

Spark: A 4C4Equality Journal

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Spark is an online-only, open-access, peer-reviewed journal published annually. It provides a forum for activist students, teachers, and researchers in writing, rhetoric, and literacy studies to articulate the public and disciplinary value of their social justice pursuits. Such justice work may be localized within a school, neighborhood, or campus, or as far-reaching as regional, national, and international efforts. It may intersect with movements such as Black Lives Matter, or campaigns such as Defend DACA or Families Belong Together & Free. **Ultimately, the work published in *Spark* speaks to the power of intersectional and collaborative efforts working for political change.**

Unlike academic journals that focus on narrow disciplinary arguments, *Spark* provides readers with an inside view of activism and community organizing being done by those in writing, rhetoric, and literacy studies. *Spark's* goals are to amplify contributors' work, to help contributors build coalitions with one another, and to inspire readers to get involved in this work or to develop their own.

2019 Call for Submissions

On 6 April 2018, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a “zero tolerance policy” on illegal immigration. Acting on Sessions’ decree and the Trump administration’s policies, the US Department of Homeland Security deemed that any adult making illegal entry into the U.S. had committed a misdemeanor and thus fit the criteria for deportation. Under this policy, if these adults were accompanied by their children, then border agents separated the families. The Department of Justice deported the parents, and the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) put the children into detention centers around the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security reported that border agents separated 2,342 children from parents between May 5 and June 9.

Shocking images from these detention centers emerged in June 2018, including photos of children corralled into cages, sleeping on floors, and living in tents in the 100+ degree Texas heat. These images were accompanied by details of cruelty and abuse, such as the story of a nursing child being dragged from her mother’s breast and the stories of children in these detention centers being forcibly drugged by ORR employees.

These images and stories have galvanized long-time activists as well as many people who don’t regularly take action related to immigrants’ rights, as many people took to social media to direct this outrage at family separation and child abuse. Their online interventions ask people to take individual action by educating oneself and donating money to organizations like Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) and Annunciation House. They also called on people to work collectively by participating in mobilizations, such as the Families Belong Together protests that took place on June 30th in Washington, DC and cities around the U.S., as well as protests outside detention centers around the country. Finally, these calls ask people to help build existing organizations and become part of the movement to stop the Trump administration’s policies and institute a humane system for immigrants and asylum seekers in the U.S.

The 2019 edition of *Spark* reflects on the ways that individual, collective, and organizational action are integral to this fight and more broadly to all struggles for justice, equity, and liberation. **Furthermore, the edition asks contributors to explore how the foci of writing, rhetoric, and literacy studies--reading, writing, speaking, and listening--undergird individual, collection, and organizational actions.** Contributions may examine a variety of topics, including but not limited to the following questions:

Individual Action

- What can an individual do to protest national policies?
- What does it mean to educate oneself on an issue, such as the history of U.S. immigration policy?
- How do individual actions fit into a larger context (e.g., for policy or social change)?
- How does one make individual action sustainable?

Collective Action

- What strategies/tactics did you use in participating in or organizing a collective action (e.g., a protest, teach in, rally, etc.)?
- How have certain strategies/tactics of collective action informed your pedagogy or institutional service work?
- What did you learn from participating in or organizing a collective action?
- How does one make collective action sustainable?

Organizational Action

- How does one create or get involved in an organization that addresses a complex and far reaching social, political, cultural, or economic issue?
- What role does mentoring play in building and sustaining an organization?
- How does one make activism organizationally sustainable?
- What do issues of self- and communal-care look like in ongoing activist work?

Overarching Questions

- What do these types of actions look like in a specific context or geographic location?
- How do they intersect, complicate, or diverge from one another?
- How do they afford or constrain “activism”?
- How do citizenship status, race and ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexuality and sexual orientation, and/or class inform individual, collective, or organizational action?

Submission Types

We seek submissions from writers who represent all the embodied experiences and labor categories which inform the purposes of our field.

We invite submissions from activist-scholars in all “ranks” of rhetoric & writing studies and adjacent areas of inquiry--from undergraduate and graduate students to non-tenure track, tenure track, and tenured faculty. Furthermore, we invite submissions that fit into the following loosely defined genres:

Extended Essays & Discussions

An extended essay or discussion piece would detail a project, its tactics, or a political moment in a 1500-2500 word piece that might take the shape of a conversation between activists or a reflective essay about a particular experience. These pieces are different from interviews or scene reports in that we encourage others to connect their activism to the field, reflect on emerging trends and new directions for their work, or offer interventions into current scholarship and/or activist movements.

Scene Reports

A scene report should do one of two things: either it provides a broad overview of local events (e.g., teach-ins, rallies, marches, etc.) and addresses the different organizations involved in these events, or it provides a detailed description of one event. In either case, you should position yourself in relation to the event(s) by addressing how you contributed and/or participated. These reports could include photos from the event(s) or documents used to organize them. Note that you do not need to submit a page design. Scene reports should be 1500-2000 words.

Interviews

We encourage interviews with activists and organizers that address questions about local work, particularly how and why local events were organized, issues the organizers faced and how they overcame those issues, public response to the events, etc. Interviews may be submitted as print or video. They should be 1500-2000 words.

Tool Reviews

We invite submissions that address different tools used in your organizing and activist work. Such submissions might address how you use specific writing genres, web applications, street team tactics, canvassing tactics, etc., in your work. Tool reviews should be 1000-1500 words.

As a way to encourage continued conversations, we will also publish the following genres on a quarterly basis:

Columns

We invite 1,000-word columns that address key terms or concepts related to activism and organizing. Columns are an ideal space to review current events or movements, offer “explainers” about a movement, or summarize how activist trends shape work within writing, rhetoric, and literacy studies.

Media Reviews

Media reviews can include underground publications/zines, books, films, records, etc. We are interested in publishing reviews of scholarly and popular texts that address different aspects of or issues related to activism and organizing. Reviews should be limited to 800-1000 words.

For examples of these genres, check out 4C4Equality's *Writing Networks for Social Justice* zine and webtext: <http://constell8cr.com/4c4e/>.

Submit Your Work

We invite submissions of alphabetic texts in Word .docx form to 4c4equality@gmail.com. We also invite submissions that are “born digital,” that is to say work that involves multimodal composing and must be presented online, such as podcasts, videos, photo essays, or downloadable resources. Multimodal work can be submitted as a Google Drive link to the above address. We welcome inquiries.

Deadline for Submission for April 2019 Issue: 1 October 2018.

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