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# Rhetoric & Writing at BGSU

## Rhetoric & Writing Notes - Fall 2001

### Issue Four: Fall 2001

#### Tradition: The Value of Each Other: Rich Miller

I was very happy to read Rosalee Stilwell's "A Dissertation Story" in the Fall 2000 Rhetoric & Writing Notes. I was happy for two reasons. First, on a personal level I remember attending classes with Rosalee not too long ago at BGSU and surviving, with her and six others, Rick Gebhardt's Scholarly Publishing seminar. In this course Rosalee and I were assigned to work together revising earlier seminar papers, hers on Elbow and mine on Burke. This was the first time I found myself truly motivated to work on my writing with another graduate student. Luckily, this became a common experience for me at BGSU with both the faculty and other graduate students.

The second reason for my happiness is that a public form such as Rhetoric & Writing Notes premiered last fall. Since leaving BGSU in 1998, I have worked a couple tenure-track jobs and have come to realize how my time in the Rhetoric & Writing Program set the stage for what I am doing now and hope to do in the future. Let me offer a few examples of how staying connected with those in the program have proved vital in my professional life.

I left BGSU after my third year of PhD study. I was ABD and wanted full-time work. Luckily, I landed a tenure-track in South Texas at Texas A&M University, Kingsville. I can hardly remember being ABD and an Assistant Professor with a 4/4 load; I wish such a fate on nobody. After finishing my dissertation and first year of teaching, I was pleasantly surprised to find out that another Rhetoric & Writing Program grad, Avis Rupert, had taken a tenure-track job at a nearby institution, Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. The times Avis and I got together were relaxing and enjoyable. We had both come so far to end up so close together. I have no doubt that if I had stayed in South Texas I would have worked closely with Avis and benefited greatly from her presence. But as it worked out, I decided to leave the bright sunshine and high humidity of Texas in hopes of relocating near Chicago or Boston, the only two cities my wife and I could agree on as places both of us could have professional futures.

As luck would have it, my second job search was much more successful than the first. [A word to you current graduate students and those in ABD land: Never underestimate the power of having the Ph.D. complete (or "in hand") and a few years full-time teaching experience to start you on your way to your dream job.] With nearly ten MLA interviews and a job offer by Valentine's Day from my #1 school, I was off to Suffolk University in Boston. What surprised me about the job search, though, was the presence of BGSU alumni. At MLA I bumped into Barb Liu from Eastern Connecticut State University; I remember her saying my vita looked great, but not what they were looking for! During an interview with University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, I mentioned that I knew BGSU alumnus Keith Duffy whom they'd hired the year before. And my old East Hall officemate Joe Wilferth gave me some excellent tips about job applications.

I emphasize these incidents because as a graduate student at BGSU I tended to see my fellow graduate students as my competition. After all, we were applying for the same jobs. But this tension is short lived compared to the resources these same people have become only a few years later.

Since leaving BGSU, I have collaborated on an electronic handbook, been part of a Special Interest Group at CCCCs, shared teaching materials, discussed what new textbooks are worth adopting, proposed a conference panel, and begun a journal article with three other authors. The reason I list all of these activities is because they were all done in concert with other graduates of BGSU's Rhetoric & Writing Program. I hope it is clear, when you read the updates from alumni around the nation, that collegiality and networking are essential parts of the success of any advanced degree program.

In closing, let me mention that I learned recently that Rhetoric & Writing grad Theresa Murden has taken a job at the University of Texas, Brownsville, only a short Texas drive from where I started out a few years ago. Theresa was also in the Scholarly Publishing seminar I mentioned earlier. I feel a comfort in knowing that Rosalee and Theresa are moving ahead with their professional lives, in Pennsylvania and Texas, respectively. I think they would agree with me that all of the hard work has paid off, and it is time to give something back to the Rhetoric & Writing Program in our collective voices and experiences.

•Rich Miller <drmillr@flash.net>, a 1999 Rhetoric & Writing graduate, coordinates the first-year writing program at Suffolk University in Boston.

