

## EDITORS' COLUMN

One of the strongest definitions of basic writing in our field emerges out of Bruce Horner's exploration of its location—institutionally, materially, and ideologically at the periphery. It is fortunate that basic writing practitioners are not easily daunted by such a location; we know to embrace it politically as a place for “refusing to settle for fixed designations of what is and isn't literacy, or illiteracy, fixed designations of who is and isn't educable or worthy of education, and fixed designations of what we do and don't know about literacy and its learning and teaching” (7). Here we find high ground for mapping needs and naming competencies, for seeing the “experience of difficulty,” as both Horner and James Slevin note, as “a re-location of earlier and other struggles” (Horner 6). To us, in our scholarship and in our pedagogy, this challenge is foundational and incessant.

This issue of *JBW* reflects the waves of movement that continue to carry us forward, with metaphors of relocation and travel especially resonant. In our first article, “Beyond Assimilation: Tribal Colleges, Basic Writing, and the Exigencies of Settler Colonialism,” Christie Toth packs a Ford hatchback with what little she knows, at first, of how to build a course for basic writers at Diné College, the oldest tribal college of North America. Recognizing that “local context is a defining characteristic in basic writing pedagogy,” Toth reflects on her own personal and professional dislocation, which becomes the impetus for exploring larger disparities of educational equity and access for her students at Diné. In light of their histories within longstanding systems of institutional misunderstandings and exclusion, she asks, “What do tribal colleges want from writing?” and how best to evolve a basic writing course to meet local potential and need? The result is Basic Writing 100B which, while responsive to local exigencies, offers a route to language competence and self-determinism grown from a colonial history.

Our next article, “Noticing the Way: Translingual Possibility and Basic Writers,” by Sarah Stanley, finds us similarly relocated at the intersection of Second Language Acquisition and Translingualism, a locale Horner knows well in his own efforts to open basic writing to this new, cross-generative terrain. Stanley's starting point is to address some instructors' hesitance to venture past strict notions of error toward what a translingual perspective offers: a “social negotiation” of error, “in other words, an agility with translingual possibility.” The way toward such possibility, Stanley

holds, is to recognize that basic writers may still need the vantage of the “privilege[d] . . . standardized reader, who can *choose* to read *through* language,” but who, in becoming a partner to the basic writer in *noticing* error, resists that privilege. While still valuing a translingual understanding of error “as less a ‘feature of text’ than a feature of ‘context,’” basic writing teachers can help students notice and puzzle over those moments “where the distinction between an error and mistake can be muddled,” thereby “allowing [a new notion of] noticing to unfold.” Stanley’s thoughtful construction of a sentence workshop for students offers a lens for basic writing teachers to discern these distinctions and allow “translingual possibilities” in the classroom to emerge.

In “A Basic Writing Course to Promote Writer Identity: Three Analyses of Student Papers,” Barbara Bird gets us traversing again—between BW and FYW classrooms and between Writing about Writing pedagogies and social identity theory. As Bird reports, new thinking about WAW and social identity theory led her and some colleagues to devise a curriculum based on writing content and Roz Ivanič’s markers of academic writer identity. Over time, Bird and her colleagues noticed “clearer claims, . . . [quotes] connected to . . . claims,” and “significant expansion of depth, logic, and discussions of each claim.” In short, they found strong evidence of both discursal and authorial identities in student writing. Bird describes her process to textually document the growth and stability of “writer identities across time” to the extent that these identities, as Ivanič asserts, are interpretable through student text. Her article conjoins discourses of basic writing, transfer theory, WAW, identity, and Bartholomae’s themes of involving basic writers in scholarship that strongly joins them “as colleagues. . . [to the] academic enterprise” (Bartholomae 11).

Lastly, we take a more expansive look at the transversive power of basic writing with our fourth article, Victor Villanueva’s “Subversive Complicity and Basic Writing Across the Curriculum,” drawn from the author’s Keynote at the Conference on Basic Writing workshop at the 2013 Conference on College Composition and Communication. Like Horner, Villanueva redraws the lines defining the periphery—beyond the basic writing classroom and across the entire curriculum. His assertion, he says, is “simple”: “time for basic writing to get out from under,” time “to inculcate a Basic Writing Across the Curriculum. . . a time yet again to move away from the concept that basic writers are in need of remedies.” Opening up our view of the field, his words encourage us to travel alongside our students, toward an educational system reinvented to encompass

the fullest range of rhetorical talent and capacity. Through a vision both optimistic and generative, Villanueva acknowledges that social movements have long histories of having to forge inroads through backdoor means, or “the trickster’s ways”—among these, the Puerto Rican “*jaiberia*,” or “a *jaiba* rhetoric,” grown from colonization.

Assuming roles that may irk us, Villanueva observes, may also afford us means for effective “troubling” of unproductive policies and practices. As he cites sociologists Grosfoguel, Negron-Muntaner, and Goeras on Diana Fuss’s work: “there can be a mimicry of subversion where the deliberate performance of a role does not entail identification.” He advocates alliances for our students across the curriculum to promote “[our students’] mimicry, their conscious invention of the university” to capture “the potential of changing the university, broadening the university’s conceptions of discourses in action, of the rhetorics that are always at play.” The location of basic writing, therefore, must keep shifting to enable a more varied and *inclusive* experience of writing for basic writers across the curriculum—with “more members of the university discovering that, at bottom, we are all creatures of the word.”

—**Hope Parisi** and **Cheryl C. Smith**

## **Notes**

Bartholomae, David. “Inventing the University.” *Journal of Basic Writing* 5.1 (1986): 4-23. Print.

Horner, Bruce. “Relocating Basic Writing.” *Journal of Basic Writing* 30.2 (2011): 5-23. Print.