

## From the Editors

For some years, the editorial board of the WPA journal has met regularly twice a year, at CCCC and at the summer WPA conference. These sessions have been an important opportunity for members of the board to get to know one another and to discuss the role of the journal in the organization as well as related issues. However, the most important feature of these meetings has been the discussion of an article that has been submitted to the journal. The resulting discussion gives both the editorial team and the board an opportunity to hear varied and valuable perspectives on how many ways an article may meet the high expectations we have for work that is published.

The most recent editorial board meeting is a fine example. The article we shared (with the author's express consent) is one that drew two very different responses from the board members we asked to review it. The co-editors had all read it and thought it warranted review and publication. One board member agreed with us, though this reader had a number of suggestions for revision. The second reader had serious reservations. Because of this difference of opinion, we thought a face-to-face discussion would be helpful to everyone.

Most of the editorial board attended our meeting in Louisville, and the manuscript generated a very enlightening discussion for those present. We did not identify the readers at the outset, but they chose to identify themselves as the discussion unfolded. Ultimately, the group agreed that the piece offered a report of what might be described as an exploratory research study and that it warranted publication with substantial revision. In addition, the consensus of the group is that the WPA journal should offer articles that are of interest and use to our readership, though not necessarily culminating in "what to do on Monday" advice. We welcome, then, a range of different types of articles addressed to those interested in writing program administration. (The call for articles for the journal on the WPA website offers a list of suggested topical areas that are of common interest.) Submissions should be thoroughly grounded in the work of program administration and may offer theoretical or practical insights based on

research that contributes to the ongoing conversation of the field. The work in the current issue, we believe, fits these criteria.

## THE ARTICLES

This issue presents four articles that address a range of issues of interest for WPAs. Barclay Barrios focuses on the possibilities and promises of custom textbook publishing. Revisiting the work of Libby Miles and building on an extensive review of scholarship on textbook publishing and its relation to WPA work, Barrios invites WPAs to consider how “custom textbook publishing offers new opportunities for WPA agency,” examining the ethics, advantages, and limitations of this still-emerging practice. Barrios argues that “by conscientiously engaging with the practice [of custom publishing], we can perhaps minimize its disadvantages while strengthening its abilities to create democratically and pedagogically informed texts” and intervene “in some of the processes that publishers use to construct the market.”

In “First Steps Beyond First Year: Coaching Transfer After FYC,” Dan Fraizer reports on an interesting study of what happens to students after they leave first year writing and go on to deal with writing assignments in other courses and in a variety of disciplines. His small study shows that students think first year composition is helpful. However, reflection, genre analysis, and “bridging” strategies may have a more developmentally appropriate impact outside of FYC during the transition period between FYC and more advanced courses in the major, when students are experiencing a range of cross-disciplinary expectations. Small studies of this kind can and should be replicated and combined to shed additional light on the transfer process.

If composition’s public reputation is yet that of an unbranded “commodity” offered in many forms entirely beyond the control of fully-informed, fully-supported composition professionals, what might we do to rescue our operations and enhance our reputations? Keith Rhodes argues in “You Are What You Sell” that CWPA should establish a strong “brand” of well-informed composition. Such a brand would establish an independent and higher public profile, such that CWPA composition could become a “market leader” that would improve the quality and reputation of all writing instruction.

Finally, James Warren’s “First-Year College Writing and the AP English Language Exam: How a High School/College Partnership Affected Exam Performance,” describes a model program for integrating college composition courses with high school AP English Language courses. It also presents results from a study that explored whether a course steeped in rhe-

torical theory and process pedagogy provided effective preparation for the impromptu essays required on the AP exam. The study concludes that while process-based pedagogies can improve scores on the AP exam, the exam itself does not measure the outcomes endorsed by WPA. Here again, if others replicate this work, WPAs may be able to make better decisions about the relevance and use of AP credit.

In response to our Fall symposium on diversity written by Jonathan Alexander and Paul Kei Matsuda, the journal received provocative replies from Mark McBeth, Jacqueline Rhodes, Melissa Nicolas and Asao Inoue. These writers approach the diversity issue from very different directions; their pieces offer much food for thought. We look forward to continuing this conversation in a journal-sponsored, CWPA Diversity roundtable at the upcoming conference in Philadelphia, and we invite readers to situate new research projects within this exchange of ideas.

As promised in the Fall issue, we continue to offer book review essays that consider several books on a single topic. In his review essay, Rich Haswell presents a compelling examination of five contemporary composition studies anthologies. He not only details their various strengths, weaknesses, inclusions, and omissions, but he interprets what these works have to say about our nascent discipline.

Rebecca Moore Howard and Missy Watson open their review essay, “The Scholarship of Plagiarism: Where We’ve Been, Where We Are, What’s Needed Next,” by remarking on the upsurge of composition research into plagiarism. While their essay reviews seven new books on plagiarism and offers brief, but detailed, summaries of what each new work brings to the conversation, Howard and Watson quickly move beyond summarizing current research to call for more empirical studies that “can be replicated and aggregated.”