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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 within universities and in the future of a democratic society. These are starting points for us, fundamental aspects of our profession. 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-12 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 teacher-leadership 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.

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