

The Conference on Basic Writing

The Conference on Basic Writing (CBW) is a special-interest group of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Over the thirty-five years since it was founded, the CBW has developed into a vibrant community of teachers and scholars. For this fourth edition of the *Bibliography*, we wanted to provide as much of the historical record as possible, so we have again included Karen Uehling's thoughtful retrospective on our group.

The Conference on Basic Writing, 1980–2005 [by Karen Uehling]¹

In 2005, the Conference on Basic Writing celebrated its silver anniversary as an organization. As we celebrated our first quarter century, we took the time to look back at the critical issues and defining moments of the past and forward to the future.

Twenty-Five Years of Community

The Conference on Basic Writing is an inclusive organization composed of a spectrum of basic writing faculty—those new to the field as well as tenured professors who serve as writing administrators on their campuses. CBW members teach at diverse institutions: community colleges, private rural colleges, research universities, and urban state universities from all regions of the country. Jeanne Gunner, CBW chair from 1995 to 1997, describes the variety of people within CBW and the organization's democratic nature:

They may be interested because they have taught BW [basic writing] classes for years and have made BW the center of their professional lives, or because they are about to begin to teach them and are seeking information and support from experienced BW teachers. They may be famous researchers we all read and whose ideas inform our classes, or graduate students who will be the next generation of famous names. They may be BW instructors with ideas . . . to share on pedagogic and curricular innovations, or those who defend traditional approaches. They may teach graduate students or freshmen, at community colleges or research institutions. What they have in common are professional and personal concerns related to the field of basic writing ("From the Chair" 1–2).

Perhaps the key motive for developing a professional basic writing organization over the years has been the genuine concern that basic writing instructors feel for their students and their desire to work collaboratively with

¹ Adapted with permission from the author.

them. Students are placed into classes labeled "basic writing" by a variety of measures and have varying degrees of control over this placement. At one pole of the placement spectrum are institutions that place students (without consultation) based on their performances on standardized tests like the COMPASS test of grammar or the ACT or SAT, which claim to measure students' reading comprehension and acuity with logic and vocabulary. At the other pole are institutions that use directed self-placement, a strategy originally developed at Grand Valley State University (Royer and Gilles, "Basic Writing and Directed Self-Placement" and *Directed Self-Placement*). Here, students receive information about writing and reading on the campus, details about the writing courses offered, and a list of questions about their own writing and reading practices. Students then choose the courses they feel are best for them. In the middle of the placement spectrum are institutions that use other placement methods, from timed writing exams to portfolio placement systems, although the number of institutions using portfolio placement is dwindling due to cost.

The students who take basic writing courses, for whatever reason, are especially vulnerable within higher education because they are often the first to be excluded or considered for exclusion when budget cuts or demands for "excellence" are issued (Fox, *Defending Access* and "Standards and Access"; McNenny, "Writing Instruction" 1–6; Rose 5–8). Sometimes basic writing students are viewed as misusing taxpayers' money to pay for a "second chance" at education when those tax dollars could be better spent on students who are already doing well.

However they are placed, students in basic writing classes represent a diverse and shifting population—first-generation college students, people of color or speakers of more than one language or dialect, refugees or immigrants, reentry students (such as displaced homemakers, older learners who are retraining, or former members of the military), people who experienced erratic or interrupted high school educations or who dropped out of high school and later earned a general equivalency diploma, people with learning or other disabilities, very young parents, and people who work long hours. Sometimes characterized as "at risk" or "underprepared," some basic writing students have experienced especially difficult lives. Some have waited many years, craving an education, and are grateful for any help and instruction. Others of traditional age are equally committed because they want to escape their parents' lives of monotonous, low-paying jobs and make the most of their sports or other scholarships. Some are traditional-age college students who have had less than positive experiences with writing and reading. Others took the basic writing placement tests on days when their attention was focused on other matters. Whatever their situations, they contribute to the rich diversity within our educational institutions.

