

## **A Review of *WAC and Second Language Writers: Research Towards Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs and Practices***

Terry Zawacki and Michelle Cox, 2014. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse & Parlor Press [ISBN 978-1-60235-504-0. 482 pages, including index. (PDF <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/perspectives/12/> and print).]

**Reviewed by Alisa Russell, George Mason University**

This collection about L2 writing pedagogy for writing across the curriculum courses and programs fills a noticeable gap in the field. Zawacki and Cox's collection advances data-driven conversations that explore the intersections and tensions between WAC and L2 pedagogy. Zawacki and Cox's second collection on the subject, *WAC and Second Language Writers: Research Towards Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs and Practices*, brings our field much closer to answering some of the tough questions surrounding L2 writing. (Zawacki and Cox note the complex baggage attached to the many terms popularly used to describe non-native speakers, but I will take their lead in this review with the descriptor "L2.") Offering case studies, course structures, and discussions of programmatic infrastructure about L2 writers in WAC-classrooms, Zawacki and Cox organize their chapters into three sections: the first focuses on L2 writers' perceptions and experiences; the second focuses on faculty expectations for and challenges with L2 writing; and the third offers course and program assessments that attempt to answer the call for a more inclusive pedagogy.

The first section, "Learning from/with L2 Students: Student Strengths, Coping Strategies, and Experiences as They Write Across the Curriculum," transfers the WAC administrator or writing instructor to the world of the L2 learner as they navigate their linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the university setting. In the first chapter, "Adaptive Transfer, Writing Across the Curriculum, and Second Language Writing: Implications for Research and Teaching," DePalma and Ringer set a theoretical landscape for the whole collection by explaining how adaptive transfer—the ability to reshape and negotiate previous writing knowledge in new situations—better includes and draws upon the varied experiences of L2 writers. They urge instructors to place less emphasis on L2 writers reusing their past knowledge, instead suggesting that instructors coach processes of reshaping that knowledge to address unfamiliar writing situations. In short, our practices must reflect the value that L2 writers are "*transformers* rather than *transferers* of knowledge and contexts" (60). An additionally insightful chapter in this section is Hirsch's "Writing Intensively: An Examination of the Performance of L2 Writers Across the Curriculum at an Urban Community College." It cross-examines quantitative information about grades and withdrawal rates with the survey results of L2 writers' learning satisfaction in writing courses. It goes on to analyze assignment scaffolding in science

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courses, which not only leaves the instructor with a better idea of how to shape assignments arcs for L2 writers, but it also provides a replicable chain of effective prompts.

To further sketch the complex picture of L2 students in the university setting, the second section, "Faculty Concerns and Expectations for L2 Writers," foregrounds faculty experiences with L2 writers. Qualitative results in the first two chapters find that the presence of mechanical errors often clouds an instructor's ability to comment on or evaluate higher-order concerns; faculty also struggle with ideas of fairness and external standards when evaluating L2 writing. However, both chapters stress that most faculty are open to and wanting strategies for dealing with linguistically and culturally diverse student writing; WAC administrators can use this data as a starting point to first understand and then address faculty concerns in their professional development design. A further and particularly insightful chapter for the WAC administrator is Cox's "In Response to Today's 'Felt Need': WAC, Faculty Development, and Second Language Writers." While every chapter aims for practical implications, Cox's chapter clearly answers faculty concerns by offering concrete ideas for faculty workshops and development sessions. She draws from her own experiences as a WAC administrator to offer strategies and templates for giving feedback, running peer review, incorporating writing-to-learn activities, designing assignments, and adjusting evaluative practices. In her conclusion, Cox charges instructors and administrators to collaborate to discover what it truly means to value linguistic and cultural diversity as a resource instead of a hindrance in writing and learning.

Finally, the third section, "WAC Practices and Pedagogies Transformed," offers explanations and assessments of recent courses and programs that seek to answer the complex needs of L2 writers whether domestic or abroad, face-to-face or online, undergraduate or graduate. While many program administrators may not be able to implement these course additions or programmatic changes in the short-term, the bottom-line of these programs is clear: collaboration. For example, Siczek and Shapiro propose a course co-developed by WAC and TESOL called "Writing About Global English" in which students examine, discuss, and critique English as a global language. Led by a TESOL instructor, this course allows students to draw on their own varied experiences with English, conduct culturally relevant research, and respond to a personally significant rhetorical situation. In this way, the course answers calls for internationalization by engaging not only linguistic diversity, but also cultural diversity. For administrators and instructors seeking additional ideas for course design, this section offers easily applicable strategies like incorporating language histories, using grading contracts, and explicitly rationalizing assignment prompts and written feedback. Whether in a position to propose radical course change or to simply tweak a syllabus, readers are offered plenty of accessible and useful ideas by the end of this section.

As a whole, a major strength of this collection is the way in which it conceptualizes L2 learners as complex and diverse; multilingual writing issues in the classroom are not just linguistic, but cultural, and both areas need equal understanding, support, and research. Zawacki and Cox have also included parentheticals that make connections between chapters explicit, so the reader can easily cross-reference and synthesize the major themes and ideas between chapters. The reader can additionally use the collection as a base reference for further research since the citation list for every chapter offers rich and extensive catalogs of past and current literature surrounding L2 writing. Finally, the collection as a whole includes a number of chapters focusing on graduate students and on non-American universities, both of which have been largely overlooked by the current literature. Most importantly, though, Zawacki and Cox's selections force us to reevaluate what we consider "good" writing and what it truly means to use difference as a resource to challenge the norms and assumptions that guide our practices.

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