Co-editors' Note

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We are excited to publish this first special issue focused on assignments from a single writing program, the Expository Writing Program (EWP) at New York University. We hope this and future special issues focused on writing programs as intellectual ecosystems will serve as a valuable way of understanding writing prompts not only at the classroom level but also as part of larger conceptual, institutional, logistical, and embodied historical systems.

This special issue is guest edited by Ethan Youngerman, an associate editor for *Prompt* who served in faculty and leadership roles in EWP for many years. We are deeply appreciative of Ethan's enthusiasm in working with us on this new special issue format, a process which included his substantial effort in managing a call for applications, selecting submissions, managing a review process, and coordinating additional logistics.

We encourage readers to treat Ethan's introduction as its own scholarly contribution: in setting out parameters for this special issue, we asked him to describe the program ecosystem within which the intellectual lineages of individual assignments fit. In broad terms, an ecosystem is a geographic or spatial area in which organisms interact together with one another and with non-living factors to form a "bubble of life" (Rutledge et al., 2025, para. 1). We did not ask Ethan to draw specifically on influential ecological frameworks offered by writing studies scholars (e.g., Dobrin & Weisser, 2002; Inoue, 2015; Reiff et al., 2015), instead encouraging him to interpret the term as he wanted. However, we did ask him to set out some of the program's history, an overview of its aims, and a sketch of the space within which the individual assignments circulate. We likewise encouraged Ethan to speak to considerations of range: that is, what kinds of diversity does he see reflected in the program and in the essays selected for inclusion? What contextual elements constrain that diversity? In what ways does the assemblage of essays push boundaries of genre, identity, disciplinarity, pedagogy, and more? Ultimately, we hoped the introduction would describe the assignments in a way that helps illustrate how they (individually and collectively) function as social actions that reinforce (and/or complicate) the work of the system.

As readers will see, the notion of *essay* is an especially important feature of New York University's Expository Writing Program. Nearly every author in this special issue emphasizes the distinct role of this genre in their program, encouraging students to embrace uncertainty and personal reflection rather than produce purely thesis-driven prose. We think this is a relatively unique aspect of their program, one no doubt influenced by the fact that the faculty hold a mix of MFAs and PhDs from multiple fields. As editors with PhDs in rhetoric, composition, and writing studies, we admit that we were sometimes at odds with the more open-form, exploratory essayistic approach used by some contributors to this special issue, but with time we have come to see its power, particularly in the meaningful writing NYU students produce and that the authors describe in this issue.

We are incredibly grateful to Production Editor Liz Hutter, who nimbly and graciously adapted to a variety of hurdles during the final phases of setting this issue.

Other Notes

In other housekeeping business, we are happy to report that Jennifer Sano-Franchini, Stephanie Kerschbaum, and Michael MacDonald have each agreed to renew for another three-year term on *Prompt's* editorial board. We are likewise enthusiastic to welcome Joseph Saufley, a University of Wyoming graduate student in writing studies, who will join the journal for a 9-month internship, during which he will work with our associate editors from across the country and across the disciplines to determine whether to send out submissions for peer review and to help identify appropriate peer reviewers given the content of the submission. We are eager to have Joseph help us promote the journal to a national and increasingly, even an international scholarly audience. Welcome aboard, Joe!

We have also updated *Prompt's* author and reviewer policies to reflect our current preferences related to generative AI. Comments from board members—especially their concerns about intellectual property—were especially valuable in our decision to bar reviewers and associate editors from using AI in their evaluation processes. All essays published in the next general issue should adhere to the new author guidelines.

Finally, in 2024, after consultation with *Prompt* editorial board members and WAC Clearinghouse advisors, we began exploring ways to increase technical support for the journal—a need that was exacerbated in late 2024 by glitches within the journal's back-end system that were well beyond the editorial team's capacity to solve. In March, we signed an MOU with University of Wyoming Libraries that has included the migration of the journal from a commercial web host to a new location supported both by UW Libraries as well as by Public Knowledge Project, the developer of the open-source editorial platform on which *Prompt* operates. We are especially grateful to UW librarians Chad Hutchens and Sierra Pandy for their expertise and support in navigating the migration. We believe that this move contributes to the long-term sustainability of the journal and we apologize to readers, authors, and our editorial team for any frustrations the somewhat disorganized migration process may have caused. Thank you for your patience—we are optimistic we have now gotten most of the bugs out of the system!

References

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