Perhaps because basic writing students are sometimes viewed as marginal within the university, the faculty appointed to teach these students are often underpaid and overworked. Sometimes instructors serve as adjunct faculty at several institutions simultaneously, are paid by the course, and are not given medical or other benefits. This faculty is given the complex job of teaching writing to students who desperately need to write well to survive in

college and attain their goals. Although some basic writing professionals hold tenure-track positions, such appointments are not the norm.

Despite these obstacles, basic writing instructors need to promote best practices in writing instruction. Their students need to write and read full-length essays about appealing and relevant topics rather than engage in skill-and-drill exercises, which overburdened instructors might view as an efficient approach to teaching. By working together, basic writing instructors and students can effectively advocate for informed basic writing classes at their institutions. The Conference on Basic Writing was born to facilitate this process—that is, to advocate best practices for basic writing instruction (including placement and assessment), to provide a scholarly community for instructors of basic writing, and to promote the critical importance of college literacy.

From CBWS to CBW: Early History and Original Goals

At the 1980 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), Charles Guilford posted a sheet on the message board of the Washington Hilton inviting people to participate in a professional organization for basic writing teachers. Interested educators filled four sheets. With advice and support from Lynn Quitman Troyka, the Conference on Basic Writing Skills (CBWS) began to take shape as a special-interest group of CCCC (Guilford and Uehling 4). The new organization's first flyer outlined its advocacy role—a role that continued throughout Charles Guilford's term as chair (from 1980 to 1983) and continues to be an important one for today's Conference on Basic Writing: "Our purpose is to respond to the needs of this rapidly growing professional field. For too long, teachers and scholars across the country have worked in relative isolation, with far too little opportunity for professional growth and recognition. CBWS will be working to provide those opportunities" (Guilford).

In its early days, CBWS focused on developing a network of basic writing professionals and providing its members with professional resources. The organization conducted annual surveys of members' needs, formed committees to work on different issues, initiated a special-interest group at CCCC, and recruited members. According to Guilford and Uehling, "In a short time, the group grew to over 175 members from almost every state and Canada" (4).

The Beginnings: Overcoming Isolation and Creating a Community, 1980–1986

CBWS came into existence to help basic writing instructors overcome the sense of isolation they sometimes experienced and to foster professionalism in the emerging field of basic writing; in the early years, issues of self-definition, community building, and teaching practices dominated the organization. One venue for the fledgling basic writing community was the special-interest group (SIG) meetings. The first CBWS SIG meeting was held at the CCCC

in Dallas in March 1981. At the 1982 SIG in San Francisco, Charles Guilford initiated a thematic focus for the meetings, a format that was maintained until the mid-1990s.

In 1982, the first attempt to establish a professional print dialogue to support a basic writing community was through the *Conference on Basic Writing Skills Newsletter*. That issue contained the first part of an interview that Karen Thomas (Uehling), CBWS chair from 1983 to 1986, conducted with Sondra Perl, recipient of the National Council of Teachers of English Promising Researcher Award in 1979 for her study of basic writers. The newsletter was created on an electric typewriter and laid out by hand using press-on lettering. Issued sporadically, the newsletter often made it into mailboxes just days before the annual CCCC meeting. Eight issues were published from 1981 to 1986.

Definition as a Field: The National Basic Writing Conferences

In 1985, Sallyanne Fitzgerald, later CBW cochair from 1997 to 1999, placed an announcement about the first National Basic Writing Conference in the *Conference on Basic Writing Skills Newsletter*. This event, which was held in September 1985 at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, was described as "a one-day Basic Writing Conference, cosponsored by NCTE [the National Council of Teachers of English]." Fitzgerald organized and chaired the first three of these conferences, developing them "out of my own frustration in the early 80s with professional conferences like NCTE, CCCC, and NADE [National Association of Developmental Educators], where only a few sessions could be devoted to basic writing" ("Basic Writing Conference" 1).

The keynote speakers at these conferences—Andrea Lunsford, Lynn Quitman Troyka, and Glynda Hull—were on the cutting edge of basic writing research. Like CBWS's early efforts to establish itself as an organization, the early National Basic Writing Conferences dealt with addressing definitions (of *basic writing* and a *basic writing conference*) and practical matters (such as creating a community and researching teaching).

