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INTRODUCTION

John R. Gallagher and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss

An Origin Tale. The story of this collection is a serendipitous one: the two of us found ourselves hanging out after a session at the 2016 Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) conference in Atlanta. Dànielle overheard John thanking Laurie Gries for helpful editorial feedback on a piece he submitted to *Enculturation*. Laurie had advised John to think about where readers could get bored—her advice was "I'm afraid readers will skim the ending. Can you guard against that?" John, thanking her, exclaimed, "It was great advice delivered at the perfect moment!" John wished aloud that there were a book of editorial advice in rhet/comp, one with short chapters containing the best advice from scholars, editors, and researchers. Dànielle, overhearing his comment, said, "That would be a great book collection! We're going to write that book!" John and Dànielle chatted for a few minutes, fantasizing about what such a book might be and do.

Later that day, Dànielle mentioned the idea to another conference attendee, who eagerly offered her business card, saying, "I want to write for that book, and I want to *read* that book!" (See Sarah Kornfield's chapter in this collection.)

We went our separate ways at the conference, only to cross-email each other a few hours later (literally at the same time), and then to meet in the lobby of the hotel for an impromptu late-night work session to crank out what became the call for chapters for the collection.

Impetus. One of our core goals for this book—an impetus that emerged that day at RSA and that has served to anchor this project—is to collect, curate, and archive some of the best advice on writing and publishing that our field has to offer. This is the advice that we pass along to our students and to each other; it's the advice that we find ourselves giving time and again as we mentor graduate students; it's the go-to advice that we remind ourselves of as we're seeking inspiration on a new project, or as we work to wrap up a particularly challenging writing task. It's the advice we overhear a colleague sharing with another that we scoop up

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and pass along ourselves. It's the advice we see in abbreviated version shared online in tweets and bursts and updates—forgotten, otherwise, due to the speed of social media. It's the best of the best.

This advice is, at its heart, representative of an exceptionally generous field—of a group of scholars who, rather than compete with one another, lift each other up and recognize the enormity of the tasks we tackle as we research and write and publish in rhetoric and writing studies: for the field, to the field, and, at times, beyond the field. We would argue that rhet/comp is a uniquely democratic field, especially in the current political climate. Much of our work is oriented toward change we can make—whether those changes be small, potent gestures that occur in the classroom, or large, loud movements that ripple outward from within our national organizations. We are also, generally, a field of individuals and collaborators who work together to *move* the field forward (rather than compete with one another in ways that can stifle the evolution of our disciplinary thoughts and practices). We hope that this book serves as part and parcel of what we do and who we are as a field—that this book curates, constellates, and presents this generosity and the ways in which we do good by each other, in ways always attentive to student learning, research processes, institutional complexities, and the other variables that shape our research, writing, and publishing lives.

This advice is also, at its heart, very reminiscent of all things writing. That is, it's complicated. It's recursive. Sometimes it's offered in a fairly linear way; other times it's constellated toward different orientations. We don't present "the writing process" here as a set or fixed thing; thus we don't present the advice collected here as any sort of linear or fixed trajectory.

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Kairos. We're delighted that this book is being published a little more than twenty years after the publication of Gary Olsen and Todd Taylor's edited collection, *Publishing in Rhetoric and Composition*, itself an incredibly important resource for our field. Our hope with this collection is to extend, reorient, and update Olsen and Taylor's work: *Explanation Points* seeks to integrate the narrative and first-person experiences into the pragmatism of publishing advice in rhet/comp.

In many ways, the publication landscape has changed since 1997. Born-digital pieces and webtexts are now commonplace (although, admittedly, all humanists continue to wrestle with issues of access, the expanse of different digital tools, and the protection of file preservation and sustainability). The social media landscape has exploded, and serves well to connect us beyond annual conferences. Although publication

venues continue to emerge across media, publishing houses continue to condense and shrink. The field itself is dramatically more diverse and we have included authors from a variety of backgrounds and career stages; *Explanation Points* includes multiple voices: graduate students, senior faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, tenure-track faculty, and mid-career faculty are all represented in this collection. We have included the advice of professors emeriti at research-intensive institutions, and the advice of faculty at community colleges and other teaching-intensive institutions. The field is also now *fields*, with a variety of foci: digital rhetoric, social media analysis, circulation studies, as well as necessary developments in archiving and curation theory, computational rhetorics, and more, and these perspectives emerge not as the focus for chapters but as the larger landscape from which authors share their advice.

