We’ve all heard the phrase “publish or perish,” and traditionally, that concept referred to four-year colleges more than two-year colleges. But, now more than ever, it is important for instructors at community colleges to be involved not only in teaching, but also in research and writing. Community colleges are now receiving national attention and have been characterized by President Obama as the key to our country’s economic recovery as well as to its future. According to the report “Research and Scholarship in the Two-Year College,” which our very own Frank Madden helped to compile for the Two-Year College English Association, “At two-year colleges, good teaching matters most, but this committee views scholarship as a prerequisite and a co-requisite for good teaching—because teachers’ scholarship legitimizes their expertise, informs their classroom practice, and provides their students with models for intellectual inquiry.”

Jessica Seessel, co-director of the Teaching Center and Scholarship (CTS), agrees. “Community colleges are a hot topic in the news today,” she says. “For many years, academics in four-year colleges and universities have been writing about community colleges. We have the knowledge and expertise to write about ourselves and better represent our students and the work we do.” She continues, “I think it’s crucial that writing teachers are actively engaged in the process of writing and research. Doing so will ensure that we continue to appreciate and understand how difficult, complex and multifaceted writing is.”

Westchester Community College is a hotbed for research and scholarship. For example, Cynthia Robinson is a gifted playwright whose works (“Peola’s Passing,” “Gold Star Mother,” “Ascension,” “Dancing on Eggshells”) have been published and/or performed. Paul Siegel presented the results of his research at CTS last year. Christolyn Williams wrote the book “No Women Jump Out! Gender Exclusion, Labour Organization and Political Leadership in Antigua 1917-1970” published. And publishing is not just limited to instructors. Several of the Academic Support Center tutors have published books, and many of them are writing and publishing on blogs. Included in this issue is an eclectic mix about the publishing adventures of some of our faculty and tutors. Enjoy!

- Where did you get the idea for your research/book?

**Heather:** I’d been doing research for a committee I was chairing in my department, called the English Studies committee; its charge was to evaluate the department, where it was, what it was doing, and that’s when I realized there were very few resources for community colleges. And the work in composition studies and writing program administration—two of the areas I drew from—was primarily done by four-year institutions and their researchers, even if they were producing work about community colleges.

**Jessica:** My first semester teaching at WCC I had a Deaf student in my Basic Writing II class and had never taught a Deaf student before. As I got to know her and saw her struggles as a writer, it made me want to know more about Deaf students and writing so I could more effectively help her and other students.

**Susan:** From abstruse, long-forgotten words mentioned initially in Hardy novels and from poring through the Oxford English Dictionary and other older dictionaries. This research led to my writing four books written under the name Susan Kelz Sperling entitled: Poplollies and...

#### What type of research was involved?

**Heather:** I researched and drew from a wide range of texts—from online resources, to books, to articles—both scholarly and professional.

**Jessica:** I used the following sources: 1) My student’s writing. 2) Interviews with my student and other experts in the field of Sign Language and Deaf Education. 3) Books and academic journals.

**Susan:** I turned pages in the many volumes of the Oxford English Dictionary and many lesser known word collections in various libraries and copied down obsolete and rare words that caught my fancy because of their sounds and original meanings which had changed over time or passed out of use altogether.

#### How long did it take to research the subject and where did you get the most surprising sources of information?

**Heather:** It took me a year to initially research, but the research continued throughout the writing process, because the information kept getting updated. I wrote during the time President Obama had turned the national spotlight on the important work of community colleges, and simultaneously, nearly all states were beginning to revise their standards and funding for developmental courses and major donors were beginning to fund developmental education initiatives. These last four-five years have produced the beginning of major changes for community colleges and higher education generally, so I had to—and still do—keep reading and reading to stay current.

**Jessica:** Too many to count. I reworked draft after draft both on my own and after colleagues read it. I then did a major revision after the Journal editors suggested some major changes.

