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Teaching/Writing

The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

T/W

*Inaugural Issue:
The Past, Present, and Future of
Writing Teacher Education*

Volume 1 | Spring 2012

T/W

Teaching/Writing

The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

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Teaching/Writing

The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

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Inaugural Issue
Vol. 1 | Spring 2012



Teaching/Writing

The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

Vol. 1 | February 2012

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Opening Editorial: *The Next Step in a Disciplinary Journey*

Jonathan Bush, Co-Editor

With this issue, we embark on an audacious adventure – the development of a journal dedicated to the discussion, advancement, and research of the teaching and support of writing teachers. This area of interest, which we term “writing teacher education,” encompasses all work that engages the development, support, training, and education of future, new, and experienced teachers of writing. Traditionally, conversations in this area have included those who have experience and background in both composition studies and English education. Typical attendees for forums in writing teacher education have included instructors of writing methods and theory courses, National Writing Project site directors, first-year and advanced writing program directors and mentors, writing across-the-curriculum and writing-in-the-discipline coordinators, and teacher-leaders and mentors for new and current elementary, middle-school, and high school writing teachers.

This community of educators has evolved over the years to include annual meetings at both the Conference on College Composition (the Special Interest Group “English Education/Composition Connections”) and at the Conference on English Education (the CEE Commission on Writing Teacher Education), regular sessions and presentations at NCTE, CEE, and CCCC, a NCTE sponsored post-conference workshop, contributions to several academic books, and articles in *College Composition and Communication*, *Pedagogy*, *English Education*, *English Journal*, and *The Writing Instructor*, among other journals. A rich and vibrant discussion has developed – connections have developed in colleagues connected by common concerns and interests, research has been done, conversations have led to teaching and professional collaborations across institutions and professional boundaries.

What has been missing, though, has been a defined, rigorous academic outlet for scholarship on topics in this area. That is not to say that those of us in writing teacher education haven’t been publishing. It’s just that we haven’t had a venue of our own. All other generally appropriate publication outlets tend to require a different angle -- a slight (or not-so-slight) tweak or change in order to make it fit that venue’s mission – a focus towards composition studies, teacher education, writing project work, writing program administration, and others. Over the years, many of us have wondered how much valuable research on writing teacher education has been rejected, or lost, or redefined in attempts to meet the needs of various publication outlets in composition, rhetoric, or education studies. We have also wondered how much scholarship in writing teacher education has not even been attempted – or abandoned early on – because of authors’ inability to see a peer-reviewed outlet for the work down the road. We – my co-editor Erinn Bentley, our editorial board, and the entire community of writing teacher education -- hope to address this issue with *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* by providing an intentional outlet for such work. We want to enhance the scholarship and research in writing teacher education and take the next step in the identification of this area as a rich place for scholarly discourse.

The journal, initially which will be published each January, but we hope will eventually become bi-annual, will include peer-reviewed articles on all aspects of writing teacher education – and we hope that our contributors will help us expand our own ideas of what encompasses this realm. We will also include several columns

on specific issues and at least one roundtable review of key texts and ideas as they apply to writing teacher education. The title of the journal -- *Teaching/Writing* – is intentional. We see the journal as being at the intersection of English education and composition studies. This isn’t just a two-way connection; rather, we see it as a nexus of many ideas -- bringing in all the theoretical and practical spokes of each of those fields. We hope that writers will find connections with literacy, literature, culture, theory, and all elements that make these fields so innovative and exciting. We hope that, through this journal, we uncover new perspectives and assist others in new ways of thinking. In short – bring it on; we’re interested in it.

For this inaugural issue, we asked several sets of key people in writing teacher education to share with us -- and our future readers -- their vision for the journal. Our opening article comes from Robert and Michelle Tremmel. Bob has been an important and inspirational figure in writing teacher education for many years, and Michelle is an experienced and skilled practitioner of writing teacher education. Together, they provide us with their view of the field, its challenges, and the opportunities ahead.

Our second piece comes from Kia Jane Richmond and M. Kilian McCurrie. Both Kia and Kilian are important leaders in writing teacher education. Together, citing the scholarship and discussion of the past and the societal trends that surround writing teacher education, they lay out some directions and ideas for future versions of the journal. The third piece in this opening collection is written together by Elizabeth Brockman and Ken Lindblom, Elizabeth, along with Mark Letcher, is the current chair of the CCCC

SIG: English Education/Composition Connections. Ken is the editor of *English Journal*. Both spend much of their professional lives in both composition studies and English education communities. Discussing the SIG, the English studies journal *Pedagogy*, and *English Journal*, Elizabeth and Ken map out the role, audience, and place of this journal as they see it advancing not only writing teacher education, but English studies as well. The fourth piece is written by Kirk Branch and Lisa Eckert, both of Montana State University. Kirk and Lisa write about their professional relationships and how, as a team, they cross English education and composition boundaries as they work together to educate writing teachers, both in their undergraduate and graduate programs and as co-directors of a National Writing Project site. Our final piece is written by Kristen Hawley Turner. Kristen is the current co-chair of the CEE Commission on Writing Teacher Education and a regular contributor to writing teacher education conversations. Kristen tells her own story and how the National Writing Project and other experiences helped her transition from teacher to teacher educator.

I offer my thanks to all those that helped launch this project: co-editor Erinn Bentley; Elizabeth Brockman and Mark Letcher, co-chairs of the CCCC SIG and Kristen Hawley Turner, co-chair of the CEE Commission; the other members of our editorial board: Douglas Baker, Patricia Dunn, Kilian McCurrie, Kia Jane Richmond, Leah Zuidema, the colleagues who have written for this initial issue, and the scholars and teachers in writing teacher education whose work inspired the journal, I also thank Anne Whitney and Mike Sherry, who along with Leah Zuidema, gave me excellent advice through the development of this idea.

