Editor's Note

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With the publication of issue 7.2 of *Prompt*, I am completing my time as editor of the journal. I began seriously brainstorming ideas that led to the creation of the journal with my founding co-editor Jon Dueck in 2014, so it has been nearly a decade of work. In reflecting on the closing of this chapter in my career, I have taken some time to look back at some of the emails Jon and I were sending back and forth in those early days, and it has been interesting to see that in our earliest conversations, we were weighing questions and concerns I still think about. We wanted to create a way for college instructors to share excellent writing assignments from across disciplines that would be meaningful not only to the readers who could benefit from learning about them, but also to the authors themselves. We were very aware that sharing one's intellectual work from the classroom is itself labor, and that any plan, platform, or publication that expected people to do this kind of work without some kind of upside or reward would have trouble growing and thriving. At the same time, thinking about labor, we were concerned about how much work it would be for us to pursue some of our more ambitious ideas. In my messages to Jon at the time, I noted a desire for better balance between my work and life and acknowledged that launching a scholar-run journal would take up many night and weekend hours that could be spent in other ways. At the time, we thought about different ideas—creating a website of interviews with instructors about assignments, pitching an annual award for writing assignments to a relevant professional association or conference, or publishing occasional online books of writing assignments on particular themes. But through a number of conversations, Jon and I agreed that what would most likely motivate instructors to put time into providing the context that would make their assignments legible and meaningful to a wide array of readers would be the opportunity to publish them in a peer-reviewed journal. We knew this project would be the most work for us, but it would have the biggest potential impact. We started taking steps toward that goal, buoyed by the good fortune we had in convincing Holly Ryan to help us develop and execute our plans.

I am proud to say that I believe our hope to offer authors a worthwhile experience has been successful. Before writing more about those successes, I do want to acknowledge that I am sure not all authors' experiences in submitting to the journal have been positive. We have of course had to decline some manuscripts, which is my least favorite part of the editor role. And there have been times when our small team was stretched thin in ways that made the process progress more slowly than we wished. Having been on the author's side of a slow-moving submission to a journal, I was always aware of how challenging this could be, and we did our best to avoid leaving authors in limbo. Having acknowledged our limitations, my experience as editor is that our team put a lot of time and care into helping authors share their ideas in as clear and compelling a way as possible. In final communications before publication, authors often noted how far their manuscripts had come in revision. I was interested in learning more about how our authors thought about their experiences with our journal, so I recently asked them, inviting those who have published in the journal to this point to offer thoughts now that they all had

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some distance of time to consider their experiences.

In their kind responses, a number of our authors indicated that having published in the journal contributed to their professional advancement. Many mentioned that the publication was beneficial during tenure and promotion cases, and one author even speculated that their publication in the journal helped them get their current job. The publications have also created connections for authors with colleagues—for some, locally on their own campuses, where the publication created discussion and collaboration, and for others, in connecting with readers at other institutions who took up ideas from the publications and let the authors know they had done so. One author thought the publication contributed to efforts to create a new minor in their program, and another let us know they were invited to speak to a course on professional writing and social justice about their assignment.

Perhaps even more heartening to me is the fact that a number of our authors reported specific intellectual benefits from having written pieces for the journal. These included thinking more deeply about teaching and making changes to their teaching based on what they learned through the process of writing and revising for the journal. Several authors reported seeing deeper connections between their classroom work and broader work in the field. Others mentioned that the process deepened their connection to a collaborator with whom they developed the assignment and co-authored the article. We hope these connections and insights continue to provide benefits to our authors long after the publication appeared on their CVs. Our experience as editors was often that authors were reaching insights they had never had about their assignment, or about their teaching more broadly, during the revision process.

