

Editor's Note

Susanne Hall*

6/20/2018[†]

I am delighted to share issue 2.2 of *Prompt* with you. Themes of genre, the value of failure, and the importance of student engagement drive this issue. Both Simone Sessolo and Jessica McCaughey have each developed assignments that lead students to scrutinize the evolving modes of communication unique to social media. Sessolo's assignment, described in "Writing the Selfie: Using Selfies to Practice Character Presentation and Rhetorical Discourse," brings classical and contemporary rhetorical theories to bear on the selfie, one of the most popular compositions of our moment. McCaughey asks students to adopt the personas of social media marketing consultants. In "Authenticity and the Rhetoric of 'Selling' on Social Media: A Role-writing Assignment Set," McCaughey argues for the value of having students in a first-year writing course analyze the social media strategy of a company or public figure and write in the professional genre of the marketing proposal.

Sessolo and McCaughey are not the only authors focused on asking students to experiment with composing in real-world genres as a means of learning about rhetoric and academic writing. Heather Lettner-Rust prompts students to work on a document with a local purpose and audience: the Faculty Policies and Procedures Manual at their own university. In "Revising the Faculty Manual: The Client Project in Your Backyard," Lettner-Rust explains the unique benefits of local professional writing tasks that allow students to investigate purpose and audience first-hand. In the fourth essay in this issue, Megan McIntyre flips the script, giving students an intentionally open-ended assignment that refuses to specify genre or audience for students. Her essay, "Productive Uncertainty and Postpedagogical Practice in First-Year Writing," explains how and why her assignment invites students to struggle with productive failure in order to make space for creativity and, ultimately, sharpen students' appreciation of genre and audience.

Michael MacDonald's "Cultivating a Global Perspective through Refugee Narratives" also gives critical scrutiny to the value of failure, but in this case, the focus is on unintentional and unanticipated failures. MacDonald's piece thoughtfully reflects on the unique challenges of asking students to connect with and respond to refugee stories,

*Humanities and Social Sciences, California Institute of Technology, seh@hss.caltech.edu. Copyright 2018 Susanne Hall. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

[†]Submitted, 5/1/2018; Accepted, 5/1/2018.

surfacing assumptions made both by him and his students about how such work should be undertaken. The editors found MacDonald's open exploration of the flaws in his assignment to be an exciting model for taking risks in creating writing assignments and then doing the difficult work of understanding and responding to the shortcomings of the assignment, ourselves, and our students.

The issue closes with a buoyant success story of writing in the disciplines, that of Deborah Justice's assignment on sound and sport. In "Music, Sports, and the Sound of Writing," Justice shares an assignment from a "Sports and Music" class that captured the interest of students at Syracuse University. By drawing on a robust interest in student athletics on campus, Justice's assignment introduced students to the field of ethnomusicology, one unfamiliar to most of them. In leaving behind the written essay in favor of an audio story, she brought students to consider sound in distinctly new ways, both as consumers and composers of sound.

This issue marks my first as sole Editor of *Prompt*. I want to offer my sincere gratitude to Jonathan Dueck, my fellow founding Editor, who now serves as the Technical Editor of the journal. There is no question that this journal would not exist without him, and he will continue to serve a key role for *Prompt* as he also serves Canadian Mennonite University in his new role as Vice President Academic and Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology. I also want to thank Holly Ryan, formerly Associate Editor and now Managing Editor of the journal. Her diligent work, sharp critical eye, and enthusiasm made this issue possible.

As always, we hope this issue inspires your thinking about the teaching of writing. If you adopt or adapt assignments from the journal, we would love to hear about it, and in a future issue of *Prompt*, we hope to spotlight such work. You can always be in touch with us at thepromptjournal@gmail.com.