Together, we look forward to this project and seeing where it takes us – rhetorically, pedagogically, theoretically. We hope we provide an outlet for exciting scholarship that advances not only the teaching and support of new teachers, but also gives us new ways to think, research, and conceive of the act of teaching, writing, and the intersections within. I encourage readers to consider this journal as an outlet for their work – practical, theoretical, and research-based. We might have a few challenges and growing pains along the way, but we look forward to the future, and what it might bring for *T/W* and for writing teacher education.

Over the years, many of us have wondered how much valuable research on writing teacher education has been rejected, or lost, or redefined in attempts to meet the needs of various publication outlets in composition, rhetoric, or education studies.

Writing Teacher Education: Past and Present

Michelle Tremmel, Iowa State University

Robert Tremmel, Iowa State University

In *The Literature Workshop*, Sheridan Blau (2003) points out one of the more significant ironies of discipline formation “in the broader field of English studies”:

a kind of schizophrenic split between the teaching of writing and the teaching of literature at every level of instruction. As a profession, we have for the past twenty or twenty-five years tended to teach composition in ways that are process-oriented, learning-centered, and collaborative while we have continued . . . to teach literature in a way that has been product-oriented, . . . text-centered, . . . and both competitive and top-down. . . . (p. 3).

Although Blau may be overly pessimistic about the state of literary instruction and overly optimistic about that of writing instruction, the kind of split he identifies is not limited to the teaching of literature and composition but extends also to the teaching of teachers of literature and writing. Preparing English teachers to teach literature has a long-standing tradition informed by a large body of research and pedagogy. Approaches to educating English teachers as teachers of writing (one aspect of what has become known as writing teacher education) has, on the other hand, emerged much more recently; indeed, it has been only in the last ten years or so that a critical mass of English teacher educators has begun viewing writing teacher education as a practice rising to the level of a discipline.

One particularly important aspect of this disciplinary development is that the ideas and structures that have led to its formation have come not just from research and pedagogy in the English language arts and English teacher education but also from research in rhetoric and composition and the teaching of first-year composition, dating back to the 1960s or before (Tremmel, 2002). Thus, when we speak of writing teacher education in terms of a discipline, we are really talking about an interdiscipline, developed over time in a process of intellectual and pedagogical cross-fertilization in an environment that supports teaching writing teachers of both high school English and first-year composition.

Jonathan Bush and Erinn Bentley’s new journal *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* is an idea in this discipline-formation process whose time has come, and Bush and Bentley are the right people to move it forward with this new journal.

We first met Jonathan Bush at the 2002 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Denver. Bob had just presented a paper on some research we had been doing related to the education of writing teachers, and Jonathan came up to the front table where Bob was packing up his book bag and, in a semi-mysterious way, basically ordered both of us to attend the next session, where Jonathan was scheduled to speak. When we got to that session, we immediately understood why we were there. Jonathan had been working on many of the same questions we had and had gotten to the same point we had: that of understanding writing teacher education as an emerging interdiscipline that had been developing for many years below the radar in English teacher education and composition studies (Bush, 2002).



Those who know Jonathan will understand immediately that when he learned there were more of us interested in this interdiscipline than anyone knew, he went right to work. Over the next few years, with the help of other writing teacher educators, compositionists, and writing program administrators Elizabeth Brockman, Janet Alsup, Heidi Estrem, and many others, Jonathan established a CCCC Special Interest Group devoted to writing teacher education and a commission on writing teacher education within the structure of the Conference on English Education (CEE). He also helped bring about numerous projects, panels, meetings, and texts that have had significant influence on how we all currently understand the interdiscipline of writing teacher education within the larger context of English Studies and NCTE.

If scholars like Richard Larson, Richard Gebhardt, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Carl Klaus (Tremmel, 2002) represent an early generation of writing teacher education, Erinn Bentley represents the future. Erinn was Jonathan’s doctoral student at Western Michigan University. Her work there combined English teacher education with rhetoric and composition, and her dissertation applied elementary and secondary teacher development strategies to a college composition program. As an emerging scholar, Erinn is perfectly positioned for the work this new journal will do.

. . . it has been only in the last ten years or so that a critical mass of English teacher educators has begun viewing writing teacher education as a practice rising to the level of a discipline.

In 2011 at the CEE Commission meetings during the 100th anniversary of the NCTE Convention in Chicago’s Palmer House Hotel, the largest group in the room was the current membership of the Commission on Writing Teacher Education. At this meeting (and at the CEE social later in the afternoon) we were excited to hear about Jonathan and Erinn’s initial plans for *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*.

Again, we believe that this is the right journal coming online at the right time. In it, the diverse array of scholars and practitioners in writing teacher education—compositionists, writing program administrators, English teacher educators, National Writing Project fellows, and anyone else interested in the education and continuing development of pre-service and in-service writing teachers—will have, for the first time in what is beginning to be a long history, a journal dedicated to research and pedagogy that is increasingly of compelling interest to them. And even though this may not be part of Jonathan and Erinn’s current business plan, we see another important potential role for this journal. We hope that as *T/W* provides a new and broadly conceived venue for researchers and scholars to publish their work and continue to shape and develop this increasingly dynamic interdiscipline, it will also contribute to changes in the way writing is taught in classrooms everywhere, call into question the view of writing instruction as testing and correction, and find ways to uproot the stubborn persistence of current-traditional approaches that for at least 90 years have worked against the growth of writers (Davis, 1922) at all levels.