Emergence as the Conference on Basic Writing, 1988–1992

By 1987, CBWS was in a state of institutional limbo, and early chairs were concerned that the organization might fall apart. However, in 1988, CBWS was reborn and renamed as the Conference on Basic Writing under the guidance of Peter Dow Adams and Carolyn Kirkpatrick, who served as chair and associate chair, respectively, from 1988 to 1991. The decision to drop the word *skills* from the organization's name was influenced by the 1986 publication of David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky's groundbreaking *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts*, which made a persuasive case for full-length discourse in beginning writing instruction, immersion reading, and the teaching of basic

writing as a rich, seminar-type course.² Indeed, the first issue of the revived newsletter contained an enthusiastic review by Adams of *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts* ("Review").

Bartholomae and Petrosky's influence is also apparent in the 1988 CBW reorganizational special-interest group meeting. This particularly memorable SIG, held in St. Louis, is described by Suellyn Duffey, who served as CBW chair from 1992 to 1994:

We had come from all over North America and from different types of schools: a community college in New Orleans, a Big Ten public university, Chicago and St. Louis, Nevada and Kentucky. . . . Nicholas Coles, Marilyn DeMario, and Mariolina Salvatori, contributing authors to David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky's *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts*, and all teachers of the basic reading and writing course described in the book, were behind the table at the front of the room. . . . The time was right for renewing the Conference on Basic Writing. (4)

Adams and Kirkpatrick capitalized on this spirit of camaraderie to continue developing the organization. In an appeal for volunteer members for the Executive Committee in 1991, Adams and Kirkpatrick wrote: "Keep in mind that most CBW members (including the officers) don't know each other except through this organization; it's here that we are meeting new friends in the profession" ("From the Chairs" 2). By spring 1989, membership had grown to 325 members, and bylaws had been proposed (Adams and Kirkpatrick, "The State of CBW" 2). From 1988 to 1992, chairs Adams and Kirkpatrick (and later Duffey) edited the *Conference on Basic Writing Newsletter* and published nine issues.³ Responding to the interests of CBW's membership, the editors made articles, book reviews, and columns permanent features of this more "scholarly" newsletter.

Along with the increasing visibility of basic writing scholarship, CBW's revival contributed to a renewed sense of community among basic writing professionals. The revitalized commitment to basic writing was evident in special-interest group meetings at the Conference on College Composition and Communication as well. In 1989, the SIG in Seattle featured presentations by the contributing editors of *A Sourcebook for Basic Writing Teachers*: Theresa Enos, David Bartholomae, Andrea Lunsford, and Lynn Quitman Troyka. At the Chicago CCCC in 1990, CBW sponsored a panel titled "Black Students, Standard English, and Basic Writing" that drew more than 180 attendees (Adams and Kirkpatrick, "SIG Scoreboard" 2). Panelists included Miriam Chaplin, Eugene Hammond, Lisa Delpit, and Geneva Smitherman, respondent. An increased sense of professionalism in the organization was also reflected in the SIG. At the 1991 meeting in Boston, *Journal of*

² Although the founders of CBW believed strongly in working with whole texts and were never especially skill-and-drill oriented, they felt it was appropriate to drop *skills* from the organization's name because of the word's negative connotations.

³ The newsletter continued publication, sometimes intermittently, until 1998. Twenty-two issues were published. Editors and contributors for the 1993 to 1998 issues included Suellyn Duffey, Jeanne Gunner, Kay Puttock, Gerri McNenny, and Sallyanne Fitzgerald. In 1995, CBW entered the electronic age with the development of the CBW e-mail list and Web site. In 1999, the newsletter became *Basic Writing e-Journal* at <http://bwe.cuny.cuny.edu/>. Both the newsletter and BWE are indexed through CompPile at <http://comppile.org>.

Basic Writing editors Bill Bernhardt and Peter Miller presented the biannual Shaughnessy Writing Award for the best JBW article to Kathleen Dixon for her essay "Intellectual Development and the Place of Narrative in 'Basic' and Freshman Composition."

