

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

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Twenty years ago, Laurie Grobman and Candance Spigelman introduced the first volume of *Young Scholars in Writing* (YSW), “an academic journal written for and by college students involved in rhetoric and composition scholarship” (1). The idea was to provide a platform for undergraduates to share their research “with a broader audience of students, scholars, and teachers” (1). For twenty years, YSW has done just that: publishing quality scholarship that showcases the important and rigorous work undergraduates are engaged in and contributes to the field’s knowledge and perspectives on a variety of important questions and issues related to rhetoric and writing studies.

Since the beginning, YSW has been committed to publishing undergraduate scholarship on a wide variety of topics within rhetoric and writing studies. In their introduction to the first volume, Grobman and Spigelman wrote, “We hope that *Young Scholars in Writing* will encourage students to write about their investigations in such arenas as rhetoric, composition, professional writing, technical writing, business writing, discourse analysis, writing technologies, peer tutoring in writing, writing process, writing in the disciplines, and related topics” (1-2). Volume 20 certainly lives up to this hope. This volume presents scholarship on a wide variety of issues using a diverse range of

research methods. Beyond this methodological and topical diversity, we are excited that Volume 20 also forwards the voices of a diverse group of undergraduate researchers—the newest members of our field—and their innovative interventions in issues facing rhetoric and writing studies.

We open this 20th volume with a reflection on the journal’s history and future. YSW intern Lexi Stewart interviewed the journal’s current and past editors together and, in this piece, shares their conversation. Here the editors consider the journal’s origins, their own stories of getting involved with the publication, the need for diversity on the board and in the authors represented within the journal, and their hopes for the journal’s future. This roundtable discussion provides a great reminder of how our field and this journal have evolved and changed over 20 years, but also what hasn’t changed: YSW’s deep commitment to and excitement for sharing the important work of student researchers.

For the 20th volume, we share the results of an exciting partnership with Penn State’s Center for Democratic Deliberation: an essay contest open to undergraduate students at any college or university. The contest aimed to:

encourage rhetorical analysis as an important method of research for undergraduate students and to encourage

greater familiarity with discursive events in the United States that have congregated around the African American Freedom Struggle, particularly the events identified on two websites sponsored by the Center for Democratic Deliberation at Penn State: *Voices of Democracy* and *The Rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement*.

The contest's winner was not only rewarded financially but after going through the revision process with a *YSW* Faculty Advisory Editor, the winning essay is published in *YSW*. We are thrilled to share Dana Diab's winning essay in this volume. In his introduction to the first-place essay, Jack Selzer, the contest's sponsor and organizer, writes, "Dana Diab's essay will impress you with its learning, its originality, its eloquence, and its research resourcefulness." Diab's analysis of the rhetorical strategies of Black women during the civil rights movement draws on the concept of "bridge leadership." Diab's approach provides a productive lens for analyzing the contributions of these under-acknowledged historical figures and offers scholars another framework for considering the important work of contemporary Black women activists.

The other articles in this volume showcase the variety of methods undergraduate researchers can employ in writing studies research, including quantitative analysis. Stephanie Leow's article explores the impact of different peer review training approaches on the composing performance of undergraduate writers. Leow uses a rigorous mixed-methods approach, combining statistical analysis of pre- and

post-essay performance and qualitative analysis of think-aloud protocols and interviews that captured student reflections on the impact of the training they received on their own writing knowledge. Leow's study brings together two previously siloed research conversations: classroom-focused research and writing center research on peer feedback. Her research begins the work of integrating and building upon these two bodies of research, and her findings provide a foundation that other researchers interested in peer feedback can build on. Maegan Sargent also draws on quantitative methods, but in the form of linguistic analysis; using corpus analysis methods, she examines the use of hedges in a corpus of her own undergraduate writing as an Art History major. Her study beautifully models the rich and rigorous analytic work undergraduates can do on their own writing samples and contributes to the field's understanding of writing and disciplinary enculturation.

This volume then features two first-year spotlight articles. In their 2008 introduction of the journal's first-year spotlight section, Shannon Carter and Doug Downs note that "The idea for a feature on first-year writing was born from the recognition that, as difficult as producing quality research may be for juniors and seniors, the barriers for first-year writers are exponentially greater." Yet, the first-year spotlight articles in this volume demonstrate a trend that Downs describes in the roundtable discussion with *YSW* editors: "one of the arcs that we've seen over the years is that submissions for the [first-year] spotlight kept looking closer and closer to the submissions

we received in the upper division.” These articles demonstrate the rigorous and impressive work of first-year writing students. Mercedes Sarah draws on rhetorical genre studies to analyze the covers of men’s lifestyle magazines, looking at trends and patterns before and after the #MeToo social movement. Her careful visual analysis suggests a covert resistance to the movement visible in this genre. Yizhou Yang also presents a rich rhetorical analysis, analyzing how the documentary *Our Secret Universe: Hidden Life of the Cell* draws on science fiction tropes and imagery to circulate scientific knowledge in ways that are appealing but also potentially harmful in light of the context of global pandemics. Both pieces explore popular genres to understand how genres are shaped by and shape social issues in our world.