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Our Vision for *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*

Kia Jane Richmond, Northern Michigan University
M. Kilian McCurrie, Columbia College (IL)

In introducing the June 2011 issue of *College Composition and Communication*, Kathleen Yancey characterizes the collection of articles as sharing a common aim to confront readers' assumptions. Yancey contends that confrontation may be viewed as a mechanism, not for antagonistic exchanges, but for "situating our perceptions, practices, and beliefs into a wider set of contexts" (581). As English educators, teachers of writing, and administrators, we also see value in opportunities to encounter writing and the teaching of writing in new and different contexts. Many of us who teach teachers of writing share multiple roles in a variety of programs: writing, linguistics, teacher preparation, and graduate faculty. We teach, advise, mentor, supervise, and administer, and sometimes it feels as though we're doing these all at once. Rarely, however, do we have opportunities to reflect on how our perceptions, practices and beliefs shape and are shaped by these contexts. Seeing the same colleagues at summer CEE workshops, NCTE and CCCC conventions, WPA summer institutes, and RSA conferences, helps assure us that it's possible to build a vital professional life around our shared history and commitment. Scholars like Richard Gebhardt, Stephen Wilhoit, and Robert Tremmel, to name a few, have also sought ways to understand the overlapping nature of writing teacher education, but for the most part, institutional and disciplinary boundaries have stifled an integrated understanding of our field. While many individuals have worked to make connections between fields, Robert Tremmel's 2001 call for us to "start acting as if writing teacher education itself deserved some kind of disciplinary status" still seems an unrealized goal (25).

In "Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century," Richard Fulkerson argues that in the new millennium, Composition Studies has become more fragmented as a discipline, noting that we "differ about what our courses are supposed to achieve, about how effective writing is best produced, about what an effective classroom looks like, and about what it means to make knowledge (2005, 681-2). We think that similarly, professionals in English Education have also approached writing instruction from a variety of (conflicting) perspectives. A scholarly journal such as *The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* will offer educators the opportunity to confront important issues in our profession as we share strategies and pedagogies, theorize practice, discuss research and grant opportunities, and propose opportunities for joint efforts in scholarship, teaching, inquiry, and professional development.

As the spaces, surfaces, and interfaces in which and through which literacy practices are shaped and rhetoric happens continue to expand, we as writing teacher educators must grapple with the transformations that occur in and through these spaces. In large part our students are still producing academic texts that are traditional in the most narrow sense: white paper, black ink, one inch margins all around, with linear development culminating in claims and conclusions. Certainly, the current emphasis on traditional linear forms of writing reflects what we think our students will be expected to teach in the first year writing class or the secondary classroom, but the values that shape what writing is and what writing does are shifting, at least in the spaces in which many our students compose and deliver their texts. Often, however, our complex institutional contexts make finding ways to address these realities difficult. The English educator, often laboring alone and isolated within an English department, needs the professional support of other writing teacher educators. While the

WPA or rhetoric and composition faculty member may not suffer the same degree of isolation in the English department, the familiar complaints about first year writing courses that don't "fix" students' writing sufficiently also focuses critical attention on the education of graduate student instructors.

The shifting expectations of writers, educators, and policy makers are nothing new, but what has changed over the last twenty-five years is our ability to respond to charge. In the nineteenth-century Harvard instituted its first written entrance exam to measure the writing abilities of incoming students after concerns had been raised about their poor preparation. By 1975 a *Newsweek* article ("Why Johnny Can't Write") proclaimed that America had a writing crisis, only this time the blame was placed on public schools for neglecting "the basics." While this was not a new controversy, the way educators and policymakers were defining literacy altered the expectations for writing teachers. The National Writing Project and other groups of committed educators responded to the crisis by creating a professional development model that extended the use of writing in all disciplines, across all levels, by identifying and enhancing the role of successful teachers. The paradigm for reform has also shifted, however, and recently, the same "sky is falling" theme has served politicians and the testing industry as they both construct a narrative of poor performing teachers and students and offer the SAT, CLA or other products as solutions, promising reliable standards and measures of students' reading, writing, and thinking abilities. Those engaged in writing teacher education are left to "consult" with representatives from the government and the testing business, complain on blogs, or become "occupiers." In one way or another we've probably all been asked, "What's the problem of teaching to a test if the test is a good one?" Plenty. And we hope *The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* can confront (to use Kathi Yancey's term) the myopic ways writing and the teaching of writing has been studied and represented by politically interested groups with no commitment to writing or the teaching of teachers. The ironic confluence of two forces - the expansion of writing in the general culture and the uniting of political and business interests to control how writing is taught and assessed - presents our field with a unique, kaironic moment. To better prepare future teachers of writing and address together the realities of standardization, we must unite. With the rich proliferation of writing in our culture, we need to find ways to prepare writing teachers to connect the processes and products of their writing in the real world with the classroom context. We need to offer practical solutions and models for administrators and policymakers involved in planning, implementing, and assessing writing programs. More specifically, we'd like to see articles in *The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* that address the following key areas for our profession:

- *Investigations of K-12 teacher education in English, specifically examinations of how we prepare teachers to create robust and rigorous lessons in creative writing, informative writing, argumentative writing, and research writing.*
- *Examinations of college teacher education in English, particularly looking at how future college instructors are prepared to teach first-year writing, advanced composition, technical/report writing, writing in the disciplines and across the curriculum.*

- *Research in writing program administration at the elementary, secondary, and university levels, with discussions of changes in standards and assessment, approaches to mentoring and evaluation of teachers, curriculum mapping, selection of courses, syllabi construction.*
- *Inquiry into the how we prepare writing teachers to reach out beyond school walls, specifically studies of writing instruction that includes engagement with academic service learning, community writing, learning centers, extracurricular writing projects, writing competitions or programs, and publishing of student writing.*

Our expectation for *The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* is that publication will offer teachers of writing at all levels a space in which to explore commonalities, to compare strategies, and to evaluate existing policies and common practices - - in effect, making connections across institutional and departmental divides. Though obstacles may exist, we believe that the construction of an academic space such as this one will provide necessary opportunities for shares interests, efforts, and hopes.

