

EDITORS' COLUMN

We begin this issue with the announcement that *JBW* has a change in its editorship. Karen Greenberg stepped down from this position and has become once again a Consulting Reviewer for the journal. We are grateful for the enormous effort Karen put into *JBW* and into the field of developmental writing over the past many years. She is an extraordinary scholar and teacher, and since it would be impossible to acknowledge the full extent of her contribution here, we will simply say how grateful we are to her. George Otte, known to many of you because of his basic writing scholarship and his hard work in our field, was able to join Trudy in time to help put this belated but otherwise impressive issue together.

In addition, we are delighted that we were able to hire two editorial assistants, Linda Camarasana and Carl Whithaus, who will be handling subscriptions, permissions, manuscript trafficking, and final production work on the journal. Linda and Carl are both doctoral students at the CUNY Graduate Center (where George is on the faculty) and each has experience in publishing and journal production, as well as knowledge about the field of basic writing. We are very fortunate to have such well-qualified and diligent individuals now working for the journal. With their assistance, we are sure that *JBW* will be coming to you on time and in excellent shape. We must thank Vice Chancellor Elsa Nuñez for enabling us to hire Linda and Carl at this moment in *JBW*'s history and we feel this support augurs well for *JBW*'s future.

Despite the pressures that resulted from these changes, we are extremely proud of this issue of *JBW*. It begins with the first chapter from Jane Maher's biography, *Mina P. Shaughnessy: Her Life and Work*, recently published by NCTE. As many of you know, Shaughnessy was not only in many senses the founder of our academic discipline, but she was also one of the founders of *JBW*, so it is especially appropriate that we are able to include the first chapter of the story of her remarkable life in this issue, particularly since Shaughnessy was the apotheosis of acute attention to students, and this first chapter gives acute attention to her as a student. In fact, acute attention to students might be the theme of this issue, and so it is doubly fitting that the next essay begin with Laura Gray-Rosendale's discussion of Shaughnessy's role in defining the Basic Writer. Gray-Rosendale questions the concept of definition itself and instead chooses to focus on the ways in which "those students whom we label 'Basic Writers' negotiat[e] their own identities as writers in our classes." Closely analyzing student discourse during a revision activity, Gray-Rosendale reveals how students' identities are constructed and reconstructed as they grapple with complex social and political issues.

In his "Narratives of Identity: Theorizing the Writer and the Nation," Morris Young also includes his students' voices. He examines

how the process of writing and revising texts helps a group of University of Hawai'i students labeled "at risk" and "non-standard" deepen their understanding of their identities as writers and gain self-determination as Hawai'ians. Rosemary Winslow and Monica Mische also focus on helping their students gain self-awareness and a deeper understanding of their own identities and potential in society in the seminar course they created. In it, basic writers study the hero's quest; they are guided through an examination of the experiences of strong, courageous individuals from a variety of time periods. Through using readings, writing, and visits to such sites as monuments and museums, students learn how individuals make personal and moral decisions. This, in turn, enables the students' move beyond critical skills into "critical wisdom."

Jim Cody in the next essay explains why – though it may seem a paradox – an emphasis on expressive language helps basic writers to write academic discourse. Students enrolled in his workshop discovered the value of their voices as they wrote about their own experiences. By including his students' writing, Cody illustrates how this led them to better understand academic material and to fulfill college assignments. Cody's essay has an interesting complement in Ann Kirch's "A Basic Writer's Topoi for Timed Essay Tests." Kirch found that her basic writing students had difficulty drawing on their personal experiences when confronted with timed writing tests. She discovered that by introducing classical topoi to them, they could learn to create a framework that would allow them to draw from a broad array of ideologies. This not only led students to generate passing essays but also to become more aware of societal issues and problems.

If we have not adequately suggested to you what a substantial and engrossing series of articles is here assembled, we can only refer you to the articles themselves. Again, we are extremely pleased with this issue and pledge our commitment to you to get our next issues to you on time. Thank you for your patience and continued support of JBW.

– *Trudy Smoke and George Otte*

Correction: In his essay on "Narrative Discourse and the Basic Writer" in the Fall 1995 issue of JBW, Norbert Elliot incorrectly attributed a quote to Patricia Laurence. The quotation on page 20 that begins with the words, "I think Lu and her supporters need to get real about the world I'm talking about..." was written by Peter Rondinone in the "Symposium on Basic Writing, Conflict and Struggle, and the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy" in the December 1993 issue of College English (page 885), not by Patricia Laurence. Professor Rondinone should also have been included in the Works Cited list for Elliot's article.