

PEDAGOGY

Introduction

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I am pleased to present the debut of a pedagogy area for *BWe*. This new section will focus on issues surrounding teaching and learning in diverse basic writing contexts. Essays appearing here blend theory with pedagogical practice and present arguments based on authors' observations of classroom realities or reflections on their own teaching experiences. We particularly prize teacher-research for two primary reasons: (1) teacher-research showcases the observations of front-line basic writing teachers; (2) this form of writing allows very busy part-time and full-time faculty to capitalize on their own teaching experiences as a resource for writing and publication. In addition, we will publish *pedagogically oriented* case studies, ethnographic research, and analyses of student writing.

While we retain a strong focus on community college and senior college programs, we know that much current preparatory literacy education occurs on-line and off-campus, e.g., in privately owned test-preparation programs (e.g., [Kaplan Inc](#)), libraries, union halls, and adult education programs. We therefore encourage submissions that situate preparatory academic literacy teaching and learning in a variety of sites, e.g., in college programs, union halls, worker education programs, English language learning courses, and prison classrooms.

You need not be a full-time professor with a PhD to publish in *BWe*, especially in this pedagogy area. We encourage submissions from undergraduate peer tutors, graduate student teaching assistants, adjunct faculty, *and* full-time instructors and professors. A full range of teaching and learning perspectives will appear in our *BWe* pedagogy section.

While we will continue to value traditional print-based essays, we also seek multi-modal presentations such as Tom Peele's "[Writing About Faith: Mainstream Music and Composition](#)" (*BWe* Spring 2007) or Richard Miller's "[This Is How We Dream, Part I](#)" (2008 MLA Presidential Address). In fact, issues surrounding multimodal writing will be the focus of the next *BWe* issue. Please read our **Call for Submissions** in this issue and on the **Council for Basic Writing [Blog](#)** and consider submitting a manuscript for the 2011 issue of *BWe*.

Topics prospective authors might consider for possible *BWe* submissions include (1) student writing/reading development, (2) instructional strategies, (3) curricula, (4) writing intensive course curricula, (5) institutional influences on writing curricula and assessment, (6) students' motivations and emotional responses to learning/writing in academic contexts, (7) methods of placing/advising basic writing students, and (8) conferencing and tutorials. We welcome essays focused on remedial writing, reading or even math programs, but we also invite

submissions on teaching and learning in mainstreamed composition classes and college composition courses with strong enrollments of "[non-traditional](#)" students. In short, we hope to learn about many different pedagogically oriented issues and topics from the scholarship that will be appearing here.

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The eight essays in this section illustrate various curricular innovations in college writing courses and arguments for understanding "basic writing" classes and students. In "**Meaning-Making Concepts: Basic Writers' Access to Verbal Culture**," for example, Barbara Bird presents a strong case for teaching conceptual knowledge as a foundation for interpretive reading and writing; in so doing, Bird challenges the generally agreed upon belief that basic writers mainly lack knowledge of Standard English and/or expertise in uses of academic writing conventions. In a different sort of challenge, **Penny Freel** writes her entire *BWe* "essay" (not in traditional expository essay form but) as a letter to her readers, thereby illustrating a letter writing genre that she assigns regularly in order to encourage her students to produce authentic writing. Freel's "Dear Readers: Thoughts on the *Dear Ms. Freel Letters*" offers a description of a basic writing curriculum based primarily on letter writing while illustrating the work of a highly committed instructor.

Moving beyond classroom practices, Deborah Mutnick explores the "material and socioeconomic realities that militate against educational success . . . and are often accompanied by weak literacy skills and/or a narrow knowledge base." In "**Still 'Strangers in Academia': Five Basic Writers' Stories**," Mutnick quotes excerpts from her students' autobiographical narratives as evidence for an argument that students who place/test into basic writing on the basis of empirically "valid" approaches most often come from working class and poor families *and that this is no accident*.

While students of color and students from poor or working class families *are* over-represented in basic writing courses, they share common ground with their more mainstream counterparts. As Stafford Gregoire argues in "**Power Point Reflection**," contemporary US college students are "bombarded by images and media" which can serve as important resources for developing writing abilities. Gregoire persuasively argues for integrating visual images and multimodal literacies into a course that also includes the traditional components of outlining and thesis writing. This combination of visual images and outlining takes flight in a project that involves students in presenting ideas via their own PowerPoint slide presentations. With a similar focus on *presentation* of student writing, Dawn Terrick argues for publishing booklets of student essays in bound journals that are distributed to all students and faculty as well as to college administrators in order to promote understanding and acceptance of basic writing at Missouri Western University. Dawn Terrick is our 2010 winner of the CBW Inny Award for an outstanding work in basic writing program development. We congratulate her on her accomplishments in program development and on winning the CBW Inny Award.

As you read through these essays, we hope you will gain insights into your own teaching practices while learning about other instructors' curricula. Furthermore, we encourage you to consider submitting your own manuscripts to future *BWe* issues. All of our prospective *BWe* authors are asked to follow the [CCCC Guidelines for the Ethical Treatment of Students and Student Writing in Composition Studies](#).