Beyond offering a generative experience for authors, I believe we have offered much to our readers. Here, I return to the introduction to the first issue of the journal, where Jon and I (2016) argued for the scholarly value of writing assignment design:

> Developing a writing assignment also requires that we martial our disciplinary research and knowledge as well as our pedagogical study and experiences. In addition to introducing students to an area of inquiry, we introduce them to our discipline's ways of asking and answering questions about that topic. Further, we must consider how to mediate between our own ways of writing to colleagues inside our disciplines—practices and poses internalized so fully that many of us have trouble imagining how else things could be done—and students' diverse experiences with college writing in many, varied disciplines. This work requires continuous critical thought, experimentation, and self-assessment. It is deeply intellectual work that deserves to be shared outside the classroom, both as a scholarly achievement in its own right, and also because it is of clear, practical use to our colleagues. (pp. 4-5)

I believe that the fact that this journal has succeeded to this point provides persuasive evidence for these claims. From the outset, authors have contributed compelling, intellectually rich work to the journal, reviewers have responded in insightful ways, and the journal has had a robust readership. Our work here is of course part of a larger and longer shift toward valuing the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher ed. I have regularly run into our readers at conferences and heard about how the journal helped them develop an assignment in their own course or support a colleague through a WAC/WID program. The ideas being exchanged in this context are not simply about classroom management—they are about the major principles and goals of various fields and how we can meaningfully engage a new generation of learners in them.

Earlier this year, I read an essay in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that I thought echoed the arguments that have been made for the intellectual value of pedagogical work in an interesting

way that is also relevant to the future of *Prompt*. Andrea Katson Tange's (2023) "Academic Service Is Intellectual Labor" highlights a now-widely documented challenge facing many academic journals, *Prompt* included: the difficulty of finding peer reviewers. The pandemic seemed to create a breaking point in a system that was already badly strained, based as it is on the assumption of peer reviewers having tenured or tenure-track faculty appointments in roles that are configured to allow them time for major service activities directed outside their institutions, such as peer review, tenure case letters, conference organizing, and program reviews. Tange argues that we need to "make service visible as intellectual labor," since "much of the work we count as service is labor that directly supports the intellectual growth of our disciplines." Tange points out that we devalue certain types of intellectual work as mere "service" at our peril—a fact that has become plainer to many academics as journal review processes have slowed because fewer people will agree to serve as reviewers, and those who do are often so burdened with other work that these reviews take longer to complete. My work on *Prompt* convinced me that Tange's argument is both accurate and important. I have been continually impressed by the quality of work peer reviewers do for our journal without any compensation from our journal or public recognition. I have understood completely when our requests for reviews have gone unreturned or been delayed, since we are reaching out and asking people to take time from their own scholarship, teaching, or leisure to contribute to the success and quality of our journal. If you have reviewed for our journal, please know you have my profound gratitude for having done so. It is a meager compensation, I realize. The fate of low- and no-budget open-access journals like *Prompt* rests on the generosity of our reviewers as well as our all-volunteer editorial staff. The biggest existential threat to this journal, and others like it, is that those who believe in a journal's project may simply lack the time and energy to contribute to it because of the changing conditions of academic employment.

This leads me directly to more heartfelt thanks I want to give before stepping down as editor: to the editorial team who worked to make the journal a reality. What a true joy it has been to work with such smart and generous people. I will start with thanks for Jon Dueck, since it was he who started with me. Jon was instrumental in the conception and launching of this journal. He served as my co-editor for issues 1.1 and 2.1, and he remained our technical editor until Brian N. Larson took over the role. The journal definitely would not exist without his contributions.

Holly Ryan moved from associate editor to managing editor with issue 2.1, but she was a crucial leader of the journal from before the first issue and through to this one. The title "managing editor" does not fully capture the depth of the work Holly did both in developmental editing and in working with me on the strategic planning for the journal's success; she has truly been an equal partner in this project. Moreover, she made doing this work feel fun and worthwhile, always bringing a positive outlook and a can-do attitude to any challenge we faced.

Our team of associate editors has been crucial in helping us assess incoming submissions and spreading the word about the journal; thank you to Nancy Barr, Alex Halperin, Leanne Havis, Elini Pinnow, Aimee Mapes, Dave Wessner, Jamie White-Farnham, and Ethan Youngerman. Our special issues were helmed by Ann E. Green, Wiley Davi, and Olivia Gianetta, and I learned a great deal from the ethic of care they took to that work.