University, Corpus Christi. Since coming to BGSU (and before, too), she has taught a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses in computer labs and virtual forums. For instance, Kris is piloting an on-line version of "Intermediate Composition" offered through BGSU's College of Continuing Education, and she developed a new seminar required in the Rhetoric & Writing PhD Program--"Computer-Mediated Writing: Theory and Practice." In collaboration with Dr. Deb Alvarez, she has also piloted an undergraduate course "Computer Technologies and the Language Arts," which both Deb and Kris will present on at the upcoming NCTE conference in Baltimore.

Kris's concern for computers in writing and writing instruction shows in her publications. She has published articles and reviews in *Computers and Composition*, for instance, and she is co-editor of *Feminist Cyberscapes: Mapping Gendered Academic Spaces* (Ablex, 1999). Her recent articles include "Electronic Portfolios in Tenure and Promotion Decisions: Making a Virtual Case," in the proceedings of the international ED-MEDIA Conference held this past summer in Tampere, Finland, and "E-Writing Spaces as Safe, Gender-Fair Havens: Aligning Political and Pedagogical Possibilities," co-authored with recent Rhetoric and Writing PhD Christine Tulley for inclusion in *Teaching Writing with Computers: An Introduction* (Houghton Mifflin, forthcoming).

For the past two years, Kris Blair has been affiliated with BGSU's Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology, and she served as its Associate Director for 2000-01. In this context, Kris applied her interests in technology and teacher training, electronic teaching portfolios, multimedia literacy, and the politics of on-line communication to the development of workshops, seminars, and institutes to help faculty and graduate student instructors integrate, manage, and assess the effectiveness of on-line pedagogies. She also co-authored, and served as Project Manager for, a \$50,000 Ohio Learning Network Grant which has helped faculty at BGSU's two-year Firelands College develop an on-site faculty development program for integrating web-enhanced and fully on-line courses across the curriculum.

Kris Blair's interests in technological literacy education for teachers and students extends from the campus to the community. She developed "(Re)Connecting Seniors through Technological Literacy," a project funded through BGSU's Partnerships for Community Action, which led to a computer training partnership between the Wood County Commission on Aging and the Wood County Public Library. And Kris's interests in technology, literacy, and language arts show in her role in a GEAR-UP grant, as she works with both BGSU faculty and area teachers to provide professional development and educational technology training to teachers at East Toledo Junior High.

### **Recent Dissertations from the Rhetoric & Writing Program**

Josephine Booth, *Workplace Genres in First-Year Composition* (2001)

Christine Sauer, *Removing the Mask of Silence: Counteracting Bias through a Cybergrrl Classroom* (2001)

Randall McClure, *Authority as a Tension in the College Writing Classroom* (2001)

Russell Sprinkle, *Written Comentary and Reflective Teaching* (2001)

Barbara Toth, *The Rhetoric, Writing, and Action in Context of Teresa of Avila* (2001)

Edward Karshner, *Representation, Interpretation, Writing* (2000)

John Mauk, *A Story of Geography and Composition Pedagogy* (May 2000)

Paul Tanner, *Embedded Assessment and Writing* (2000)

Scott Calhoun, *The Classical Trivium in Contemporary Contexts* (1999)

Keith Duffy, *The Role of Spirituality in Re-Envisioning Writing Pedagogy* (1999)

Jai Hee Cho, *Comparative Rhetoric and Student Writing* (1999)

Richard Miller, *The Rehabilitating Role of Buber's I-Thou Relationship* (1999)

Michael Ryan, *The Rhetorical Figures as a Prism of Illumination in St. Augustine* (1999)

Avis Rupert, *Ethnography and Ethnography-Like Approaches to the Writing Language Arts Classroom* (1999)

Joseph Wilferth, *Toward a Literacy of a New Medium: Hypertext* (1999).

### **A Long Distance Collaboration**

works and lives in Los Angeles, Rich is located in Boston, and their publisher is in New York City). The electronic publication is scheduled for release late in 2001.

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