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## From the Editor

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## From the Editor

**Roxanne O'Connell**  
**Roger Williams University**

It seems no matter how much time we have, in publishing, there's always a rush to the finish line. So here I am at almost the 11th hour before the 2013 NYSCA Conference commences, preparing to hit the "publish" button on last year's work.

In this foreword, I'd like to do three things: 1) give the readers a sense of the amazing "reach" we have now that we are on the BePress system; 2) give a summary of what this issue of the proceedings contains; and 3) muse a bit on the kinds of publishing we as scholars are involved in, particularly as I have personally run the gamut this year and find myself looking at how all of these activities are part of a "whole" that proceedings journals like ours help complete.

### State of the Proceedings Journal

Over the past few years we have augmented our journal by adding an Undergraduate section and a non-juried section for G.I.F.T. articles, especially as these offer many of us some really practical and inspiring ideas for our own teaching.

In a recent email to the Executive Board, I shared some startling statistics:

Now that we are on the BePress system our articles are getting downloads! We have had over 7,000 full text downloads this year. We've had close to 9,000 hits. That means people who are coming to the Proceedings Journal are pretty much finding the real deal and reading it. (2013, October 6).

We have had articles downloaded from over 90 countries in the past year. Every month I get an editor's update on which articles have had the most downloads as well as an author's update on those articles I have published in the Proceedings. It still astounds me that someone would download last year's "From the Editor" but I'm happy that someone wants to read it.

It has become a common complaint lately that getting papers published in journals is largely a tenure-chasing activity. There is some truth to that. However, the original reason, and hopefully still the main reason, for publishing one's work is to put it out there to share with other scholars. In the process of submission and revision we address challenges to our thinking, are introduced to other work for our consideration, and, once published, find that other people want to know what

we think, what we wonder about, and what we have found on our scholarly journeys. It is not an easy or simple task, but real work rarely is.

I look forward to the papers that will be submitted to the 2013 Proceedings journal. What I can promise you is that if your work is published in our journal interested readers *will* find it.

### **Profiling the 2013 Edition**

As I wrap up this edition of our proceedings journal, I marvel at how much I've learned from reading and re-reading each paper, seeing familiar works cited and finding new works to acquire for my library. This edition features both Keynotes: Tom Cooper and John Shotter. It was a great pleasure to revisit these addresses and to work them from the Spoken to the Written word.

Among the papers published in this edition are our two Top Paper awardees, Laura Abbasi (undergraduate) and Noura Hajjaj (graduate).<sup>1</sup> We also have papers that look at female roles as mediated through the television sitcom "Roseanne" (Ghanoui), how we use Disney theme parks to recreate ourselves in mythical proportions (Loy), the influence and impact of media technologies on the family (Villegas), and how media narratives present ethical dilemmas concerning our food and where it comes from (Torosyan).

Last, but certainly not least, we have a G.I.F.T. article that will be useful to anyone teaching rhetoric and argumentation (Plummer).

### **Thoughts on Publishing**

I have just come off of a year of intense writing and editing: a journal article, a book chapter, and a single-author book. That statement is not meant to be self-laudatory. It wasn't that I planned it that way. It was just the way things turned out. You cast your net widely and sometimes you get nothing. Other times, everything you submitted gets taken up and suddenly you are spending a great deal of time at your computer. There are many people who publish much more than I do and I truly wonder how they manage to be so prolific. But this recent experience leads me to look back at how I got to this point and the role each form of writing plays in the life of a scholar.

We actually had a session that dealt with publishing at the 2013 NYSCA conference where I was joined by Sue Drucker, Brian Cogan and Thom Gencarelli. It was somewhat free-wheeling—as it had to be—but I now regret that we didn't record it in some way because there were many words of wisdom

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<sup>1</sup> We decided at the last Executive Board meeting that winners of competitive paper submissions would be considered as having been juried as they are blind reviewed.

concerning the main ways and by-ways of publishing as an academic. Let me see if I can merge my recent experiences with my recollections from that session.

There are many kinds of publishing. If one is concerned with tenure and promotion, there will be some forms of publishing more favored than others. However, there is also personal style. Some writers do well with the short, intense coverage of a single thought or phenomenon. Others have work that is more sweeping in scope and that cannot easily be squeezed into 5,000 to 7,000 words. Some scholars want to be investigating something new and different every few years. Others have the one passion and want to spend all their thinking and writing time with it. It is wise to determine which of these kinds of writers/scholars fits your interests and style because it is so much easier to write when you are in your own kind of *flow*.

One of my colleagues uses the conference/proceedings/journal/book process. Of her current research work, she choose the three to five perspectives on an topic that will eventually find their way into a book. She first outlines them as short conference papers which are then worked into 10-15 page proceedings articles (< 5,000 words). Further research and refining yields a journal article or two (approx. 7,000 words). Fortunately for her, she writes about digital media and online journals have a faster publishing cycle. These become the basis for book chapters, often a collection of essays on a particular theme. This is perhaps a more methodical focused approach than most people feel they can embrace. And yet, when I look back at what got me to the book I just wrote, it was not that different a journey. It started with a presentation. I did try to write a journal article, but found I don't naturally write short. I'm too big on context. However, I did keep writing about the subject and working with it in my teaching. I also spend some time writing every day. When the opportunity came to consider writing a book, I was ready. It's about keeping in a writing *flow*.

Here's the take-away:

- Write something every day, even if it is just “free writing” for three or four pages. It keeps you sharp and might even pull you toward an inspiring idea.
- Think about your writing projects in incremental steps. Submit your work starting small and build it as you try for more ambitious publishing vehicles.
- Collect feedback every step of the way—at the conference presentation, from the proceedings reviewers, the article reviewers, the editors. Even the submissions that get rejected come with valuable reviewer notes.
- Start by sending your 2013 NYSCA presentation to the Proceedings Journal!

Roxanne M. O'Connell, Editor  
October 2013