

EDITORS' COLUMN

To glance at the articles of this issue is to realize the awesome insistence, and persistence, of its author-professionals in striving to create integrated experiences of learning. Even as we daily encounter exigencies—both institutional and social—that replicate divisions, instructors of basic writing and reading continually build the theory and pedagogy to anchor students to their lives of literacy. The gusty roarings of programs and pedagogies that sweep past students' already-there literacies are challenged to re-imagine what author Kimberly K. Gunter, in this issue, calls the “continuum” that turns writing into so many either/or-type activities: Either students are learning writing or learning reading; either they are writing personally or they are writing academically. Meanwhile, the either/or-defying qualities of students' literacies, already rich and whole when they enter our classrooms, become obscured. In response, we feel compelled to slow our own and others' movement past students' literacies—hopefully, long enough for us to recognize and re-center them as part of students' academic journeys.

For some critics and practitioners, the “whole language” approach more meaningfully engages students' own literacies as part of the process of developing academic reading and writing proficiencies. While whole language is more commonly evoked in conjunction with primary and secondary education, it offers a useful frame for thinking about the articles in this issue as they grapple with entrenched assumptions about, and continuums of, language learning that often drive our programs and practices. With first and home literacies as its starting-point, whole language acknowledges, and accounts for, the learning of language in terms of integrative activity—a process that constantly engages itself according to new input, in turn sparking new experiences of problem-solving—synthesis and re-synthesis. The process supposes an active and subjective agent at the helm, aware, interested, and creative—an agent capable of responding literately. When driving pedagogy, whole language challenges common boundaries in learning—as in, now we're reading, now we're writing; now we're writing and now we're reflecting on our writing. (How can reflecting, by way of writing, not be also writing?) Thus, whole language illuminates the possibility of both/and identities, by which students may “voice” their writing in multiple, interrelated ways, within and between the various aspects of any one (supposed as only “one”) reading or writing event.

Among the articles in this issue, the first one, “ESL Curriculum Revision: Shifting Paradigms for Success,” by Doreen E. Ewert, most directly highlights the theme of integration and the value of whole language. A disjointed array

of courses at Ewert's institution, Indiana University, fragmented the experience of English language learning for the growing number of international, second-language students entering the college. Through rigorous study of the various courses and curriculum, and by adopting a team approach with colleagues similarly interested in creating a unified, context-specific experience of English language learning, Ewert drew from the best models and theories for growing a completely revised ESL literacy developmental sequence. The integration of reading and writing throughout the sequence productively re-writes a "long history of ESL and EFL instruction of focusing on discrete language skills rather than literacy" for Indiana University and within the field of first and second language acquisition. By all measures that may be garnered at this point—test scores, grades, and student and teacher interviews—the new curriculum, now in its second year, models success for matriculating ESL international students.

Our second article, "How Antonio Graduated On Out of Here: Improving the Success of Adult Students with an Individualized Writing Course," by Michelle Navarre Cleary, also tells a story of striving to value students in terms of their unique abilities and locations within the academy. Navarre Cleary offers a relatively rare story of outreach to students as individuals—students who, as adults, have traveled particular roads, coursing academia first on its terms and finally on their own. Like the innovation of Ewert at IU, Writing Workshop at DePaul University's School for New Learning accommodates students not sufficiently served by current programs for writing and advancement. Navarre Cleary designed Writing Workshop to suit adult learners at any number of stages along the ladder of college writing, from students who typically might be deemed "basic" to more advanced students, like Antonio, who as a senior was stuck on a final project. Again, the focus is holistic—on a writer and his particular experiences and priorities, not some pre-set or modularized agenda. And as students accrue the benefits of individualized instruction, teachers unexpectedly confront assumptions about "instruction." Citing the challenge of teaching in an individualized context, Navarre Cleary quotes Deborah Brandt to say, "the habit of automatically seeing 'teachers' and 'students' and 'classroom organization' must be problematized. That [we] can take such categories so easily for granted. . . only speaks to how widely sanctioned and understood are the roles of teachers and students and classroom life in general, how well embedded and routinized they are in normal life." In pushing back on entrenched categories in higher education to build holistic frameworks of teaching and learning, we find challenges to be attributes of promise.