In many ways, however, our writerly landscape has not changed. Advice collected here encourages writers to read and to listen, and to identify the *kairotic* moment (and even *chronos*-based moments) at which to enter a scholarly conversation. Advice focuses on getting started, on brainstorming, and on managing projects. Advice relates to sharing drafts, collaborating, and rethinking or revising—all practices that transcend any one writing task or publication venue. Advice relates to navigating reviewer feedback and understanding publication production processes. Advice relates to the after words (literally), or transitioning from one major project to the next. All of the advice in this collection is as relevant and as applicable today as it would have been five, ten, twenty, or even fifty years ago.

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Overview. We hope that this book reads like a conversation. We hope you find yourself in the pages, *hearing* the voices of these scholars as they share their advice with you. Although we've created a structure with which to hold and present the chapters, we believe that, together, this collection offers holistic advice—readers will have to take these pieces and fit them together. That's part of implementing good advice.

Section 1, "Getting Started," presents advice for inventing, brainstorming, and managing projects. This section presents suggestions for taking a good idea and getting it down on the page (or saved to the hard drive or the cloud), making time to conceptualize publication projects, and for storyboarding ideas or managing content. Readers will immediately notice that this section is longest, with multiple pieces echoing similar themes. This decision is rhetorical and intentional; we believe that getting started can take an inordinate amount of time and necessitates both persistence with an idea and a range of different strategies for

moving forward. For this reason, we have included multiple approaches that tackle similar issues: creating community, trusting oneself, and content management are just three themes echoed across several voices from various institutions.

Section 2, "Getting Feedback," includes advice on how to best share drafts, collaborate, and (re)develop ideas. This section presents advice for making the most of workshopping opportunities, approaching others to collaborate, and seeing the forest *and* the trees. We often encourage collaborative work in writing classrooms, and more and more, our larger humanities units recognize that collaboration perhaps *is* the default orientation for producing work in a digital, networked world (a world that no longer orbits, perhaps, around the single-authored monograph). However, we rarely discuss *practices* of collaboration, which several authors address in this section. Chapters also address the strategic (re)deployment of ideas—how to nurture an idea to a conference presentation and beyond into a manuscript, and managing a publication pipeline.

Section 3, "Finding a Foothold," presents recommendations for identifying audiences and targeting publication venues. Finding a foothold includes reading and reviewing, writing to and for particular audiences, and considering different venues. As graduate students, we are trained to read journals and oriented toward those that carry the most disciplinary heft, but we perhaps aren't mentored as closely or carefully about how to orient to different venues *as* authors. Chapters in this section offer advice on finding fit, connecting with readers, navigating author guidelines, and considering a range of publication-related issues (e.g., communication with editors, copyright and fair use, crafting code, and shaping webtexts).

Section 4, "Getting (More and Different Types of) Feedback," provides advice relating to the review process and good ideas for dealing with (inevitable) failure, navigating reviewer comments, and undertaking revise and resubmit processes. A topic that we discussed and wrestled with, as editors of the collection, is the fact that a key aspect of disciplinary service is serving as manuscript reviewers and/or joining editorial boards. However, the entire review process remains generally murky to many of us. We may be taught practices of peer review across our lives as students, but we are rarely oriented toward the complexities of reading, absorbing, digesting, and acting on reviewer and editor feedback on our work. Nor are many of us formally trained to serve as reviewers or editors. Chapters in this section thus include advice from editors representing journals and book series about navigating this task as editors and

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communicating with authors about their work. This section also includes advice from authors who have received the range of responses most common to the publication trajectory: reject or revise and resubmit.

The final section of the collection, "Moving On," includes advice related to post-publication—or advice most applicable after completing a lengthy, time-consuming writing project. The advice in this section suggests ways to be a publicity vehicle for your work, to pivot to the next project, and to take a breather before moving on. Multiple pieces here stress the labor and situated activity that occur *after* publication.

Publishing is hard work. Writing is hard work. As we so often wind up arguing in our institutions, writing *can't* be taught, learned, and mastered in one class—or in one book collection. It's a life-long practice; it's a career-long (and beyond, as some of our emeriti authors note) practice. And writing, as we all well know, is messy work. Conducting research, moving classroom practices to pedagogical stances presented in manuscripts, nurturing good ideas, navigating large-scale research projects, engaging in the emotional labor related to making ourselves vulnerable by sharing our work, and the myriad other complexities of generating ideas on the page or the screen can't be entirely represented in one collection (even one with seventy-seven chapters). What we hope to offer here, across these chapters and in these sections, are small, *potent* pieces of advice. Take them. Try them out. Try them on. Share them with others. Build from them.

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All Together Now. We present the following to summarize and snapshot the advice offered in this collection and to entice you, we hope, to spend time with these scholars and their suggestions:

Amidon: Know how intellectual property impacts your writing and leverage fair use.

Anson: Storyboard projects, and storyboard across projects.

Barrón: Listen to stories, read stories, and learn to tell stories.