**Susan:** I pored over all the entries to each book’s completion with two years’ worth of revisions.

#### How long did it take to write the piece?

**Heather:** Four years—I include the proposal time, too, because so much research began in the development of the book proposal, which I sent to the editors of the series. But there then were multiple rereads and proofreads, by me and editors.

**Susan:** Each book took over two years or more to complete the research.

#### How many revisions did it go through?

**Heather:** Countless. I have no idea. I completed the first draft after two years, but then added significantly to it—I mean significantly, dramatically in the next two years.

**Jessica:** I pored over all the entries to each book’s completion with two years’ worth of revisions.

#### What tips would you give to student writers who are engaged in writing and research?

**Heather:** Follow your curiosity, and don’t stop at GOOGLE. Use the databases the library provides for all of us. Talk to real people. Talk to librarians for research tips, talk to friends and colleagues about ideas, and have other people read your work and share their thoughts about it with you.

**Jessica:** It’s a PROCESS and writing and research are not discrete parts of the process. One can’t "finish" research and then begin writing. When one writes, one often discovers new things that need researching.

**Susan:** Be very well organized and keep copies of your research so that the order of it all is extremely readable.

#### What tips would you give to faculty/adjuncts who are interested in doing scholarly research and publishing?

**Heather:** I’d give much of the same tips I’d give to a student, but I’d add that scholarly work is important, particularly in the field of community college education. The public two-year institution is situated to be a major contributor to literacy discussions across the United States, but it needs practitioners to be both researchers and advocates. These literacy discussions that the nation is currently having need the voice of the community college, if only to shift the direction of higher ed—perhaps all public education, from K to 12—into a more meaningful direction.

**Jessica:** Write about something that genuinely interests you.

**Susan:** Find a reliable agent and editors who respect your material and your very hard work.
Here, some additional sources from The Two-Year College Association about Research and Scholarship in the Two-Year College:

**Literature**


**Other Useful Sources**


**Writing**


I am a volunteer tutor in the WCC Writing Center. But in my secret life I write a blog. It’s called Sightings Over Sixty, and it covers baby boomers, retirement, health, finance, grownup children, and how time flies. My pen name – my nom de Internet, if you will -- is Tom Sightings. I’m over 60 years old. Get it?

A lot of my friends – and some people in the Writing Center – wonder why I spend my time jotting down thoughts in cyberspace. What do I tell them? First of all, I point out that I’m not alone. A lot of people write blogs. According to web directory technorati, my blog is ranked #2 out of 363 blogs about baby boomers. There are blogs about stamp collecting, knitting, golden retrievers and a thousand other topics. But if you really want to know, here are the top ten reasons why I blog. To . . .

10. Get something off my chest – I have a few opinions on things like health care and how people drive (in my opinion, unlike Lake Wobegon, most people are worse than average drivers!), and so I can spout off when ever I want.

9. Make friends – I have over a hundred followers of my blog. Some of them I consider friends. In January, when I vacationed in Florida, I played golf with one of my blogging friends.

8. Join a community – You don’t just get people to read your blog. They talk back, make comments, and usually, you end up following their blog as well. It’s a party!

7. Make people laugh – I admit it, in my younger days I was a class clown. My teachers didn’t think I was funny, but some of my classmates did. Check out the Humor section of my blog, and you be the judge. But hey, gimme a break . . . it’s not easy to be funny!

6. Make money – Yes, you can sign up for advertising programs through Google and Amazon, and earn money from your blog. Sometimes I earn as much as $3 in one day.

5. Practice my writing skills – As you can see . . . I need the practice.

4. Annoy my spouse – Since I write my blog under a different name, and I don’t identify my spouse by name, I can say anything I want!

3. Stay out of trouble – I’m retired. Well, to be more accurate, I’m unemployed. But when you get to a certain age, you can call yourself retired instead. Blogging gives me something to do while my long-suffering spouse goes off to work.

2. Make a name for myself – Wait a second, I write the blog under a different name, so how am I making a name for myself? Er, I guess I’d better rethink that one.