Kimberly K. Gunter offers a compelling case study to support a holistic valuation of literacy learning in our third article, “Braiding and Rhetorical Power Players: Transforming Academic Writing through Rhetorical Dialectic.” Contesting the rivalry she observes between modes of writing in the academy—whether “personal” or “privileged”—Gunter imagines academic writing as braiding, an integrative process that resists configuration as either this or that. She further urges us to imagine possibilities for student writing beyond the transactional-poetic continuum, proposing a “slicker” kind of surface “along, around, and about which writing might skate.” Further, she states, “[w]e can overlay on that continuum, whose gauge is now free to roam, the genre of academic writing, which will. . . contain. . . possibilities that were before constrained or, depending on the classroom, unimaginable.” Referencing theories of mixed and hybrid discourse and alt/dis, Gunter presents Laura, a student who enrolled in her LGBTQ-themed writing class. Laura was out as a lesbian in her writing class but remained conflicted by the intersections of her identity/ies, including her identity as an Army cadet. As Laura eventually accepts her teacher’s invitation to braid identities rhetorically, new possibilities emerge; she is better able to theorize her experience as a lesbian and a soldier. As a rhetorical strategy, braiding engages a “multiplicity of discourse and [students’] own multiple subjectivities.” As Gunter notes, such opportunity benefits students from mainstream cultures, who may find it new and thus particularly challenging, as well as students from marginalized communities—those more apt to already employ a “discursive survival strategy”—like so many basic writers.

Our fourth article, “Reflection Revisited: The Class Collage,” by Jeff Sommers, similarly addresses the bifurcation of experience in writing instruction by re-exploring the convention of reflection within many writing courses. Too often, Sommers attests, the potential for reflection to affect meta-consciousness in and about writing, and oneself as a writer, languishes in courses where reflection slides to the last weeks, or embeds a performance for convincing evaluators that the student is worthy of “passing.” Current notions of reflection, such as Donald Schön’s reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, and Kathleen Blake Yancey’s reflection-in-presentation, affirm the role of reflection in writing classrooms, but still link reflection to the writer’s cognitive development. As Sommers shows, instructors can get students beyond descriptions of new writing abilities. His class collage activity repurposes reflection as a holistic pedagogy, spanning the semester, for students to examine and re-examine their beliefs about writing as well as those of their classmates. In a communal frame, students consider what it means

to value, or not, the aspects of writing that students experience in the course. The approach engages both students' prior experience as writers (resisting the notion that they are novices) and their capacity to philosophize, encouraging students to substantiate and explain their claims for writing. This process eschews potentially lock-step methodologies for reflection—for example, teach, write, reflect. For Sommers, reflection is a fully integrative activity, enfolding the writing experiences of the entire semester and writing community.

Finally, in our fifth article, “Defining and Experiencing Authorship(s) in the Composition Classroom: Findings from a Qualitative Study of Undergraduate Writing Students at the City University of New York,” Johannah Rodgers further complicates notions of student reflection on writing experience, broadly conceived. At the point of effectively having completed their writing courses as adult students at The City College of New York's Center for Worker Education, students consider how and whether they view themselves as authors and/or writers. In this study, Rodgers probes the literary and academic traditions that influence the ease and resistances with and by which students relate to notions of authorship, proving the persistent impact of these traditions on students' writerly identities today. The underlying question for Rodgers is one of authority: To what extent, and under what influences, will or may students claim a sense of writerly authority? And if such a claim is indeed an end of all writing instruction, how must we (re)configure our writing classrooms?

Exploring how students “experienc[e] authorship” is ultimately a fitting way to capture this issue's concern with holistic literacy learning for college, bringing us full circle, back to Ewert's concern over the fragmented experience of English language learners at her institution. In Rodgers' move toward “authorship-as-experience,” we are urged against pedagogies that seem to push students toward one or the other identity, thereby limiting their opportunities for making meaning. In holistic frameworks, identity is plural—encouraged by multiplying, not minimizing, the contexts that enable new subject positions.

We would like to close by welcoming a new addition to our editorial team. Professor Ann Del Principe of CUNY's Kingsborough Community College will be joining JBW as Associate Editor. Annie comes to us with a strong background in composition, rhetoric, and basic writing. At Kingsborough, she is Director of the Freshman English Program. Her research interests include writing assessment, play theory in the writing classroom, and students' literacy experiences in community colleges. We look forward to many fruitful collaborations with Annie and future JBW authors.

—Hope Parisi and Cheryl C. Smith