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Promising Connections: Uniting Writing Teachers

*Elizabeth Brockman, Central Michigan University
Ken Lindlom, Stony Brook University*

Two thousand eleven was a banner year for the Composition Studies-English Education Connections SIG, a special interest group that meets annually at CCCC. First of all, the SIG marked its ten-year anniversary. From 2001-11, the SIG showcased more than one hundred presentations by an impressive range of new and veteran teachers-scholars who, despite differing roles and affiliations, all share a professional interest in mentoring new writing teachers in the broadest sense of that responsibility. Second, former and current SIG co-chairs published "Seeking Connections, Articulating Commonalities: English Education, Composition Studies, and Writing Teacher Education" (Alsup, Brockman, Bush, and Letcher) in *College Composition and Communication*. The article, which chronicles the SIG's ten-year history, appears in a two-issue symposium celebrating the tremendous value in significant NCTE-CCCC bridges. As if these two overlapping events—the ten-year anniversary and subsequent recognition from the CCC article—weren't enough, SIG leadership also learned in 2011 that Jonathan Bush, a founding SIG co-chair, had proposed and received approval to create a new journal, *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* to be published by Scholarworks/Eerkeley Electronic Press. Though not formally affiliated with the Composition Studies-English Education SIG, the journal's roots are intricately connected to it and, further, SIG members are likely to be targeted as readers and contributors—more good news.

As current and future SIG co-chairs, we naturally see value in *Teaching/Writing*, so we immediately invited the co-editors to the 2012 SIG meeting in St. Louis, where they will introduce the journal, distribute PDFs of the preliminary issue, and discuss the Call for Manuscripts for the inaugural issue, along with general submission guidelines, publication schedules, and the like. In turn, we readily accepted the co-editors' invitation to explain in this preliminary issue of *Teaching/Writing* why the field needs the journal and what we hope it might provide to its readers and the field, at large.

Take Inspiration from the SIG

As previously indicated, *Teaching/Writing* is not currently affiliated with the SIG (or any other professional association, for that matter), but the SIG nevertheless does help to demonstrate the tremendous audience the journal will immediately address.

Identifying and Reaching the Interests of a Broad and Far-Reaching Audience

Most obviously, SIG members, whose ranks number in the dozens, are representative of a far larger group of writing/rhetoric professionals who easily number in the thousands: writing program administrators (directors of composition and basic writing coordinators, as well as NWP site, WAC/WID program, and writing center directors); English education faculty (writing and/or literature methods professors, field instructors, and student teaching supervisors); and secondary-level English teachers (NWP teacher-consultants, host teachers, literacy coaches, and classroom teachers). These three major groups, as well as their corresponding subgroups, represent an incredibly broad range whose pedagogical influence is made even stronger by virtue of varied geographic location and institutional affiliation. They teach, for example, in rural, small town, urban, and suburban locations across the entire country and in virtually every educational setting imaginable (flagship institutions,

regional universities, private and community colleges, and in secondary-level arenas).

One could argue that this vast group already contributes and subscribes to a number of excellent journals with fine publishing records, so why create one more? While there are many journals for which writing teacher education is part of a larger intellectual concern (*English Journal*, *Voices in the Middle*, *Writing Center Journal*, *Business Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Basic Writing*, *College Composition and Communication*, and *Pedagogy* to name just a few) none of these journals currently focuses specifically and solely on the topic of mentoring new writing teachers. *Teaching/Writing*, then, has a more fine-grained mission than the other pedagogical journals do, but even that fine-grained focus, however, is more complex, multi-layered, and nuanced than one might suppose. In the SIG sessions over the past ten years, for example, three overlapping topics—identity construction, practical teaching suggestions, and an overall focus on growth, change, and innovation—have emerged as especially rich and noteworthy among presenters.

We expect that these themes would be further explored in *Teaching/Writing* articles, but we challenge the co-editors to go beyond them. For example, the journal might delve further into the intricacies of writing assessment, contexts for writing instruction, methods for instruction of particular genres, practical rhetorical theory, professional issues for writing teachers, new state standards for teaching writing, and many more issues, which other key journals in the field may touch on in only specific articles or special issues.

Creating College-to-Secondary and Discipline-to-Discipline Connections in Hostile Learning/Teaching Climates
Anyone reading the newspaper or following the politics of education reform knows it's a particularly vulnerable time for best practices in the teaching of writing, particularly in secondary schools. Teachers are demonized daily in the media and by candidates seeking higher political office. Thanks to the Obama administration's new federal funding practices, an inarguably successful and long-standing program for the teaching of writing, the National Writing Project, must now compete for funding with far less tested and more politically motivated programs. And, thanks to the offensively entitled "Race to the Top" fund-structure, states must compete with each other for revenue to educate the nation's children. In New York State, the governor's recently issued budget may follow suit, requiring school districts to compete as well. It's no accident that it's increasingly difficult for professional educators to connect in an atmosphere of increased competition.

Another complicating factor for writing teachers is the Common Core State Standards, which were created with minimal input from educators by a consortium of US governors and appointed state commissioners of education and which have now been adopted by almost every state in the union. For good reasons, the CCSS have neither been endorsed nor opposed by the National Council of Teachers of English, but they have the potential to reshape writing education in K-12 schools. Even more concerning is the fact that new assessments for the CCSS are scheduled for release in 2014, but we so far do not know what those assessments will look like. Much about literacy is not easily assessable, but the public (including political and media leaders) seems dangerously unaware of this. Further, "preliminary documents indicate that. . . computers may be involved in both administration and scoring" of these assessments (Wessling 6). It's too early to cry foul, but it's unlikely that computer scoring will raise the level of writing expected on standardized exams. Computers aren't known for nuance.

The encouragement by pundits and politicians of public anger against schools and teachers coupled with the increased inertia of too-easily-measured standardized exam writing does not bode well for the future of K-12 writing instruction. As a result, it is an important time for instructors of writing at all levels to work together to maintain best practices in the teaching of writing and to build them in an increasingly hostile climate. Needing to build connections between college and secondary schools, however, does not mean it will be any easier.

