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From the Book & New Media Review Editor's Desk

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Book & New Media Reviews

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Georgia College and State University

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Jessica Shumake

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In a recent meeting with middle and high school teachers in a rural mining town twelve blocks from the Mexican border, as part of a National Writing Project grant focusing on argumentative writing, I experienced the power of in-person collaboration as I took notes on teachers' classroom-tested approaches for teaching argumentation. In my current university appointment I design curricula for fully online courses, which requires constant technological innovation and little face-to-face interaction. The practical strategies the Douglas Unified School District teachers shared not only resonated with many of the classroom practices I remembered from face-to-face teaching, but also humbled me because of their generosity and willingness to share their very best ideas. The same can be said of the keyword authors and reviewers featured in this issue.

This issue's keyword essay, with its emphasis on social movement and change, sets the stage for the reviews that follow it. If social movements are concerned with the maintenance and alteration of symbolic and material reality, then it follows that self-initiated rhetorical acts—in this case, selfies—can be as much a declaration of a shared sense of revolutionary energy as an expression of solipsistic self-regard. Melanie Carter and Amanda Fields' semester-long partnership to teach research writing and rhetorical analysis, with students in Cairo and Tucson, had numerous outcomes. Carter and Fields' reflection on their collaboration takes risks and puts forward that perhaps they co-opted a genre that students would otherwise engage in without teachers monitoring them. Then again, Carter and Fields argue, the genre of the selfie is capacious and protean enough to contribute to students' sense of themselves as rhetorical critics and global citizens. Students' desires to create rhetorically impactful selfies enabled their engagement with one another and also constrained discussions of their differing investments in the genre due to the way selfies impacted public discourse during Arab Spring. Ultimately, Egyptian and American students affirmed their visions for the kinds of change they desired to see in the world based, in part, on their lived experience and communal values. As Carter and Fields suggest, the word 'selfie' mislabels as much as it labels their students' productive back and forth dialogue about the use of social media for activist ends.

Brad Jacobson's review of Todd Ruecker's *Transiciones: Pathways of Latinas and Latinos Writing in High School and College* describes the writing transitions in the lives of Latina/o students and calls for thinking beyond the dualities of home culture and school culture. Given that what happens beyond the walls of the university "matters much more" in terms of supporting the literacy transitions, retention, and graduation rates of Latina/o students, those working in writing program administration and writing instruction are called upon to "work for much broader and ambitious transformations" both beyond and within their institutions. Jacobson agrees with Ruecker's assessment that "institutions can and must change." Furthermore, Jacobson reflectively observes that there is "no silver bullet" to support struggling students or to aid them to resist dominant cultural assumptions that underestimate what they can accomplish. Nonetheless, community engagement researchers must attend to how to implement sustainable pedagogical practices that anticipate the "unpredictable nature of students' paths to and through college."

Jessica Pauszek's engaging review of Erica Abrams Locklear's *Negotiating a Perilous Empowerment: Appalachian Women's Literacies* powerfully illustrates how acquiring writing and communication skills is double-edged, ambiguous, and contradictory. Daniel Bernal's take on Amy Wan's *Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times* reminds us that overplaying "literacy and higher education as the preferred road to citizenship" can erase the multifaceted social, cultural, political, and economic hurdles immigrants face as they seek to gain life opportunities. The final review, Erika Dyk's discussion of Hazel Carter's *Creating Effective Community Partnerships for School Improvement*, recommends openness as a framework for practitioners and theorists of community literacy who are invested in school reform and school-community collaboration.