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Drawing from her decade leading Salt Lake Community College’s Community Writing Center (CWC), Tiffany Rousculp advocates cultivating relationships within a “rhetoric of respect” that recognizes the abilities, contributions, and goals of all participants. Rousculp calls for understanding change not as a result of an outcome, but as the potential for people to make choices regarding textual production within regulating environments.

The book’s dynamic movement through stories of failure, success, misunderstanding, and discovery is characteristic of the way in which academic-community relationships in transition pivot between disruption and sustainability. By inquiring into the CWC’s history, evolution, internal dynamics, relationships with stakeholders, and interplay between power and resistance, Rousculp situates the CWC not as an anomaly in composition studies but as a pointer to where change can happen and what is possible in academic-community writing partnerships when uncertainty, persistence, and respect converge.

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*New Media in Composition Studies*

Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes  
CCCEC/NCTE Studies in Writing & Rhetoric Series  
232 pp. 2014. College  
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As our field of composition studies invites students to compose with new media and multimedia, we need to ask about other possibilities for communication, representation, and making knowledge—including possibilities that may exceed those of the letter, the text based, the composed.

In this provocative look at how composition incorporates new forms of media into actual classrooms, Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes argue persuasively that composition’s embrace of new media and multimedia often makes those media serve the rhetorical ends of writing and composition, as opposed to exploring the rhetorical capabilities of those media. Practical employment of new media often ignores their rich contexts, which contain examples of the distinct logics and different affordances of those media, wasting the very characteristics that make them most effective and potentially revolutionary for pedagogy. *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies* urges composition scholars and teachers to become aware of the rich histories and rhetorical capabilities of new media so that students’ work with those media is enlivened and made substantive.

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Our November 2014 issue of *College English* brings to you, the reader, two featured articles, one symposium, and one multi-book review. We continue our growing tradition of spotlighting traditional articles (single or coauthored) as well as multivocal conversations taking place in forums such as symposia. Doing so, I hope, allows not only for more voices to find their way into the journal across its six-issue run per year, but also for topics and debates that need a range of perspectives to be fully engaged in that mythical conversation which, ideally, our field journals are always seeking to lead. Thus, both our previous issue (September) and this one feature a symposium focused on a singular concept of interest to scholar-teachers today. Whereas in September this concept was non-tenure-track labor—specifically, *full-time* non-tenure-track faculty positions as a growing part of academia—this month the discussion concerns the labor that goes into editing scholarly journals, a topic obviously near and dear to my heart.

As a point of disclosure and as a way to add to the archives—in that origin stories are often important to include wherever we can, so as to enrich our own scholarly historical footprints, as it were—this editing symposium came to me by way of the 2013 CCCC. At that meeting in Las Vegas, I was fortunate to be in the audience to hear these three symposium participants speak as part of a larger panel on graduate student editing in composition and rhetoric journals. One of these participants at the time was my own assistant editor for *CE*, Summar Sparks. I was so struck by the important points that all three authors raised in their talks that I subsequently invited them to consider shaping the talks into a symposium for the journal. The result is what you see here. I believe that the questions raised—How is graduate student labor on journals measured and valued? What position does editing play in tenure and promotion decisions (in terms of faculty “productivity”)? How can we make journal editing a more “visible” endeavor overall?—are critical ones that I hope readers will take back to their home institutions, where journals are read, and sometimes also edited and published. In particular, Melissa Ianetta’s call for CCCC or NCTE to take

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a position on the value of scholarly editing seems to me quite timely, if not overdue, and thus I hope it’s a call that will gain considerable reader attention.