Institutional, cultural, and intellectual boundaries separating most secondary and college writing teachers are multiple and mighty. High school and middle school teachers' increasing class loads and sizes make it difficult for them to find any time at all for connections. College writing teachers—particularly those who don't teach in colleges of education—receive little reward for making connections with secondary schools, and, frankly, it's much easier to stay on one's own campus. Much heralded reports of studies indicating that teachers earning of masters degrees has no impact on students' tests scores are unlikely to increase college-secondary connections. Those of us who work in the borderlands of writing instruction (English Educators) understand the pressures faced by both groups of colleagues and we see the possibilities that can grow from collaborations between them. We lament that there are not more ways to connect.

Even NCTE's journals highlight separations between levels: *English Journal* (primarily for secondary English), *Voices from the Middle*, *College English*, *College Composition and Communication*. And the handful of NCTE members who regularly attend both the NCTE Annual Convention and the Conference on College Composition and Communication note the stark cultural differences between them. The Composition Studies-English Education Connections SIG has helped strengthen the resolve of those of us in the borderland. The new journal, *Teaching/Writing*, will help even more by creating a space in which a central purpose is mentoring teachers at all levels in well-informed practice in the teaching of writing. Its online venue is likely to improve communication even further, not just communication between levels of instruction, but also between writing teachers in different disciplines.

The new journal, Teaching/Writing, will help even more by creating a space in which a central purpose is mentoring teachers at all levels in well-informed practice in the teaching of writing.

Since Richard Gebhardt's foundational 1977 CCC article "Balancing Theory and Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers," the field has documented (see, among others, Fox and Fleischer; Tremmel; and Tremmel and Broz) that teachers and scholars who might be potential readers for *Teaching/Writing* are likely to work in disciplinary silos separated either physically or symbolically by institutional boundaries, turf wars, or disciplinary borders, making discourse and dialogue difficult or even impossible.

When institutional silos do not allow for disciplinary cross talk, events such as the SIG provide time and space for them to happen. When people from two similar, yet sometimes competing, disciplines share a room and speak in real time, stereotypes and preconceptions break down, experiences are shared, and scholarly identities are expanded. (Alsop, Brockman, Bush, and Letcher 677)

Though *Teaching/Writing* provides opportunities for merely text-based conversations, as opposed to the SIG's face-to-face interactions and exchanges, the online venue renders the journal more accessible for readers. Most obviously, it negates fees and/or other expenses associated with journal subscriptions, association memberships, or conference attendance, and it allows any reader—regardless of content or developmental level, institutional or departmental affiliation, and/or geographic location—to gain easy access to the journal and be connected to the community at whatever time or day is convenient for the reader. And readers who still prefer traditional, print materials will appreciate that the *Teaching/Writing* format is a PDF file with the "look and feel" of a visually appealing, standard print journal—another great feature responsive to the broad range of readers, including their digital comfort level.

On the topic of digital comfort, it's worth noting that the online venue is also responsive to this diverse group in another way; it provides tremendous flexibility in terms of production schedule. Currently, the schedule is

a single, annual issue with four or five articles and a book review to be published in October of every year—a reasonable goal, one that saves the co-editors from the need to “rustle the bushes” for suitable manuscripts during the first two to three crucial years as the journal gets up and running. However, *Teaching/Writing* will surely increase the momentum of the professional dialogue among and between the subgroups, so we predict the co-editors will eventually see the need to increase production to two or even three issues a year, as number and quality of manuscript submissions warrant it. This transition, though, will take place smoothly and with virtually no additional publishing expenses, thanks to an online venue.

Take Inspiration from Other Journals

In addition to serving as current and future SIG co-chairs, this article’s co-authors each serves as an editor for a national journal (Ken is the current editor of *English Journal*; Elizabeth, an assistant editor for *Pedagogy*, is responsible for a column called “From the Classroom”). Naturally, the audiences and missions of *English Journal* and *Pedagogy* vary from that of *Teaching/Writing*; nevertheless, both journals have a national audience and a pedagogical focus, and we believe that this new journal can take inspiration and learn lessons from these well-established venues.

Pedagogy: Lessons from Another New Journal with Similar Roots and Cross Sub-Disciplinary Perspectives

Now in its twelfth year and recipient of the 2001 Best New Journal Award, *Pedagogy* came into being in much the same way that *Teaching/Writing* did: A grassroots effort.

We became convinced of the need for a journal [like *Pedagogy*] during our last years in graduate school: as teaching assistants, we found that the profession paid little attention to issues of teaching; subsequently, as teacher trainers ourselves, we had little information to provide to the new TAs in our program. Circumstances over the past five years have suggested that the profession is hungry for pedagogical discussions. The annual Modern Language Association convention has seen a steady rise in sessions on teaching; the MLA Approaches to Teaching series has produced many new volumes in recent years; and *PMLA*, *College English*, and *Profession* have devoted special issues to teaching. Certainly, *Pedagogy* owes a debt of gratitude to these and other journals that have steadily brought the importance of teaching into view in their subfields. Yet in a profession in which a large portion of our scholarly work concerns itself with teaching, it is ironic that no single journal is exclusively devoted or consistently committed to exploring that work across the discipline and from a range of perspectives. (Holberg and Taylor 1-2)

Like Jonathan Bush, *Pedagogy* co-editors Jen Holberg and Marcy Taylor saw a need in the field, they believed the time was right, and they secured both the financial backing and editorial support required to begin a new journal. Equally important and most relevant here, the journal was originally, and is still to this day, committed to publishing the scholarly and creative endeavors of both new and veteran scholars across all the English Studies sub-disciplines.