The Fourth National Basic Writing Conference: Mainstreaming and Marginalization, 1992

The Fourth National Basic Writing Conference, held in College Park, Maryland, in 1992, was a turning point for the organization and for basic writing teacher-researchers. The Conference on Basic Writing organized this conference, which grew from one to three days. Carolyn Kirkpatrick stepped down as associate chair of CBW to cochair the National Basic Writing Conference with Eugene Hammond, CBW member and earlier board member. Titled "Critical Issues in Basic Writing: 1992," the conference marked the emergence of two critical issues that have continued to stimulate discussions in the field: (1) should basic writing students be placed in separate courses or be mainstreamed into freshman composition courses, and (2) how do we keep from marginalizing basic writing students?

At the Maryland conference, discussions of these questions emerged in presentations about defining and assessing literacy, the politics of error, the place of grammar, connections between basic writing and English as a second language, the design of basic writing programs, and adaptations of Bartholomae and Petrosky's *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts* approach (Uehling, "Report"). One notable example was David Bartholomae's keynote address, "The Tidy House: Basic Writing in the American Curriculum," in which he argued that students entering the curriculum should not be negatively labeled by being placed in a basic writing class and should instead be mainstreamed. At the 1992 conference (and in the subsequent special issue of the *Journal of Basic Writing* published in spring 1993),⁴ issues that had long been at the core of CBW—how to work with students in basic writing classes and who was doing that work—converged with new questions related to instruction, most notably whether the enterprise of basic writing was the most just and ethical way to work with students or whether alternatives should be sought. These issues moved to the forefront of discussions within the organization and the field.

A Foundational Shift: Grappling with Mainstreaming, Mid- to Late 1990s

The mid- to late 1990s were marked by vigorous debates on mainstreaming, which were initiated at the 1992 conference. These arguments raged in

⁴ See Bartholomae; Adams, "Basic Writing Reconsidered"; Berger; Fox, "Standards and Access"; Greenberg, "The Politics of Basic Writing"; Gunner, "The Status of Basic Writing Teachers"; Jones; and Scott. In addition, a particularly interesting conference panel called "Rereading Shaughnessy" focused on Mina Shaughnessy; two of these presentations were also published in the Fall 1993 issue of JBW (Gay; Laurence).

meetings and in the halls at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. The 1995 special-interest group in Washington, D.C., was a defining moment for the Conference on Basic Writing. As Gunner recalls, "The politics of mainstreaming proved a uniting topic, even as different points of view made for intense exchanges" ("From the Chair" 2). The importance of continuing these conversations and keeping in touch generally led to some new initiatives, including the creation of the CBW e-mail list and Web site in 1995 and the proposal for a pre-CCCC all-day workshop in lieu of a national conference. Participants in the 1996 workshop, called "Exploring the Boundaries of Basic Writing," at CCCC in Milwaukee heard, among others, presentations by Tom Fox, Judith Rodby, Charles Schuster, and Ira Shor, in which each challenged the advantages and disadvantages of mainstreaming as it was perceived at that time. Shor's remarks were later developed in "Our Apartheid," published in the *Journal of Basic Writing* in 1997. In response, Karen Greenberg and Terence Collins published separate, vigorous rebuttals.

In 1996, in reaction to this debate, Gerri McNenny, CBW cochair from 1997 to 1999, proposed that CBW support a collection of essays on basic writing and mainstreaming. CBW distributed a flyer soliciting manuscripts, and McNenny, with the assistance of Fitzgerald, saw the volume through to publication as *Mainstreaming Basic Writers: Politics and Pedagogies of Access*.