The unsung heroes of any scholar-run journal are the technical editors. The technical work of taking a bunch of edited manuscripts and creating the published PDF and HTML files is significant and time-consuming. Michael Carlozzi offered crucial support as associate technical editor during Jon Dueck's time as technical editor. Brian N. Larson's tenure as technical editor has been fundamental to making the journal a sustainable enterprise that can continue under new leadership. His care, focus, and professionalism are off the charts and beyond what anyone could reasonably expect. Joseph Glover, Beth Keller, and Liz Hutter made key contributions

as associate technical editors, and we are in great hands now with Liz taking on the technical editor role.

I would not be moving on from my role if we hadn't found great editors to take over. While I am proud of where the journal is now, I believe there is much potential yet untapped. I feel so grateful knowing that Rick Fisher and Kelly Kinney will take the journal forward and continue the work of helping it grow and develop. They already have some exciting developments in store that will broaden our readership and strengthen the journal's foundations.

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This is a very satisfying issue to end on as an editor, as it represents the depth and breadth of writing assignments we hoped that this journal would be able to contain when we set out. The two assignments focused on undergraduate writing courses both focus on Wikipedia, highlighting the journal's ability to help readers tackle multimodal composing as well as real-world writing contexts. The issue offers two assignments entirely outside of writing studies, one related to science communication and the other to psychology courses. We also feature an assignment aimed at graduate students taking a pedagogy course on writing instruction. If we were ever afraid that the journal would mostly receive submissions on a handful of similar types of traditional college writing assignments, those concerns are far in the rear-view mirror. Let me offer a more detailed introduction to the innovative pieces in this issue.

This issue contains two assignments focused on Wikipedia. Both offer innovative approaches as well as practical advice for planning and teaching assignments that ask students to navigate this sprawling, collaborative authored encyclopedia. Travis DuBose's "Can Anyone Edit? Digital Capital and Student Writing on Wikipedia" offers a perspective on how students can utilize the resources of their university to improve the quality of information available in Wikipedia on the community in which their university is located. Tara Propper offers another approach in "More than Memorizing Rules: Using Wikipedia to Emphasize Rhetorical Approaches to Grammar Instruction and Collaborative Editing Practices." Her assignment reimagines a course on editing to focus on the Wikipedia editing process, asking students to critically examine how editing is a rhetorical and cultural process rather than the mechanistic application of rules to writing.

In "Inclusive Science Writing about Socioscientific Issues for Diverse Audiences," Nicole C. Kelp, Alycia Pisano, Sydney Alderfer, and Nancy E. Levinger share an assignment that asks students to direct science communication to two specific, different audiences. In honing their understanding of audience, the students are also refining their knowledge of the topics they are writing about. This assignment uses a composing tool and a rubric for science writing that will be of interest to anyone who teaches science writing.

In "Using Creative Artifacts to Teach Scientific Communication to Psychology Students," KatieAnn Skogberg and Beth Ann Rice explore the ways learning about psychology can be enhanced by replacing a more traditional assessment tool with a writing assignment that allows students to tie key concepts to their other intellectual interests. The assignment includes both the composition of an "artifact" as well as a written description for a non-expert that explains the way the artifact relates to key concepts in the course. They found the assignment successful while teaching online during the pandemic and are continuing to explore its uses beyond that context.

Kelly A. Moreland offers an assignment to support the training of new graduate student instructors of writing courses in "Preparing Reflective Practitioners: The Feedback Analysis Assignment for Writing Pedagogy Education." The assignment encourages these students to develop a reflective praxis as instructors, leading both to valuable localized insights as well as to a habit of mind that may shape their ongoing work in the classroom.

Supplementary Material

For supplementary material accompanying this paper, including a PDF facsimile of the assignment description formatted as the author(s) presented it to students, please visit https://doi.org/10.31719/pjaw.v7i2.172.

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