Taking inspiration from *Pedagogy*, we propose that the *Teaching/Writing* co-editors remain true to its mission and do the same. After all and as previously emphasized, writing teacher educators represent an incredibly broad cross section in English Studies, but let’s be truthful: English Education professors and WPAs may likely perceive themselves (or be perceived by others) as the primary target group for *Teaching/Writing*, just as *Pedagogy* was frequently mistaken initially as “just a comp journal” (Holberg and Taylor 1). Indeed, the SIG, with its English Education/Composition Studies cohort, reinforces this reality. To remain true to the *Teaching/Writing* mission of encompassing all the sub-disciplines who mentor new writing teachers, then, the co-editors should most obviously actively solicit and/or accept manuscripts from scholars outside of English Education and traditional Composition Studies, as important as these two groups are. However, they could, perhaps less

obviously, consider the book review section planned as a regularly featured column by examining it through a *Pedagogy* roundtable lens.

To clarify, we remind the co-editors of Jonathan Bush’s round table review of Katie Wood Ray’s *The Writing Workshop: Working through the Hard Parts (and They’re All Hard Parts)*, which was published in *Pedagogy* in 2005. Entitled “Finding Connections, Seeking Reciprocity: Toward an Inclusive Community of Writing Teachers—Kindergarten to College and Beyond,” the review is a discussion across disciplines and developmental levels that brought together Doug Baker (an English Education professor and NWP director), Jane Morrison (a WPA), Patricia Bills (an elementary teacher), and Tom Moriarty (a rhetoric and writing scholar).

At first glance, the work of elementary teachers and that of college composition scholars has little in common. The case for making connections between high school and college writing has been made, but what does writing in elementary school have to do with college composition? It might be considered a stretch [our emphasis] The group’s task was to see if the [Wood Ray] text, though written for one developmental context [elementary and middle school], would have meaning for the others as well, and, if it did, provide a model for the type of collaboration that could actually occur across developmental levels. . . . Could all the cross talk result in real disciplinary change and improved K-16 writing instruction? (Alsup, Brockman, Bush, and Letcher 21)

This roundtable may initially appear to reinforce the centrality of English Education and Composition Studies, which we have explicitly challenged the co-editors not to assume; but think again. The elementary teacher complicates the roundtable roster. After all, she reports teaching writing in a “small, urban center . . . ser[ving] the most economically challenged families in the area [a]t time of . . . statewide budget cuts, a growing transient population, and dwindling enrollments (Bills 345), and so it’s her unique perspective—neither that of an English Educator or Composition Studies specialist—that provides “the stretch” that enlivens the conversation and, thereby, enriches the knowledge and awareness of all the panel members and, by extension, *Pedagogy* readers. While it’s unlikely that the *Teaching/Writing* co-editors will precisely replicate the roundtable review format found in *Pedagogy*, we challenge them to provide book review and other writing opportunities with multi-voiced perspectives that create unlikely bedfellows, such as professional writing faculty and NWP teacher-consultants, student teachers and WAC/WID directors, or writing center directors and host teachers—the kinds of writing teacher mentors and mentees who aren’t likely to otherwise physically or virtually meet for the purpose of exchanging ideas, enriching each other’s professional lives, and for the overall purpose of “improve[ing] K-[College] writing instruction” (Alsup et. al. 21).

English Journal: Lessons from 100 Years of Serving the Cause

NCTE’s oldest and most widely-read journal, *English Journal*, just celebrated its 100th year of publication with the January 2012 issue. While *EJ* was originally conceived as a journal for all teachers of English, as NCTE grew and sub-groups formed and founded their own journals, *English Journal* has become the official journal of NCTE’s Secondary Section. Since its inception, *English Journal* has taken the teaching of writing as a major focus; in fact, its now-famous first article, published in 1912 and written by Edwin M. Hopkins, has an eerily-contemporary sounding title: “Can Good Composition Instruction Be Done Under Present Conditions?” (His answer comes in the first sentence: “No.”) As its current editor, Ken describes the *EJ* audience as “grade 6-12 English teachers and those who love them” (i.e., English Educators). The teaching of writing is a frequent focus for articles and issue themes, and two regular columns have focused on writing instruction: “Innovative Writing Instruction,” edited by Valerie Kinlock and “Professional Writing Instruction,” edited by Jonathan Bush and Leah Zuidema.

One of Ken's goals as editor has been to increase the number of articles that demonstrate and encourage secondary-college collaboration. Notable collaborations that focus on writing instruction include Brockman et. al. "Helping Students Cross the Threshold: Implications from a University Writing Assessment," and Fanetti et. al. "Closing the Gap on High School and College Writing Expectations." He also instituted a feature called "EJ in Focus," in which a noted scholar would be invited to write a sustained article on the issue's theme. Over the past several years, Duane Roen, Nancy Mack, Doug Hesse, Bonnie Sunstein, Patricia A. Dunn, Jim Burke, Grant Wiggins, Heather Bruce and many others have written "EJ in Focus" articles that examine best practices in the teaching of writing in the context of the issue's theme. Arthur N. Applebee and Judith Langer have reported results of their National Study of Writing in English Journal, most recently in July 2011. Also, in collaboration with the CEE Commission on Writing Teacher Education, Ken is working on creating a special EJ award for the best article written in collaboration between secondary and college teachers.

Despite EJ's contributions to writing teacher education, the format of the journal does not allow it to completely cover what even just the discipline of English needs to support teachers of writing, particularly new teachers. EJ's audience is very busy and has great need for a particularly practical focus for its articles. As a result, English Journal articles are generally no longer than 15 manuscript pages (often quite a bit shorter), and while they are well-informed by theoretical concepts, they do not often include sustained attention to them. EJ also focuses on all of English language arts (not just writing), and judging by the submissions and responses we get, the average reader is more excited about teaching literature than teaching writing.

Teaching/Writing, then, creates a more exclusive focus on well-informed writing instruction, which will allow greater diversity of disciplinary attention to writing, to genres of writing that may or may not be central (right now) to secondary classes (even if they should be), to professional issues for new and veteran teachers of writing, and for writing about writing instruction. In addition, the online format will allow for a greater diversity of lengths of articles and would be easily accessible for teachers at all levels. Done well, the journal has the potential to reach a very wide audience with a very wide range of experiences and needs—all centered on developing effective writing instruction.

