, historiography, literary theory, and assessment. Our “Emerging Voices” author for September 2012 is Tara Lockhart. Her article, “The Shifting Rhetorics of Style: Writing in Action in Modern Rhetoric,” investigates the structure and import of the four editions of the textbook Modern Rhetoric written by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren. Lockhart argues that “midcentury [pedagogical] practices were not narrowly constructed around issues of clarity or developing syntactic maturity, as many accounts of the period would have us believe” (17), while providing a viewpoint into Brooks and Warren’s contributions to composition—rather than their more frequently discussed work in literary studies—and how these two editors envisioned through this text their students as writers. In doing so, Lockhart challenges the accepted view of “current-traditionalism” in composition instruction, contending that Brooks and Warren “commit themselves to an effective middle style where the domains of literature and composition productively intersect” and where current-traditional values are not the dominant paradigm (19). She concludes that a historiographic analysis of textbook usage such as this one provides for readers “a clear example of the ways that we, as teachers and as theorists, might often attempt to open language up, testing new possibilities and pedagogies, only to revert back to more comfortable (or better received) systems or positions” (38).

In a similar historical vein—but with a human subject, rather than a printed text—Lisa Shaver explores the work of Margaret Prior and her “walks of usefulness” in nineteenth-century New York City slums, in conjunction with the work of the American Female Moral Reform Society (AFMRS). Shaver details how Prior’s walks—in which she “evangelized, provided counsel, visited the sick, attained assistance for the needy, organized prayer meetings and Sunday schools, helped locate suitable jobs and lodgings for women, confronted libertines, reproved gamblers, and ardently encouraged temperance” (62)—allowed her to exert an “ethos of presence” that led to a moral and ethical authority among the people of her community (63). Shaver argues that recovering the history of Prior affords us an early example of “presence as public advocacy” (75) that we can now see manifested in movements such as Occupy Wall Street, and in both national and international human rights organizational activities.

Turning away from rhetoric and writing and toward literary studies and literary theory, Kurt Fosso and Jerry Harp’s essay, “J. Hillis Miller’s Virtual Reality of Reading,” argues for a reexamination of the considerable work of critic J. Hillis Miller in
light of how “his vision of literary virtual reality imparts valuable insights into the persistently mysterious dynamics of reading—dynamics of particular interest at this present moment when so much about our reading lives is questioned, contested, and even at times agonized over” (81). Using Miller’s On Literature as one of several texts for analysis, Fosso and Harp consider Miller’s intuition about the preexistence of the literary text in terms of language as a shifting structure that interpenetrates and always exceeds the writer’s and the readers’ minds, of the meta-awareness implicit in the dependence of the mimetic on self-referentiality, and of the relationship between the literary realm of the virtual and Derrida’s idea of the future anterior.

Contrasting these theoretical concerns, Chris Gallagher’s “The Trouble with Outcomes: Pragmatic Inquiry and Educational Aims” focuses on a present and “practical” subject that likely all of us must face sooner or later in our professional work: outcomes assessment. Gallagher provides a critique of the terms of assessment, specifically the difference between “outcomes” and “consequences,” through the lenses of pragmatic inquiry. Gallagher argues that “[f]ocusing on outcomes tends to limit and compromise the educational experiences of teachers and students, while attention to consequences tends to enhance those experiences” (43). Further, he contends that too often, “outcomes statements take on an aura of finality, of achieved and unimpeachable institutional authority” (45). He instead offers the possibility of greater student (and faculty) involvement in the long-term refinement of outcomes statements through the concept of articulation—wherein a department might better define “consequential assessment” in terms of its own intellectual and curricular goals (56).

Finally, we close this issue with a review essay of three new book titles that examine recent histories of composition and rhetoric. Lisa Mastrangelo and Wendy Sharer review two monographs that examine local, recent histories (Steve Lamos’s Interests and Opportunities and David Fleming’s From Form to Meaning) and one that surveys the landscape of English studies as it pertains to composition and literacy (Thomas Miller’s The Evolution of College English)—in order to interrogate the ways in which local and national histories provide differentiated means of viewing our collective narratives of writing, literacy, and rhetoric, and where they also profitably intersect to illustrate English composition in particular “as a site for dynamic, political, and sociohistorical resistance as well as a place for knowledge formation” (106). Mastrangelo and Sharer’s view is the first in a series of regular review essays that I will commission for the journal, on the order of one per issue, when possible. In doing so, we will continue to focus on deeper analyses of a topic of scholarship via exemplary texts (monographs, edited collections, textbooks, e-books, or Web texts) about that topic, rather than on shorter, single-text reviews.

As I close, I want to thank all of you who continue to support College English through your membership in NCTE, your individual subscriptions, your manuscript
submissions, and of course, your reading, thinking, and conversation about the work featured here. But most of all, I want to thank John Schilb for providing me with the best advice and assistance that I could ever hope for in assuming this editorship. His wisdom and kindness—and good humor—have sustained me through my decision to accept this very big job, and through my transition time into doing the actual work of it. It may be a cliché, but I will say that John’s shoes are going to be very difficult to fill.

Second, I want to thank Kurt Austin, director of NCTE publications, and Carol Schanche, production editor at NCTE. Kurt’s patience in training me on the EM system, and in helping me to understand the culture of publications at NCTE, has been invaluable. Carol’s expertise in manuscript handling and copyediting, not to mention her deep knowledge of publishing, are without compare. I look forward to working with both of them for these next five years.

I also want to thank and acknowledge my incoming editorial board, who are listed in the front matter of this issue. I have worked hard to select outstanding scholars from a variety of institutional types and geographic regions, representing an equal array of intellectual concerns and identity formations within the subfields of English studies. In doing so, I have also somewhat expanded the number of board members, in part so that I can get this broad representation, and also so that I can expand my available advisors at hand for larger matters of journal scope, mission, and function. I look forward to working with these eighteen individuals, as well as our nearly 150 (and counting!) current manuscript reviewers, and I thank them for their continued service to this journal and to our profession. In doing so, I also want to recognize the exiting advisory board members who worked under John Schilb through July 2012. They are David Bleich, John Brereton, Donald Hall, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, Victor Villanueva, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Morris Young, Carolyn Calhoon-Dillahunt, and Patricia Dunn. I know that I and countless other scholars have benefited greatly from their time and expertise.

And finally—finally!—I want to thank my two assistant editors, Jacob Babb and Zachary Laminack, who have helped me find my way through not just this first issue of the journal, but also through integrating another journal into our University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) English department and making its aims and mission part of our departmental culture, and even more so, our graduate student discourse about professionalization and the field. Jacob and Zachary are the first team of assistant editors that I will work with from our PhD program here at UNCG. Each year I will select a new graduate student team, who will work with me on a number of journal tasks—including reading manuscripts, corresponding with authors, assisting with securing books for review, and answering general queries about the journal. Jacob and Zachary know that I would be lost—or at least significantly disheveled and gravely wounded—without their help. I look forward to working with more fine individuals like them over the coming years.