Subsequent workshops continued to address questions related to mainstreaming and marginalization,⁵ but presenters also began to focus more on innovative classroom strategies designed to help students challenge definitions of literacy and status in the classroom. The annual pre-CCCC one-day workshop has developed into one of the highlights of the CCCC for basic writing professionals. Bill Lalicker, 2002 to 2005 cochair, remarks that workshops need to be both "theory-stimulating and practice-energizing in ways that make a difference in BW classrooms all year" because workshops must "serve people at community colleges, regional schools, all kinds of universities" (e-mail). Tom Reynolds, 2002 to 2005 cochair, also comments on those varied local situations: "The workshop, and the SIG group always remind me of how conditions in one state, one city, one school, differ so greatly from another" (e-mail).

The 1995 special-interest group meeting in Washington, D.C., also led to the formation of the CBW-L, the Conference on Basic Writing e-mail list, which provides a forum for online exchanges about mainstreaming and other issues relevant to the work of basic writing instructors and students in basic writing classes. "An ongoing discussion of the theory and practice of basic writing," the CBW-L allows subscribers to engage in professional conversations that are fast, frequent, and far ranging. The CBW Web site was also a response to the 1995 special-interest group discussions on mainstreaming and the resulting need for greater communication. Like the e-mail list, the special-

⁵ The 1997 CBW workshop, for example, was titled "Race, Class, and Culture in the Basic Writing Classroom," and the presentations from this workshop, as well as pieces by the cochairs, were published in a special issue of the *Journal of Basic Writing* (see Gunner and McNenny; Maher; Royster and Taylor; Shor; Soliday and Gleason; Tate, McMillan, and Woodworth; and Villanueva).

interest group meetings, and the preconference workshops, the Web site is another way that basic writing teacher-researchers can build community and access resources useful for their work. The site contains links to information on CBW membership, the CBW e-mail list, online resources, basic writing programs, a reading list, the *Journal of Basic Writing*, the CBW archive, and the CBW Award for Innovation.⁶ The Web site also has a link to *Basic Writing e-Journal*, a free, peer-reviewed online journal that began publication in summer 1999 and is designed to expand conversations about basic writing.

CBW Defines the Field of Basic Writing with Its Bibliography, 1999–2005

The years 1999 to 2005 again brought new direction to the Conference on Basic Writing as it faced state budget cuts, "outsourcing" of basic writing, and high-stakes testing. In response to these challenges, CBW continued to make the work of basic writing teacher-researchers more public and to advocate for teachers and students in basic writing classes.

Perhaps CBW's most notable achievement to date is the publication of four editions of *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Basic Writing*. The first two editions were edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Gregory R. Glau, CBW cochairs from 1999 to 2002; the third edition was edited by Gregory R. Glau and Chitralakha Duttgupta; this fourth edition is edited by Duttgupta and Robert J. Miller. The *Bibliography* abstracts books, articles, and periodicals; more than sixty teachers from around the country annotated more than four hundred entries for this fourth edition. As Mike Rose notes, "In the academy . . . your life [is] the record of all you [have] to say about the particular booklists you [have] made your own" (70). The same can be said of CBW as an organization and the field of basic writing: our life is the record of all we have to say about the particular booklists we have made our own. The fees the editors would normally receive from the *Bibliography* are used to fund the CBW Fellowship, which supports travel to the annual Conference on Basic Writing workshop and to the Conference on College Composition and Communication meeting. CBW Fellowship applications are judged on their benefit to the instructor's professional interests, their benefit to students, and the applicant's clear dissemination plan.

An important aspect of the CBW community has always been an emphasis on informal collegiality. This tradition continues, especially at conferences, with a primary focus on the special-interest group meeting as a place to gather. Glau observes, "I've been especially pleased at the special-interest group meetings over the past couple of years—more and more people (we often are overflowing our room!) with lots of good ideas and suggestions and comments" (e-mail).

Honoring those who have made contributions to the field and celebrating their successes have sometimes been features of SIG meetings. This idea was revived in 2004 with the institution of the annual CBW Award for

⁶ The CBW Web site can be accessed at <http://bwe.cuny.cuny.edu/>.

Innovation. According to the CBW Web site, this award “recognizes writing programs for innovations that improve educational processes for basic writers through creative approaches” (Glau, *Conference on Basic Writing*). The winning schools are presented with a plaque and invited to give a brief presentation about their innovative program to SIG members. Lalicker identifies the CBW Award for Innovation and the CBW Fellowship as “the newest high points and those with the most transformative potential for the future” (e-mail).

