

Editors' Introduction

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MIKE ROSE: TEACHER AND SCHOLAR, WRITER AND FRIEND

As a scholar with more than four decades of contributions to the field, Mike Rose set the stage for how the field of composition and rhetoric would grapple with basic writing, working-class rhetorics, and open-access education. Although it is impossible to quantify his impact, his broad reach is certainly evidenced by the twelve books he authored and edited, over sixty articles in print, numerous book chapters, and his uncountable speaking engagements and public works. Beyond the scholarship that Mike contributed to the field, he leaves a legacy that is evidenced with the scholars who have been shaped by his works. Throughout his life, Rose wrote prolifically on public education policies and reform, often troubling the easy answers academics give themselves regarding how to foster intrinsically motivated learning.

From *Lives on the Boundary* to *The Mind at Work* to *Back to School*, Rose's work focuses extensively on socioeconomics and the impacts, challenges, and opportunities present in higher education for the working class in the United States. Rose brought attention to adult learners and reminded us all that class-based decisions regarding readiness to learn are nothing but a lack of imagination on the part of those in positions of power. In the introduction to *The Mind at Work*, Rose argues, "Measures of intellectual ability and assumptions about it are woven throughout [my] history. So I've been thinking about this business of intelligence for a long time: the way we decide who's smart and who isn't, the way the work someone does feeds into that judgment, and the effect such judgment has on our sense of who we are and what we can do" (xiii). The questions of who we are and what we can do rest at the focal point of much, if not all of, the scholarship in writing program administration. And it is with this knowledge, and respect for Mike Rose's leadership and contributions, that we have compiled this special issue.

Throughout his career in teaching, writing, and research, Rose exposed the dualistic thinking so pervasive in our public, legislative, and academic settings by using the lived experiences of the working class, students, and teachers to challenge "the single story" of learning. In her podcast *On Being*, Kristen Tippet reminds us that Mike Rose's "expansive wisdom" makes it possible to disrupt our tendency to view learning too narrowly,

encouraging us to illuminate the blending, the hybridity of the process, the coalescence of the physical, human, and cognitive.

Working from this challenge, contributors in this special issue share how Mike Rose has influenced their “civic imagination on big subjects at the heart of who we are—schooling, social class, and the deepest meaning of vocation” (Tippet). The texts presented within the issue show how Rose’s work has not only profoundly impacted our past, but also continues to inform our vision for the future of writing program administration. In particular, submissions were sought from those who identify as working class, first gen, from historically, minoritized backgrounds, and those who worked with Rose and/or his contributions to the field. We hope that the special issue serves to trouble easy answers about Rose’s work, as we honor his lasting contributions. In this vein, contributors work to answer the following questions:

- What challenges Rose’s work in light of new developments and perspectives within the field?
- How might Rose’s work be blended with emerging ideas across generational and/or institutional lines?
- How does it demonstrate an understanding of the difficulties writers face based on class, race, economics, region?
- How might we celebrate the impact of Rose’s work in the areas of access, accessibility, community partnership, socio-economic equity/justice/assistance, and/or other of Rose’s foci?

By centering narratives, dialogues, observations, and conversations, Rose illuminated multiple and diverse perspectives and experiences about teaching, learning, and working. To understand how his work compels us to imagine the future of writing program administration, we also present collaborative and polyvocal works that illustrate textured and nuanced understanding of the constraints and tensions that emerge in educational research and education policy about what counts as learning and whose learning counts. In the words of Mike Rose, “it is hope that drives the writing, hope that careful analysis and the right phrasing might in some small, small way open a space to think anew” (*An Open Language*, Introduction).

To facilitate this work, the special issue opens with an introduction written by David Bartholomae, who takes readers through some of Rose’s first works, as well as some of his last. Readers move through four sections, which bring together conversations around “remedial” education; classism and racism in education; challenges in education; and human and inclusive approaches to education. The introduction and four sections are set apart

with interludes. These interludes work to introduce and connect concepts throughout the issue, as well as serve as moments of historicity within the field—placing Rose’s work in the larger context of the field and beyond. Ellen Cushman’s text closes the collection with a close look at the professional and personal persona that Rose championed throughout his career.

This issue serves as not only a stirring tribute to the work of Mike Rose, but also as a reminder of how much work is yet to be done to truly construct educational spaces that allow for all and any to imagine who they want to be and what they want to do. As you sit down with this text, you may want to return to Shane Wood’s opening episode of *Pedagogue* (located at <https://www.pedagoguepodcast.com>) to hear Mike Rose reflect on his experiences as a writing teacher. Rose reminds us of the privilege and importance of our work in the classroom; he says “there’s not many occupations that provide that opportunity to get close into people’s lives and help them grow in a way they want to grow” (Wood). You may find some delight in traveling along Rose’s narrative of self discovery in his writing about his family history, with childhood and family images included, in one of Rose’s final publications, “Searching for Tommy and Rosie.” He writes, “It is through the telling of her stories that I’m finding a way to live the rest of my life—stories of work and opportunity and the barriers to it, of finding meaning in the hand we’re dealt, of her dreams for me, of desire that propels us forward or flattens us with a broken heart” (Rose). Perhaps you will find yourself, near this one-year anniversary of Mike Rose’s passing, rereading Kevin Dettmar’s celebration of Rose’s rippling influence on education in “The Teacher Who Changed How We Teach Writing.” Dettmar writes, “His work heralded a paradigm shift in the way that writing is taught in our educational system, from elementary school through college.” We invite you to savor the issue, as we all strive to “think anew” on how Rose’s work served to shape the past, present, and future of writing program administration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the spirit of Mike Rose’s generous heart, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge several people for their work on this collection. We thank the twenty-five authors who shared their encounters with Mike and the influence of his works on their teaching and scholarship. We also want to thank Kobena Bannerman-Jones, who worked diligently on the extensive bibliography. Kobe’s contribution showcases Rose’s contribution not only as a scholar in our field but also as a public intellectual. As Duane Roen reminds us in his 2014 CWPA plenary address: “Mike Rose, who seems to move effortlessly between the academy and the public sphere, . . . uses a

prose style that is accessible and elegant . . . mak[ing] even the most complex ideas understandable. In his books, as in his life, he melds the academic, the professional, the civic, and the personal arenas of life.” We are grateful to the past presidents of CWPA who offered support to this editorial team, particularly for the kind and thorough feedback of Doug Hesse and the editorial eye of Duane Roen. This journal would not be possible without the work of David Blakesley and Parlor Press. We appreciate the CWPA executive board, who supported a special issue on our colleague Mike Rose, who lived the roles of teacher and scholar, writer, and friend.

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