And the Number 1 reason why I blog? I blog, therefore I am – It’s a little known fact, but all the great philosophers had their own blogs. The first blog? "In the beginning . . . ."

Graduating in May?

If the Library or the Academic Support Center contributed to your academic success, then apply for THE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AWARD

AWARDS ARE GREAT FOR: COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, RESUMES AND TRANSFER STUDENTS.

Pick up the award application packet from either the Library Reference Desk or the Academic Support Center Front Desk.
A few years ago, a spunky Jean Robbins walked up to me in the Writing Tutorial and declared emphatically, “I want to be your first 90-year-old tutor.” I said, “Jean, I believe you will be!” On December 18, 2013, Jean’s wish came true and a celebration was held in the staff room complete with singing and a cake. A veteran of the publishing industry, Jean has been a tutor in the Writing Tutorial for fifteen years.

Jean in describing her long career as a writer and an editor, says, “It included anything that required a pencil, or a typewriter or, for the past 25 years, a computer.” Her articles have been published in Harper’s Bazaar, This Week, Woman’s Home Companion, Today’s Woman and several others “whose names are lost to history.”

She also served as Editor-in-Chief for Magazine Management (now Marvel Comics), where she was in charge of Women’s and Film magazines, writing copy, cover titles, blurbs, copy-editing, proof-reading, and working with freelance writers and graphic artists.

Jean later held the position of Editor-in-Chief at Sunburst Communications, an educational publishing house where she wrote and edited prize-winning video scripts. She was also responsible for production, catalogue content, and publishing decisions.

As a fashion writer at Kirkeby Hotels Magazine, which she states was, “an elegant in-house publication,” she wrote the fashion and shopping pages. She also wrote feature articles and interviews. As a Copywriter at Lee Ramsdell and Co, a Philadelphia-based professional advertising agency, she created concepts and wrote their first full-page color shelter magazine ad with her architect husband, Robbie, doing the layout. Their impressive collaboration won a top prize at a major convention.

Never one to slow down, Jean continues to help students in the Writing Tutorial working on brainstorming, organizing and writing their papers. She loves getting to know our students, whose lives and backgrounds she finds, “truly fascinating.” We think Jean is truly fascinating and want to congratulate her on reaching her goal and being our first 90-year-old tutor.
ASC Workshops

**Improve Your Study Skills & Reduce Test Taking Anxiety Workshops:**
- 2/5 : Manage Your Time, Learn to Read Your Text
- 2/12: Develop Your Note-Taking Skills
- 2/19: Improve Your Memory Techniques
- 2/26: Identify Your Learning Style
- 3/5 : Reduce Your Test Anxiety
- 3/12: Decrease Your Math Anxiety
- 3/26: Predict Test Questions
- 4/2 : How to Take the Test
- 4/9 : Review of Study Skills & Test Taking Skills

**Math Workshops:**
- 1/29 & 2/5: Learn How to Use the TI Graphing Calculator

**Review Your Grammar Workshops:**
- 2/11: Build Sentences:
  - Simple, Compound, Complex/Compound Sentences
- 2/18: Verb Forms
- 2/25: Prepositions
- 3/4 : Punctuation
- 3/11: Articles

**Writing - Let’s Get Started:**
- 2/5 : Conquering Fear of Writing
- 2/12: Brainstorming/Organizing
- 2/19: Writing the Introduction & Thesis
- 2/26: Revising the Paper

**MLA/APA Formatting Workshops:**
- 2/20 & 5/8: Hands-On Citation

For more workshop information call:
Math, ESL & Reading Tutorials @ 914-606-6470
Writing Tutorial @ 914-606-7853
Science Tutorial @ 914-606-6906

The ASC Newsletter is published once a semester by the Academic Support Center.

Editor-in-Chief: JoAnn Gala    Managing Editor: Beth Holden
Layout/Designer: Bishara Al-Akeel