Improving Writing Instruction: Taking Students' Texts Seriously

What we see as this new journal's greatest potential is that it will contribute directly and widely to improved writing instruction. *Teaching/Writing* will unite those of us who take students' texts and their composition seriously enough to appreciate in-depth, sustained focus on the subject. Moreover, we believe *T/W* has the potential to "reverse the long-standing marginalization of teaching and the scholarship produced around it and ... to assert the centrality of teaching of our work as scholars and professionals" (Holberg and Taylor 1). We are, however, most likely to reverse this trend by forging connections among professionals interested in teaching real—not just easily assessable—writing expertise even at a time when such connections are discouraged by so many cultural, institutional, and political boundaries.

Our field's older journals, the College Composition-English Education Connections special interest group, and now, *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, are not only spaces in which successful collaboration can happen, but they are also hallmarks of the successes that are possible with determination and optimism.

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Teaching/Writing Together: Joining Stories, Joining Voices

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In our narratives of higher education within universities we rely too often on a K-12 foil: College professors correct the shortcomings students bring with them from their previous schooling; we offer a depth which offsets the one-dimensional views students learn in high school; we make students work and think with more sophistication and precision. Typically these narratives feature – whether prominently or buried under faint praise – primary and secondary teachers failing to prepare students college. These stories focus particularly on literacy shortcomings, on students who can't write or aren't prepared for complex and challenging readings, hand-wringing that puts special pressure on faculty in composition and rhetoric and English education. College writing classes “fix” writers, breaking them from their schooled habits; English education classes prepare teachers who can do it better. These generalities are not fair to many in both fields, of course, but teachers at all levels will recognize this familiar narrative arc. We hope to challenge and replace these stories with new ones highlighting collegiality and collaboration, mutual understanding and celebration, shared struggle and support, narratives written and revised as writing teachers at all levels reflect on their experiences and share their scholarship in the pages of this journal.

We should start, perhaps, by remembering what we have in common, which is, most crucially, our teaching. We rely on knowledge and experience and our own intuition to create the best learning conditions we are able to. We take pleasure when students exceed their own expectations, when they succeed in new tasks. We care about language and composition and we believe in the possibilities of our own work, both in the lives of our students and in the future of a democratic society. These are starting points for us, fundamental aspects of our profession. Likewise, we share institutional and political affinities. Teachers at K-12 schools have long experienced the harrowing admixture of decreasing budgets and increasing oversight. They are used to political (mis)representations of teachers that emphasize unprepared students and undisciplined teachers (or unprepared teachers and undisciplined students) and that further undermine their increasingly unacknowledged professional status. Creative and progressive K-12 teachers grapple daily with official mandates from all levels – from district policy to Common Core standards – that seek to define more and more narrowly what teachers do in their classrooms. If college faculty are paying attention, we shouldn't be surprised to see evidence of these trends in our own daily work, a “trickling-up” as post-secondary institutions commit further to data-driven program development and assessment. Literacy scholars need to recognize the work our k-12 colleagues have done in negotiating these pressures. Under such conditions none of us, especially those teaching in public institutions, can afford to make our communities smaller. This journal should help up capitalize on those commonalities.

At the center of such a praiseworthy project, however, is a thorny rhetorical challenge. Professional expectations for college faculty prioritize research that addresses disciplinary questions and contributions, academics writing for academics. K-12 teacher-leaders, however, rely on research, practice, and policy to help other teachers improve their instruction, expert teachers addressing other teachers. Navigating these vastly different rhetorical situations requires acts of translation on the one hand and acts of professional empathy on the other, and this navigating will never be done successfully unless it is done in collaboration. In order to make their work

available and relevant to teacher-leaders, literacy scholars must listen carefully to the lived experiences and fundamental questions and challenges posed by k-12 teachers, which requires embracing the expertise those teachers have in delivering rigorous and differentiated writing instruction and in negotiating the pedagogical, administrative, and public expectations that shape their daily work. We share a similar professional organization in the National Council of Teachers of English, but the journals and conferences sponsored by NCTE too easily divide into audiences of scholars and audiences of teachers. This journal offers a professional compass, a navigational aid that can emphasize cross-institutional listening and learning, promoting grassroots scholarship that helps teachers become better teachers at the same time that it advances the disciplines of composition and English education.

Rhetorically, then, this journal appears to be entering uncharted territory. So one of its primary tasks will simply be practical: how can we write for and with one another? How can we identify the shared concerns and practices that will sustain connections across grade levels and institutions? These boundaries are often articulated but are not real. We hope to demolish them. When we review and reflect on the work we do, it suggests that we are looking in different directions and that we are working on different projects—we're not. We are all teaching writing. A broader lens on our shared work and our shared challenges gives us a clearer voice and reminds us that we are all of us professionals who can teach and learn from one another. English education and Rhetoric and Composition discussions are crucial in breaking down boundaries, connecting with K-12 writing teachers, and articulating common strengths and concerns that span K-16 challenges to effective writing instruction. The National Writing Project has secured alliances across grade levels and into the University and has helped form something like a common cause among teachers of writing, wherever they work. Those of us with the opportunity to teach English education courses in our universities cannot afford any attitude of condescension regarding the critical work our students have committed to. And of course we have, or ought to have, sophisticated theoretical understandings about literacy and pedagogy that should foster connections between any thoughtful teachers – which is to say most of them – focused on increasing the literate ability of their students.