YSW debuted the methodological reflection genre in volume 18. This genre was born out of our desire to provide an opportunity for undergraduates, especially those engaging in empirical research, to share their experiences with ongoing research, reflect on the challenges they face and choices they make, and inspire and educate other researchers. In their methodological reflection, Panathip Chimrak, Nadiyah Hasnol, Juhua Huang, and Apichaya Thaneerat describe their experience as a multilingual student research team conducting research about multilingual students and using that research to create videos that aim to help faculty understand the barriers to academic writing, speaking, and listening that multilingual students face. Their reflection is also a valuable resource for other large research teams, providing a behind-the-scenes look at

how researchers collaborate with each other and other colleagues over time. Liz Crouse also investigates linguistic diversity in educational institutions. Crouse’s methodological reflection focuses on how she chose appropriate and effective methods to understand the experiences of non-native English speakers in one North Carolina community college amid the many communication shifts prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Crouse argues for the value of qualitative ethnographic methods and explains how she used these methods to translate her research study into a public-facing document that seeks to help crisis communicators better serve multilingual audiences.

Like past methodological reflections, both pieces offer thoughtful first-person narratives of their authors’ experiences, but they also provide insight into other important aspects of the research process: circulation and impact. In their chapter in the *Naylor Report on Undergraduate Research in Writing Studies* on circulation of undergraduate research, Downs and his co-authors “advocate seeing the goal of research as consequential publicness” (98). Downs and colleagues argue that we need “expanded notions of purposes, forms, and venues” for the circulation of research (95). In other words, we need to imagine what research can look like beyond traditional genres, such as the research articles found in journals like *YSW*. We see both of this volume’s methodological reflections engaging with the goal of “consequential publicness.” Chimrak et al.’s project considers the efficacy of videos that present research about multilingual students to faculty. And in her narrative about the process

of conducting her study, Crouse describes revising her 74-page research paper into a concise 25-page manual for crisis communicators. The methodological reflection is a nascent and developing genre for this journal, and we are excited that this volume's examples show that undergraduates are thinking carefully about the process of conducting their research and the best ways to share and circulate their research to have the most significant impact.

Our final article is Ashlyn Bellman and Marilyn Damord's comment and response, which builds on Armand St. Pierre's 2017 *YSW* article that explored how to support engineering writing in the writing center. In the first volume of *YSW*, Grobman and Spigelman called for this comment and response genre because they hoped the journal would "initiate lively and engaged classroom conversations and written responses by students engaged in similar kinds of work" (3). In *YSW* volume 10, Sean Patrick O'Rourke and his student co-authors celebrated the comment and response section, considering its role in "enhanc[ing] students' understanding of and appreciation for research and writing as important ongoing collaborative and controversial activities with real consequences" (35). The comment and response genre promotes engaging with and building on past research, creating a rich conversation among undergraduate researchers aligned with the ideals of the Burkean parlor. Bellman and Damord's piece marks a new approach to this genre. Their study replicated St. Pierre's methods, adapting St. Pierre's interview questions to learn from disciplinary faculty about writing in their discipline, in this case focusing on business writing. They wondered

if they could draw similar conclusions about the value of generalized tutoring to support disciplinary writers; ultimately, Bellman and Dormord find there are some key features of business writing that tutors can learn to best help students with business writing genres. John Raucci's recent *College Composition and Communication* article called on the field to embrace replication research as a way to increase the transparency and generalizability of our discipline's research. We are excited to see this new approach to the comment and response genre, and we hope it might be the first of many such submissions. We have a hunch that replication studies might be a particularly feasible way to engage new researchers in empirical research, given the limited timeframes many undergraduates face in coursework. But more importantly, replication studies revitalize and extend valuable conversations begun by other *YSW* authors.

We close this volume with a set of short retrospective reflections from authors who published in past volumes of *YSW*. The editors put out a call to past authors asking for brief reflections about their experiences publishing in *YSW* and what publishing their undergraduate research meant for them. Ten authors share their experiences, reflecting on how having the opportunity to work with a Faculty Advisory Editor (FAE) and ultimately publish their work shaped their perceptions of themselves as writers and researchers and how the undergraduate research and publication experience shaped their development and future goals.

The illustration we selected for the cover of this 20th-anniversary volume isn't obviously relevant to *Young Scholars of Writing*. It's part

of a scientific illustration of the nerve cells in a dog's olfactory bulb (part of the brain, according to Wikipedia) from Camillo Golgi's 1885 *Sulla fina anatomia degli organi centrali del sistema nervoso*. While the story of Golgi's Nobel-prize-winning neuroscience research and illustration is fascinating in and of itself, we were drawn to Golgi's beautiful visualization of a network. When thinking about the

history of *Young Scholars in Writing*, its lasting legacy is a rich network of scholars, mentors, methods, genres and audiences, a network which has shaped our understanding of what undergraduate research in rhetoric and writing studies can look like and accomplish. We can't wait to see what this network creates in the next twenty years.

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