

Rhetoric and Composition



Stories from CCCC 2013!

CCCC this year seemed bigger than ever, in no small part because of the ostentatious nature of Las Vegas. The combination of conference theme and location provided the backdrop for some of our new MA students to have their first CCCC experiences as well as provoking contemplation from some of our PhD students currently dissertating. At a conference so large, it is easy to miss many good sessions and many good friends. Thus, our newsletter this spring seeks to share the voices of our rhetoric and composition students so that we might all share in their insights, knowledge, and simple good times.

Aimee Jones attended CCCC for the first time this year and found the Research Network Forum to be hugely beneficial to her current work-in-progress. She shares, "I was really blown away by the amount of feedback I received from not only the

discussion leaders, but also other graduate students who were also in their beginning stages of research. Everyone gave really insightful and encouraging feedback and definitely made me feel comfortable as a new graduate student attending CCCC and RNF for the first time."

Christine Maddox, a 2nd year PhD student preparing for prelims, shared her favorite session. One of my favorite sessions took place on Friday morning: "Composer Agency and Multimodal Composition." Our very own Matt Davis presented in this session, discussing his experiences teaching multimodal assignments on the 2012 presidential election. He emphasized the ways in which multimodality allowed him to bring current, real-life events into his students' classroom experiences. The second presenter introduced a theory he's working on called "listening agency" - and it's basically the agency that is/should be

enacted when we encounter a text that is not intended for us. I found this idea really fascinating."

Rory Lee, a 4th year PhD student, observes that we're starting to see more innovative sessions. "We're starting to see different approaches, which I think is much needed. Some of the sessions, like the Digital Pedagogy Posters, are designed differently....(continued on back)



Assessment Institute

Michael Neal and Kathi Yancey will be offering a three-day assessment institute for those of students going on the market next year. For those of you not going on the market, there will be an opportunity for you to take Michael's special topics class on writing assessment this fall. But because taking this class would be very hard for people dissertating and going on the market and because it's good to know more than most of you do about assessment, Michael and I are offering this three-day institute. It is our hope that the assessment institute will be fun as well as instructive. Looking forward to seeing you there.

We'll run it Monday-Wed, May 20-22. To participate in the institute, you have to *participate*: you need to attend all three days and all of each day. The assessment institute will cover four sets of topics:

- 1) Kinds of Assessment: This will begin with a focus on what students already know (classroom and teacher assessment) and move from there to assessments related to the program, accrediting agencies, and how they work
- 2) WPA Outcomes: Here, we will discuss what the outcomes are and what they mean as well as their advantages and disadvantages.
- 3) Technologies of Assessment: The focus here will be key concepts (validity, reliability, fairness, scoring) as well as practices.
- 4) Current/Future Issues: We will look forward to current issues in the field--multimodality, portfolios, and human vs. e-rating) and factor in how they will impact assessment in the future.

Elizabeth Powers, musing on what it takes to really "make it" as a scholar notes:

"Chris Anson started his Chair's Address with a brief history of past chair's stress dreams before their speeches. Upon hearing this, I got a little panicky, as I hadn't had a stress dream about my presentation the night before. Maybe I'll know I've made it as a rhet/comp scholar when I start having important, scary dreams the night before I talk."

Others sessions, however, were just creatively constructed. I'm not saying we need to do away completely with the traditional format; rather, I think we need to think about other productive ways to hold sessions. That's why, for the second straight year, I participated in the posters. And as was the case last year, I found the experience far more rewarding than when I've gone a more traditional route. I get more out of the experience, and what's more, I firmly believe the attendees do as well. What we need to do now is have more of these sessions, and, just as important, we need to treat them equally. Sure, it's great that we're having more Pedagogy Posters, but they're also at a disadvantage when positioned on a completely different side of the conference."

And, Leigh Graziano, a 3rd year PhD student but a first-time presenter at

C's, found it completely heartwarming that she had so many familiar faces in the room. "Although I felt good about my paper, I was nervous going into my session. I felt so supported to not only have my director, Dr. Fleckenstein, but friends Kendra Mitchell and Katie Bridgman there to cheer me on. It reminded me that we have a really supportive community here—even though surely, they were sick of me talking about memorials all the time!"

As Dr. Teague shared, the FSU party is always wonderful but it was particularly so this year, not only because the Peppermill Fireside Lounge was a good and classically Vegas venue, but it was also nice to see some of our alumni: Kara, Liane, Scott and Matt. Thank you to everyone who shared his or her C's story.

Student spotlight: Christine Maddox Martorana



Christine is a second year PhD student, specializing in Feminism, Agency, and the Visual. She is currently finishing coursework and looking ahead to taking her prelim exams. She came to FSU from the University of Dayton where she graduated with a Master's degree in 2009. Christine has been really happy to be at FSU. She is currently teaching a self-designed FYC course called "Writing about Gender, Images, and Sight" and serving as a mentor for first-year TAs in the department. In February, she was excited to see her first print publication: a book review within the *Community Literacy Journal*, and she is looking forward to an upcoming editorial she wrote for NCTE's *English Education*.

During one of her first few weeks in the program at FSU, one of the faculty told her, "This PhD program will be a big part of your life, but don't let it become your entire life." Christine has tried to remember this, and so every Sunday morning she has fun teaching a preschool Sunday School class at her church. She also enjoys spending time with her new husband (they were just married this summer!), and running on the nature trails around Tallahassee. Her ideal evening might just consist of enjoying Thai food, snuggling with her sweet kitty Nova, and watching reruns of *The Cosby Show*.

Publication Advice from our Published Graduate Students

Stephen McElroy: "Being open to collaboration is a good way to make new things, learn new things, and teach new things. So much of what I do is collaborative, and I've learned something new from each person with whom I've had the pleasure to work. Talk about your ideas with people, because you never know how such conversations might be productive."

Jennifer O'Malley: "For me, the most favorable part of collaborating was experiencing the process. I recognize collaboration as a value-laden site of knowledge-making, but I have yet to make the effort to make collaboration an underlying part of my own process. The opportunity to collaborate with my colleagues on this book chapter reinforced the necessity of collaboration in composing for me and demonstrated how to execute collaboration effectively."

Katie Bridgman: "One of the main things that this kind of collaboration has underscored for me is the degree to which a collection of minds is better than one. My experience has been that when multiple perspectives and approaches to a topic are brought together, everyone is pushed to think more deeply and in new ways."

Rory Lee: "Publications take forever. Be prepared to write multiple drafts and to take up considerations you might not find salient or germane. In short, your vision and the editor's vision are not always congruent. That said, don't incorporate or attend to the editor's suggestions unreflectively. In short, revise rhetorically."

Josh Mehler: "One of the best aspects of our collaboration is the opportunity to dialogue and share resources with an expert on shared interests. These exchanges of texts highlight for me that although experts like Kristie know large bodies of texts and are invaluable resources, no one, even incredibly knowledgeable practitioners, can know about *everything* about every text."

Leigh Graziano: "The opportunity to collaborate with such a successful scholar like Dr. Yancey improved my writing and thinking in my individual publication under review. Getting to see and participate in the publishing process really helped me understand what it takes to get a manuscript ready for publication. Talk to the faculty that inspire you and initiate a collaborative project."

Elizabeth Powers: "I found the experience to be more rigorous and challenging than individual research and writing. Schedules, ideas, and voices had to be coordinated and synthesized. I really enjoyed getting to so closely observe the writing practices of others, and appreciated the built-in review process."