This journal makes its debut at a time when all literacy educators, from pre-kindergarten to graduate school, must come together and provide a clear voice in influencing national, state, and local educational policy; celebrating the scholarship unique to English Education and Composition and Rhetoric as separate, but related, fields, yet working together in articulating and pursuing common goals in literacy education. This venue offers opportunities for reframing repressive literacy policy conversations, a space for critical questioning, and fresh examination and analysis of current trends in curricular standardization and assessment by researchers and teacher-leaders committed to improving writing instruction at all levels. This journal offers opportunities to explore connections, interrogate barriers, and focus on ways we can all contribute to report research and projects that bring like-minded people together to solve the looming problems associated with literacy and learning. We're writing teachers, of course. We love challenging our students to confront new and often for them unimagined rhetorical situations. We love seeing them stretch and stumble and revise and gain a voice. We especially love when their writing teaches them, and us, something they had never understood before they sat down to write. This journal asks the same of us. And we know the best way to figure that out is to start writing.

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Competency vs. Achievement: Why Connections are Important in Writing Teacher Education

Kristen Hawley Turner, Fordham University

“How is this going to increase student achievement?” The assistant superintendent looked at me expectantly, and I struggled to find the words that would challenge her beliefs and maintain my credibility as a professional service provider. I had been working with middle school teachers in her district that morning in a workshop that was designed to engage the teachers as writers, to ask them to reflect on their processes, and to consider what their experiences as writers means for their teaching of writing. The teachers and I had written together for over an hour. After we had created multiple starts that were sometimes prompted and sometimes free form, I sent the group on a mini writing marathon (Louth, 2002) throughout the building. While the teachers were writing in new spaces, the administrator provoked me with her question that inherently equates writing with test scores. How is this work, where teachers engage as writers, going to increase student achievement?

I inwardly cringed at the question. I wanted to explain that being a writer is about practice, not performance. I wanted her to understand, as I do, that to teach writing effectively, teachers must engage as writers themselves. Most of all, I wanted to tell her that she was asking the wrong question. This administrator, like so many others who are focused on scores by a societal discourse where assessment and achievement are inherently linked, has lost sight of what matters in the teaching of writing. She has forgotten, or perhaps she never truly understood, that teaching writing is about building competence, not about increasing achievement.

Fortunately for me, I did not enter the teaching profession in the age of accountability. Though test scores mattered in my life as a young teacher, they did not carry the pejorative weight that they do today. Perhaps it was a different era that allowed me to explore the teaching of writing by taking risks in my classroom. Through trial and error I learned what worked for a particular group of students – and I learned to adapt my instruction for each class. My goals were never about increasing test scores; from the first day I entered a writing classroom, I hoped to create competent writers. Unfortunately, I missed opportunities in my early years to develop competence. Focused only on form, particularly the form of the five paragraph essay, I urged the teenagers in my classroom to conform to a prescribed structure rather than to explore their ideas and create sound arguments. I subverted their thinking, valuing a single process and a uniform product.

Though I regret those lost opportunities, I do not blame my younger self for missing the mark. Like so many institutions of teacher preparation, my undergraduate university did not train me to teach writing. I entered a high school classroom in the fall of 1998 relying only on my own story as a writer in order to teach the students in my charge how to become writers themselves. From my experience of learning to write in school, I erroneously thought that the teaching of writing involved conformity in structure and teaching grammar out of context. Over a decade of dedicated study has helped me to better understand the multiple contexts of teaching writing, but my teaching was transformed the moment I connected with other teachers in the National Writing Project (NWP).

My summer as a fellow in an NWP summer institute brought me together with colleagues who cared about students, who cared about writing, and who cared about improving their practice. By sharing my own writing

with them and by listening to their struggles and successes as writers and teachers of writing, I began to understand that learning to write is about being a writer, not about mastering a formula. It is about receiving feedback from others and developing competence with language to express ideas. Most importantly, my conversations with my colleagues that summer helped me to see that *my* process wasn't *the* process of writing. All writers create products by following unique paths. It was important for my growth as a teacher of writing to identify my own path and to connect with other writers who composed differently than I.

As an NWP teacher, I understand what the administrator who questioned how the workshop would increase student achievement did not. I know that as teachers engage as writers, they experience a writing process in a way that transforms their own writing. In that transformation they also reflect on what it means to be a writer and the challenges the young writers in their classroom face. Teachers who connect with other writers in a community receive feedback that helps them to build their own competence; these writers, in turn, can connect with their students, creating communities of readers and writers inside of their classrooms.

The social nature of writing has been well documented, and the use of peer conferencing has been promoted for quite some time. Creating real connections between readers and writers in a classroom, however, takes practice and patience. Teachers of writing must understand how relationships of power play out in a writing group, and they must work to develop trust among the writers in their charge. In order to achieve community, they must first see their students as writers, not as test takers.

*It is my hope that **The Journal of Writing Teacher Education** will invite conversation and collaboration, that it will highlight the voices of students, teachers, and teachers of teachers, and that it will foster a community of writers who support all members' growth toward competence.*

The word achievement relates to accomplishment. It is something worked toward, something attained. It is about product. Competence, on the other hand, is linked to ability. It is something that is developed over time. It is about process. For teachers of writing to develop competent writers, they need to look away from achievement, away from success on a test. They must “fight the fear of failure” (Turner, 2010) and focus on students' thinking. It is by participating in a community of writers and teachers that they will find the support to take risks in their instruction. The connections I made with teachers through the NWP have been lasting, and I continue to add to my network of writing teachers through NWP and through other professional organizations. Writing teacher education invokes knowledge from many sources. It includes stories of trial and error, trial and success. It includes personal accounts and empirical investigations. It is a field where conversation matters, and connections build competency. It is my hope that the *Journal of Writing Teacher Education* will invite conversation and collaboration, that it will highlight the voices of students, teachers, and teachers of teachers, and that it will foster a community of writers who support all members' growth toward competence. In developing competence as writers, teachers and their students will develop confidence, and it is through competence and confidence that they will realize the highest achievement possible.

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T/W Teaching/Writing

Teaching/Writing

The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

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Drawing from scholars and teachers in composition studies, English education, and K-12 English language arts, *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* seeks articles that expand knowledge and improves practice in all contexts relating to the teaching of writing teachers, including:

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