But I get ahead of myself, in terms of our Table of Contents, because before you enjoy this symposium on editing, you will have before you two excellent featured articles to read. First, we have Steph Ceraso’s piece on multimodal listening and sound studies, which takes up an area of scholarship with which I admit to being almost wholly unfamiliar. I was very pleased to get Ceraso’s submission some months ago (in editorial time, many months before it would appear here), because it not only brought this emerging corner of our field to my attention—so that I could share it with our CE readers—but also because I learned something valuable about what nonalphabetic utterances might mean to students in both writing and feedback-response situations. As Ceraso argues, “[A]ttending to the multimodal aspects of sonic encounters can provide information about how sound works as a mode of composition to create particular effects and affects—intentional or unintentional—[and] students can use this information to become more thoughtful producers of sound” (103). Her study adds to the existing literature, then, not just on sound studies, but also on composing in digital environments—a pedagogy that many institutions currently promote, but not all are able to thoughtfully articulate in terms of the how and why, including considerations of sound as relevant to students with disabilities.

Ceraso’s investigation of the parameters and consequences of various “sonic events” provides a new way of looking at multimodal affordances in the composition classroom, but also could be extended to composing processes in other classrooms across English studies, I think, particularly if we consider how prevalent the push is now for departments to engage in the digital humanities. Ceraso’s focus here on listening is very different, to me, than our typical focus on creation of the utterance—whether that be in print, or in person, or in some hybrid form, with multimodal resources. As Ceraso contends, she is calling for “a reeducation of our senses—a bodily retraining that can help us learn to become more open to the connections between sensory modes, materials, and environments. In addition to listening in to digital content, it is time that we learn to listen up, out, through, and around” (120).

There’s no smooth transition to be made here from the subject of sound studies and embodied listening in 2014 to the federal government’s labor initiatives in 1930s America (and those readers who know me well can attest that I’m rather lousy at segues anyway). But our next article, by Deborah Mutnick, does in fact take us away from the present and the ever-encroaching future of multimodal composing to our collective (American) intellectual labor past, and its impact on our educational present, with a look at the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) and its potential use value in college writing programs today. Mutnick’s article argues that “both the prescience and the limits of the FWP’s emphasis on cultural diversity can be seen in its influence on American social norms from revisions of the literary canon to corporate diversity training, fostering social justice on the one hand while papering
over persistent inequalities on the other” (133). Thus, the FWP might serve as a good model for a twenty-first-century writers’ project, building on existing local initiatives in rhetoric and composition studies and in the process, calling up “a public across localities, giving visibility to thousands upon thousands of stories revealing common themes and galvanizing responses to twenty-first-century social realities” (138–39).

Tracing the brief history and accomplishments of the FWP, and putting these events in dialogue with current concerns facing public writing projects and other community literacy initiatives, Mutnick contends that a new FWP could afford writing programs a unifying set of goals and objectives to forward their work, as well as “mobiliz[e] our forces to document our times, inflect writing instruction with a genuine sense of purpose and politics, and foster deeper, more critical, regenerative interpretations of history and culture in our students, our communities, and ourselves” (142). I appreciate the weaving here of a history we think we know—the FWP and its place in the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s—and our currently separate but often overlapping local projects that bring writing, community work, and often, historical preservation of various groups of citizens’ intellectual contributions together under one roof.

Finally, in this issue we offer a review of three recent books in multimedia composing and digital studies, to loop back to the multimedia focus of Ceraso’s article that opens our issue and also nod to the historical perspective on writing that Mutnick’s piece brings. Alan Benson reviews three recent titles, by Jason Palmeri, Patricia Suzanne Sullivan, and Ben McCorkle, that all in some ways reinscribe the composing process—or, as Benson puts it, “contribute powerfully to the scholarly conversation about the changing face of composition by illustrating how the narrative of newness associated with multimodal and experimental work hides a long saga of negotiation between the traditional and the new in the field of composition” (166). Benson’s review of these titles highlights the critical importance of “disrupt[ing] the all-too-prevalent narrative that our current engagement with technology and new forms of writing has no precedent” (166). Surveying these works, Benson brings to readers’ attention the ways in which the new is, in fact, a difficult label to put on composing technologies as a whole.

So, I encourage you to enjoy each of these fine contributions and overlapping voices; I’ll see you again after the turn of the year.