Editors’ Note

With this issue of Composition Studies, the journal comes home to Texas Christian University, where it began as Freshman English News under the editorship of Gary Tate. As Tate tells it, he intended the newsletter to serve as a clearinghouse for ideas about teaching freshman composition, but it quickly became much more than that. Indeed, as we perused copies of those early issues published in the 1970s, familiar names jumped off the pages: Richard Braddock, Ann Berthoff, Jim Corder, James Kinneavy, William Irmscher, Janice Lauer, Andrea Lunsford, Ross Winterowd. It is an awesome legacy to live up to, yet we are confident that future readers and editors of Composition Studies will one day look back on this and other issues and remark that we, too, have played an important role in shaping the discipline of Composition or Rhet/Comp or Writing Studies. Whatever it comes to be called, we know it as the discipline devoted to the theory and practice of writing and teaching writing.

We decided early on to open this issue by interviewing Gary Tate (though he insisted on turning the interview into a conversation). Such an interview, we reasoned, would give us the chance to situate our vision of the journal in the context of its history and the history of composition as a field. Lucky for us, Tate articulates many of the themes that inform our vision of the journal: the need for more compelling writing about what goes on in the classroom, writing that puts our students and their texts at the center of our analysis; the need for more genres of academic writing that might speak to the ordinary classroom teacher—on whom so much depends—as well as senior scholars; the need for continued study of what composition studies is and should be, especially its relation to literary studies and to rhetoric; the need to bring together areas of composition often seen as opposed, such as critical pedagogy and the teaching of writing as a craft; the need for more attention to advanced writing courses, to writing majors and minors, to interdisciplinary writing programs like WAC and first-year seminars.

As Tate puts it, one thing that can sustain us in our work as writing teachers is the importance of that work, which he calls “noble” and “a heroic service” to students and their future success. But as we say a bit later in the interview, teaching writing (like editing a journal) is also fun; both are highly engaging activities that involve helping to put someone else’s ideas in the best possible form. Composition Studies, we hope, will be a journal where both of these qualities of writing instruction—as a noble service and an engaging intellectual activity—are exemplified and explored.
Although most of the pieces in this issue were shepherded through the publication process by the former editor of CS, Pete Vandenberg, they do, in fact, exemplify the vision of the journal that we have just described. Victoria Tischio’s “Speaking the Fool’s Rhetoric” uses a playful form to address the serious issue of critical pedagogy’s lack of attention to gender while Kelly Pender, in “Kairos and the Subject of Expressive Discourse,” considers how the classical rhetorical concept of kairos might inform our teaching of expressive discourse. Both Neal Lerner and Amy Gerald re-evaluate the history of our field. The connection between composition studies and creative writing is explored in Christy Friend and Kwame Dawes’s course design for a graduate pedagogy course in teaching creative writing. The panoply of books represented in the book review section, from *Moving a Mountain: Transforming the Role of Contingent Faculty in Composition Studies and Higher Education* to *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition*, represents in itself an interrogation of what kinds of writing and what kinds of teaching constitute composition studies as a discipline.

In future issues, we will continue to publish alternate forms of writing about teaching as well as traditional scholarly work that addresses the issues we’ve identified above. We hope to initiate some new features as well—a space for personal essays that bring the work of teaching writing (all kinds of teaching of all kinds of writing in all kinds of settings) alive for readers, for example. The website for *Composition Studies* will also offer new features, making course designs and book reviews available to anyone with an Internet connection. Of course, we hope that our online resources will convince you to subscribe to *Composition Studies*; as the oldest independent journal in the field of Composition, we depend not on dues from a professional organization but on subscriptions and advertising to meet the journal’s expenses each month. We also depend on you, the readers of *Composition Studies*, for intellectual as well as material means: your submission of work for publication, your offers to review books, your service as referees, your responses to what you read here, are what keep this journal and its editors going. As Tate says, it’s a noble service and a fun one, and we’re glad to play a part.

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