

EDITOR'S COLUMN

With this issue, *JBW* completes two years under our new policies. Most notable among these policies is our conversion to a refereed journal. Without the invaluable services of our Editorial Board, and the goodwill of our authors who are willing to submit to our rigorous review process, we could not have succeeded as we have. This issue also marks the close of the two-year period stipulated for the first "Mina P. Shaughnessy Writing Award" for the best article in *JBW* every two years beginning in 1986. We hope to announce the winner, to be selected by a group of three scholar/teachers who do not serve on the *JBW* Editorial Board, in our next issue.

Another policy in place since 1986 has been our move away from the constraints of thematic issues in favor of offering timely presentations of current thinking about basic writing. In this issue, we have a lively range of topics, but with a twist I did not expect. As I worked with the essays most favorably reviewed in recent months, I noticed that three pursue a related theme I have rarely seen discussed in such detail: the effectiveness of teaching of writing patterns to basic writers. Is this coincidence, the beginning of a trend, or the reporting of what has long been underway but little reported? We welcome your responses to these questions and to any others raised by the discussions on these pages.

Our first three essays discuss overarching topics related to basic writing. Attitude as it affects variations in writing skill is discussed by Willa Wolcott and Dianne Buhr in a description of one of their recent studies. Faculty collaborating to create tests for one type of measure of basic writing achievement is described by Jon Jonz in a discussion of method as well as research outcomes. Error is explored by Rei R. Noguchi who uses the perspective of transformational-generative linguistics to suggest fresh ways of understanding certain sentence-level problems.

Next comes the cluster of three essays about writing patterns. Janet R. Gilbert presents a list of language patterns that her research reveals as important, and she offers analyses of student writing before and after basic writers have been instructed in those patterns. Donna Gorrell argues the value of imitation, in its classic forms as well as its modern variations,

for basic writers. Jean Sanborn describes her surprise at the value of sentence combining for the type of advanced ESL student often found in basic writing classes.

We end this collection with two responses to essays in earlier *JBW* issues. Kristine F. Anderson critiques Ann B. Dobie's essay on spelling which appeared in our Fall 1986 issue. Joseph G.R. Martinez and Nancy C. Martinez comment in support of Myra Kogen's essay published in our Spring 1986 issue (another response to the same essay was included in our Spring 1987 *JBW*). We hope that these responses will encourage additional readers to participate in similar exchanges of ideas.

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