CBW-L, the Conference on Basic Writing online discussion list, continues as an electronic forum. Topics of discussion include reading in the basic writing classroom, basic writing and learning disabilities, and teaching the process of writing.

Over the last thirty-five years, the Conference on Basic Writing has established a professional community that is interested equally in practice and theory. Lalicker characterizes the equal focus on research and teaching as an “exemplary dialectic” and adds that “the emphasis on both of these values is something that attracted me to the organization. . . . The invitation to newcomers operates productively to bring new ideas and practical energy to counter the natural institutionalization of theory” (e-mail). The CBW community was developed through a network created by the early newsletters, its online successors CBW-L and BWe, the Web site, books, the early national conferences and current annual workshops, and the continuing special-interest group meetings. Through informal conversations, information sharing, formal presentations, debates, and scholarship—in person, in print, and in electronic media—the organization has developed into a thriving community of diverse educators who work together to create a rich, professional practice.

The Next Thirty-Five Years, 2015 and Beyond

As the Conference on Basic Writing looks forward to its next thirty-five years, the students will always be there. But how can basic writing educators meet their needs? Some issues we may need to address include reduced funding for education, high-stakes testing, widely varying local conditions, working conditions for basic writing faculty, the community college voice, and global literacy.

As state budgets tighten, we may need to work to reduce or eliminate extra fees for basic writing instruction, particularly because basic writing students often are the ones who can least afford them. Another challenge is motivation: basic writing is often a noncredit course, and our students are frequently controlled by mandated tests for initial placement or for prerequisites for higher-level classes, which essentially lock them out of a serious education.

One response to these external demands is to link them back to our local situations and particular students. Reynolds conveys the importance of local conditions and programmatic assessment: “The CBW group has been valuable to me, as a program administrator and a scholar, for its constant attention to the differences among BW programs. . . . If there’s a unifying

factor in these discussions, it seems to be that everyone is under pressure to show results, usually through state-mandated testing of one sort or another. A high point of my time as cochair has been to see people sharing knowledge of these pressures and, in so doing, making it a national concern” (e-mail). Reynolds identifies program accountability as “one of the major issues facing the field”: “Although we are getting better at documenting what it means for an individual writer to advance one’s writing ‘skills’ through our classes, a more difficult challenge is to show that an approach, identifiably ‘BW,’ can be applied and measured (quantitatively) to show progress” (e-mail).

McNenny agrees: “As cautionary tales, the dismantling of various basic writing programs signals a need for a more public, proactive role for writing program administrators and instructors, to present a convincing and comprehensive picture of the gains that students achieve through writing programs, and the intellectual work involved for both students and faculty” (“Writing Instruction” 5). Lalicker suggests that we create a picture of ourselves based on broadly defined goals “in terms not just of discrete student ‘skills’ but in terms of students’ inclusion in the academy and students’ power in the larger culture. . . . We need to define program goals and outcomes in ways that are congruent with real student needs (as students see them, not just as we dictate them),” and we need to argue for “ways of assessment that can recognize these qualitative outcomes” (e-mail).

Perhaps as another response to external mandates, the Conference on Basic Writing might become a clearinghouse for information on high-stakes assessment, state mandates, local conditions, and programmatic assessments. The CBW Web site offers a venue for posting this information. There has already been some excellent work done in this area by CBW members such as Terence Collins (“Basic Writing Programs”) and Gregory Glau (*Arizona State University’s Stretch Program*).

We also must address the conditions under which basic writing faculty work. Reynolds notes how “BW classes are still handed off as ‘last resort’ teaching assignments. . . . Most BW courses are not part of a formal BW program but rather some other ‘remedial’ effort at colleges” (e-mail). Lalicker mentions how “too many outstanding BW teachers [are] . . . seen as pieceworkers, contingent faculty in the pink-collar ghetto” (e-mail). Reynolds suggests that a challenge for CBW is “to improve working conditions and make the job of teaching BW an attractive one,” perhaps by “seeing the job as a wider project, one that embraces literacy issues more generally” (e-mail). Lalicker agrees: “In too many of our institutional relationships, BW is seen as a separate room, a kind of subacademic support center” instead of “an academic field” that draws “creatively on the knowledge bases” of several subdisciplines: “mainstream composition, reading and literacy, ESL, and advanced rhetoric” (e-mail).

