

Editorial

Taking Stock and Looking Forward: 2019 Year-End Editorial

Sibo Chen
Ryerson University

It is my great pleasure to write 2019's Year-End Editorial for *CJSDW/R*. This year has witnessed a notable increase of publishing activities at the journal: we managed to publish a total of 15 articles, along with a record number of submissions at various stages in the editorial pipeline. The sheer number of article submissions suggests that now many researchers consider *CJSDW/R* a desirable venue for sharing their work. Building upon such momentum, this editorial provides a brief review of this year's publications and their shared concerns regarding discourse and writing studies in Canada.

This volume begins with Kim Mitchell's exploration of social media as an informal community of practice in writing scholarship. Drawing upon the growing body of scholarship addressing social media's impacts on knowledge translation, Mitchell considers social media writing as a form of digital storytelling blending the personal and the professional. Through a self-reflection on the Academics Write (@academicswrite) Twitter account, she discusses the unique challenges social media present to academic writing and pedagogical practices. The implementation of new technologies in writing instruction is also at the heart of the article by Stephanie Bell, where she reports on an experimental learner-created podcasting assignment in a first-year undergraduate research skills course. Bell points out the various benefits of engaging students in the invention of an emerging genre of radio storytelling.

The article by Peter Grav investigates citation practices in English literary studies. Through a corpus-based analysis of 35 published articles, he problematizes the widely held assumption that there are extensive commonalities across humanities and social sciences writing. Based upon this research insight, Grave advocates for discipline-specific graduate writing instruction and calls for further research into humanities writing practices.

Writing assessment is another topic that triggers extended conversations among *CJSDW/R* contributors and readers. On this topic, the current volume presents a teaching reflection from Michael

Kaler and Tyler Evans-Tokaryk who share their experience of participating in the Writing Development Initiative at University of Toronto Mississauga. They introduce the Basic Assessment Package (BAP), which was created to address the difficulty of effectively assessing student writing performance across disciplines. BAP includes three key stages: (a) Anonymous student surveys before a writing project, (b) end-of-term TA interviews or surveys, and (c) student writing sample analysis.

The remaining two articles in the general section share a common focus on academic integrity. Eugenia Gene Vasilopoulos' article concerns the prominence of digitally mediated writing. It challenges many instructors' negative views of students' use of the Internet, and proposes that digital plagiarism could be positioned as a learning process. With proper pedagogical interventions, the use of the Internet could teach students how to conduct research and integrate sources following academic conventions. Accordingly, Vasilopoulos opposes the emphasis on plagiarism detection, deterrence, and punishment during writing instruction. Likewise, the article by Stephanie Crook examines the issue of "unintentional plagiarism" in the North American post-secondary context. Her central argument echoes Vasilopoulos' concern that the mainstream approach to academic integrity has detrimental impacts on students' long-term writing skill development. Following a Foucauldian-Vygotskian framework, Crook recommends both students and faculty members internationalize academic integrity as a part of their learning goals, instead of treating it as an academic "crime" that prohibits further dialogues.

As the two special sections have their own introductions, here I only briefly address their themes. I strongly recommend that readers check out both sections given their timely contributions to the ongoing conversation on the future of Canadian writing studies. The special section "Writing Instruction, Academic Labour, and Professional Development" takes on the challenge of precarity in academic writing support. The section investigates the uneven visibility and resourcing in writing support units across North America. In particular, as co-editors Heidi Darroch, Micaela Maftai, and Sara Humphrey point out in their introduction, the lack of professional training and ongoing pedagogical development plays a key role in the peripheral status of writing support units in Canadian institutions. A key recommendation emerging from this section's articles is that there is an urgent need for moving the graduate training of writing development and instruction beyond English departments. It is time that Canadian institutions move beyond the myth that everyone can teach writing and provide much needed support for writing studies.

The special section of 2018 papers from the Canadian Writing Centres Association conference focuses on their annual conference theme “Politics and the Writing Centre: Inquiry, Knowledge, Dialogue, and Action”. The conference engaged with tough questions relating to indigeneity, decolonization, and academic labor, and the papers included in this section showcase conference participants’ conversations about anti-oppressive educational practices. Of the various topics addressed throughout the special section, I am especially impressed by Sheelah McLean’s discussion on how whiteness is reproduced in writing centres. McLean raises important questions concerning the relations between knowledge production and power as well as the sustaining of “settler grammar” by the prevailing “deficit discourse” during writing instruction.

Acknowledgements

The *CJSDW/R* editors would like to thank the CASDW Executive Committee and SFU’s University Publications Fund for their continued support, as well as editorial assistant Taylor Morphett for her much-needed assistance. All the high-quality articles could not be possible without the arduous work of our special section editors, contributors, and reviewers. *CJSDW/R* will bring you more articles in the coming year, and we also encourage you to submit your own work. We particularly welcome responses to articles published this year.