

Editor's Note

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We are excited to publish Issue 8.1, our first as editors of *Prompt*. During the transitional period, we have been appreciative of the careful and caring labor that past editors Susanne Hall, Holly Ryan, and Jon Dueck have invested in the journal. We echo, too, the gratitude Susanne expressed in her final Editor's Note (2023) for the passion, labor, and expertise of the journal's editorial team, its reviewers, and the authors whose work has appeared here. We feel fortunate and humbled to inherit a set of policies and procedures that are smart and humane. Rather than finding ourselves eager to mold the journal to our preferences and priorities, we instead come into our editorial positions with a desire to maintain the thoughtful course of the ship.

That desire to maintain course does not mean that we have made no changes. Indeed, we are excited to steer the journal to continued impact by:

- Signing an MOU with the WAC Clearinghouse in June 2023 to affiliate *Prompt* with their family of journals. Mike Palmquist and Michael Pemberton were key to this effort, and we are grateful for the new pathways to visibility and expertise this relationship will bring.
- Bringing on a new set of energetic associate editors. Several associate editors ended their terms in 2023, and our call for applicants was met with an impressive number of impressively qualified individuals. The following people have joined *Prompt's* editorial team as of November 2024:
 - Sara Callori, Associate Professor of Physics, California State University, San Bernadino
 - Eman Elturki, Lecturer of English, University of Illinois, Chicago
 - Fangzhi He, Assistant Professor of the Practice (Writing Studies), Davidson College
 - Kristy Ganoë, Assistant Professor in English, Pennsylvania State University
 - Angela Laflen, Associate Professor in English, California State University, Sacramento
 - Jessica McCaughey, Associate Professor of Writing, The George Washington University
 - Thomas Girshin, Associate Professor of English, California State University, San Bernardino
 - Drew Loewe, Professor of Writing and Rhetoric, St. Edward's University
 - Jonathan Marine, PhD candidate in Writing and Rhetoric, George Mason University

These new colleagues join Alex Halperin, Aimee Mapes, Dave Wessner, and Ethan Youngerman, who continue with us as associate editors.

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- Lining up a special issue focused on assignments from a single writing program, the Expository Writing Program at NYU. Slated as Issue 9.2, this effort should help us refine future calls for additional program-focused special issues. We hope that explorations of assignments from individual writing program ecologies will become a signature type of special issue. We hope, too, this focus for special issues will help us ensure a broad range of assignments across disciplinary contexts.

Across the essays and assignments in the current issue, you will find contributors taking up important concerns including agency, motivation, and play; cultural preservation; productive failure; ambiguity and contested knowledge; and audience awareness. Spanning first-year writing, technical communication, art, chemistry, biology, and disability rhetorics, the assignments in this issue provide several generative ideas for application across a range of contexts.

Tolonda Henderson’s essay, “The Unbibliography: When Failure is Not a Waste of Time,” describes an assignment that asks first-year composition students to reflect on the task of discarding sources as they work through the process of creating an annotated bibliography. Thus, the Unbibliography assignment recasts a moment that might be considered a failure as a valuable part of the process. Drawing on comments from a previous class, Henderson finds that the assignment helped students assess source quality and relevance with more sophistication.

“Bridging the Worlds of Art and Science: How General Chemistry Empowers Cultural Heritage Preservation,” by Adrian Villalta-Cerdas, asks students to use theoretical chemistry concepts and apply them to art and cultural heritage conservation, emphasizing the practical application of chemistry concepts to real world artifacts. Through the process, students come to see not only the significance of scientific literacy in cultural domains, but also the importance of preserving cultural artifacts and artwork.

Carolyne King’s essay, “Constructing Disability: Creating a Keyword Portfolio” describes a semester-long assignment in which students identify and develop explanations for terms related to disability. King explains that, unlike encyclopedia entries that often present knowledge as static, keywords help students engage with the contested and shifting nature of disciplinary knowledge. Through creating keyword entries and an accompanying cover letter, students grapple with rhetorical constructions of disability and access, including their own positionality.

Natalia Andrievskikh’s essay, “Student-Created Tabletop Games as Advocacy: Exploring Alternatives to the Op-Ed Genre in First-Year Writing Courses” describes a critical making process leading up to the collaborative development of tabletop games. Andrievskikh argues that this kind of learning through play enhances student critical thinking, persuasive argumentation, and rhetorical agency.

Chadene Tremaglio and Michelle Kraczkowski’s essay, “In Layman’s Terms: Teaching Students to Understand the Scientific Literature Through Blog-Style Writing Assignments,” describes their efforts to promote deeper reading and clearer writing about scientific concepts. In their upper-level undergraduate biology course, they developed a blog-style lay summary as a writing-to-learn activity that they have since revamped in response to student feedback.

Finally, we’re proud to be making the University of Wyoming the new editorial home of the journal; UW has a long and storied history when it comes to writing instruction, particularly the ways best practices in the field are intimately tied to issues of academic labor. As we continue to shape the journal, we will be looking for opportunities to shine a brighter light on how individual writing assignments respond to the conditions of work in specific institutional contexts.

References

Hall, S. (2023). Editor’s Note. *Prompt: A Journal of Academic Writing Assignments*, 7(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.31719/pjaw.v7i2.172>