A related working-condition issue is employment contracts for adjunct faculty teachers. No one can survive on wages that are paid by the course and do not include benefits. “Freeway flyers” who are worried about paying their utility bills, buying food for their children, finding a parking space, and making it to class at the next institution cannot be expected to make a serious commitment to students and teaching. Improving working conditions is part

of what Lalicker calls "the continuing struggle to encourage the several levels of academia (the department, the institution, the national professional establishment) to see BW instructors as serious professional practitioners" (e-mail). Being taken seriously means being funded and offering "well-theorized and practical programs," and as Lalicker concludes, "only those with a first-class institutional voice proportionate to their educational role can influence budgets, program goals, syllabi, and teaching methods. . . . Politics are pedagogy" (e-mail).

In some states that follow a business model, basic writing instruction has been "downsized" and "outsourced," moved from four- or six-year colleges to community colleges or from colleges to private providers. Another challenge for the future of the Conference on Basic Writing is to allow more space within the community for community college and private provider voices. Although three of CBW's chairs have been from community colleges (Adams, Kirkpatrick, and Fitzgerald), community college teacher representation in CBW has not been broad. In the first volume of this bibliography, only nine of the 119 contributors were from community colleges (although some contributors were working in the community college arm of four- or six-year institutions). McNenny notes that "much of the mainstreaming debate has indeed excluded the voices of two-year college decision makers" (Preface vi). Fitzgerald adds, "Where do our community college students and faculty fit in the discussion? . . . Why do my colleagues in the Conference on Basic Writing have to be reminded that basic writing is a universal term that can be applied to many contexts, not just the universities where they teach?" ("The Context Determines Our Choice" 222).

Within the organization, the Conference on Basic Writing must also continue to include instructors from many types of institutions, from two-year colleges to PhD-granting institutions. We serve every basic writing student. Conversations between teacher-researchers and researcher-teachers across geographic boundaries, between private and public environments, across open admissions and selective admissions lines, and among differing levels of academic institutions strengthen our practice.

Another challenge is global literacy and online teaching. As Reynolds notes, "We will have to start to address more global literacy issues. Our students are already in competition with students overseas now for employment, and literacy issues here are literacy issues there. Education offered through accredited online colleges has started to include lower-division courses, including composition. I expect that we need to start thinking more carefully about how to bring our theoretical and practical concerns to current global literacy practices" (e-mail).

In his final column as the chair of the Conference on Basic Writing, Adams articulated the importance of CBW's work:

The teaching of basic writing is important—as important as anything being done in higher education. Often we are the last chance at college-level education for students who have plenty of ability but who have not been served well previously or who have not taken advantage of the opportunities offered. . . . Further, we are one of the few areas in the academy where differences between students are reduced rather than exaggerated. . . .

Because the teaching of basic writing is so important, the work of this organization is similarly important. . . . CBW's most important role is to insure CCCC continues to provide a place where teachers of basic writing feel that their needs are being addressed and to insure that the considerable intelligence of the combined membership of CCCC continues to address the thorny problems involved in teaching basic writers. ("From the Chairs" 2–3)

As Charles Guilford, founder of the Conference on Basic Writing, said before he retired in 2004, "There are many, many students who continue to need quality teaching." The future of those students rests in the hands of those teachers and scholars who are committed to students and serious about providing them with access to quality education.

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⁷ The CBW Web site, the *CBW Newsletter*, and issues of *Basic Writing e-Journal* can now be accessed at <http://bwe.cuny.cuny.edu/>. Other resources for teaching basic writing can be found on the CBW blog at <http://cbwblog.wordpress.com/>.

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