Barton: Protect an hour a day for research.

Baumann: Consider good timing.

Bernhardt: Look outside academia for opportunity.

Blair: Know your audience.

Blakesley: Listen for a while and catch the tenor of the argument—then write what you know and care about.

Bloom: Find a dissertation topic you can fall in love with.

Bost: Voice, positionality, and community are three principles useful for evaluating advice.

Brown: Pester editors politely.

Buck: Choose readers who will serve as coach and critic.

Burnett: Don't just revise—manage the process of revising and resubmitting.

Carter: Publishing is only the beginning.

Comer: Find the right publication for your work.

Cools: Separate yourself from your writing.

Cooper: Make sure your work gives your readers a payoff.

Cotich: Speak to others as you would like them to speak to you.

Cushman: Learn to keep learning.

Cutrufello: Prioritize reviewer comments when revising and resubmitting.

Dobrin: Understand the importance of self-promotion in an age of academic analytics.

Duffy: Locate first, invent second.

Elliot: Use quantitative approaches and frameworks to tell stories with evidence.

Enoch: Work through a request to revise and resubmit in steps.

Eyman: Webtexts should integrate text, design, and code as rhetorically powerful parts of a piece.

Faris: Develop content management strategies to keep your project organized.

Fishman: Engage the WHIMSY Protocol.

Flower: Move your writing from writer-based to reader-based through collaborative planning.

Gallagher and DeVoss: Create a pipeline to publish on a continual basis.

Gonzales: Create and nurture networks for your writing projects.

Grabill: Don't do anything you can't write about.

Gries: Identify the scholarly contribution you want to make, and have a ten-year plan.

Halbritter and Lindquist: Rock on.

Harris: Think of your dissertation not as a draft of your first book, but as materials for it.

Hawk: Listen to what's being said—at conferences, in journals, and in books.

Hensley Owens: Publishing a book isn't really the end of anything.

Hesse: Remember this isn't the last thing you'll ever write.

Hicks: Read like a writer; write for your reader.

Horner: Don't take the advice of manuscript reviewers, *use* it.

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Inoue: Find a resistant reader, then practice compassionate, rhetorical listening.

Jensen: Adopt approaches to reduce the intimidation of the submission process.

Johnson-Eilola and Selber: Think of editorial relationships as partnerships or collaborative endeavors to facilitate both conceptual and concrete feedback.

Kirsch: Sit down and write, get up and move.

Kornfield: Revise and resubmit ASAP.

Kumari: Start with what you know.

LaVecchia, Morris, and Micciche: Think like a copyeditor.

LeCourt: Reconsider old arguments as possibilities for new publications.

L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo: Work so that editors think fondly of you.

Lettner-Rust: Rejection tells you what your next step is.

Lindquist and Halbritter: Recognize the productive complications of collaborations.

Lockhart, Glascott, Lewis, Middleton, Parrish, and Warnick: Understand editors' perspectives and advice.

Lunsford: Imagine you are entering a conversation among equals, all of you devoted to pushing the boundaries of knowledge.

Manthey: Establish a pipeline, and then make and maintain connections and collaborations to maintain it.

McCorkle: Assemble a crew.

McKee: Everyone starting out has felt to some degree and at various times nervous and doubtful; grab hold of your right—your imperative—to join public and scholarly conversations.

Medina: Chip away at projects by making the most out of slivers of time.

Mina: Know that an editor's approach to providing feedback matters as much as the feedback itself.

Mullin: Be sure to consider personal characteristics along with scholarly credentials when choosing collaborators.

Palmeri: Your dissertation is just the text written so far.

Palmquist: Consider open-access publishers and the affordances of making your work more available.

Parks: The best writing emerges out of a collaborative conversation.

Perryman-Clark: Be strategic, especially if your baby is new and so is your role as tenure-track WPA.

Poe: Engage in editorial work to create an enduring conversation in the field.

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Rhodes: Queer your research (and shout in the Burkean parlor, then toilet-paper the yard).

Rice: Publications don't end; they lead to future projects.

Ridolfo: Make the best use of the time you have (case in point: voice memos while commuting).

Rose: Be brave and be bold.

Shipka: Keep a daily work log.

Silver: Believe in your idea while reframing your rhetorical exigence.

Skinnell: Embrace rejection as a heuristic for conducting self-assessment.

Smith: Go to the writing center or form a writing group.

Stedman and Danforth: Seek out smart people and then collaborate with them.

Sullivan: Writing *is* revising.

Tebeau: Know that the best ideas have their roots in the familiar, where you can uncover new connections and ways of seeing.

Toth and Jensen: If you are working to transform the field, plan a campaign, not just a publication.

Trimbur: Originality is overrated.

Yancey: Trust the process.

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