

EDITORS' COLUMN

Territories, frontiers, “the pedagogical West”—In metaphors to describe the new work of Open Admissions, our field generated a professional impulse for *re*-conceptualizing Basic Writing nearly simultaneous to the moment of its conceptualizing. Mina Shaughnessy’s way of characterizing the “place” quality of Basic Writing—where we as professionals saw ourselves as going, and whom we were meeting there—aimed at, and for a time well accomplished, motivating self and others toward understanding teaching as both a *searching* and an *encounter*. But as we soon saw, those “spaces” were sorely troubled in that we brought along the imprimaturs of the academy and expected that we would always lead in these encounters. In the same way Basic Writing represented a clear departure from business as usual for writing instruction at CUNY and other open admissions sites, Shaughnessy’s bequest of “place” and “travel” for Basic Writing pointed to a *there* that was clearly elsewhere, and acknowledged, if not affirmed, the trepidation that many felt about venturing there.

Refiguring the “place” quality of Basic Writing, as we might characterize the work of this journal for many years, has largely meant shifting *there* to *right here* and the goal-oriented *sometime soon* to *right now*. Our first article, by Don J. Kraemer, “Fact and Theory and Value Judgment: What *They Say/ We Say* of Basic Writing’s Unhedged Good,” recalls the encounter among voices and communities as foundational in the work of Basic Writing. Kraemer maps a continuum of critical versions of such encountering, first through Graff and Birkenstein’s *They Say/ I Say*; second through Zak Lancaster’s critical reading of *They Say/ I Say*; and third through Kraemer’s own argument for expanding that space in which students meet academics and their expectations for writing, whether in terms of academic moves (Graff and Birkenstein) or more indirectly, through the language of hedging and concession (Lancaster). Drawing on ideas of “spatial dynamism,” Kraemer advocates for teaching beyond “the rules of the game” toward a type of “contact with . . . interlocutors” expressing choices “relative to those expectations” for “cultivating common ground, not prostrating oneself on ground owned by others.” Following Suresh Canagarah’s translingual classroom as contact zone, the refigured space of Kraemer’s BW classroom “does not ignore ‘dominant norms and ideologies of correctness’; rather norms are negotiated” to start from the “interests and values” of those whom he names “student-writer citizens.” These students, as we find them, “*should* [be] imagine[d] . . . [to] regard others, as they regard themselves, as free and

equal . . . free to pursue their own conceptions of the good; [and] committed to the principle that others are also free to pursue their conceptions of the good” (author’s emphasis). The *right here* and *now* of the BW classroom is thereby ethical space for “better see[ing] the point of hedging” and for constituting writing as deliberative practice.

In our second article, “Negotiating a Transcultural Ethos from the Ground Up in a Basic Writing Program,” Michael T. MacDonald and William DeGenaro likewise resituate the *where* of Basic Writing by recognizing, and so more enabling, the shifted terrains of language diversity in local contexts of Basic Writing. Accounting for the growing population of Arab-American students at their institution’s home in Dearborn, Michigan, alongside an increased outreach to international students, MacDonald and DeGenaro relate their vision of Basic Writing space as “the site where linguistic diversity is most *audible*, where,” citing Lu and Horner, “difference is the norm” (author’s emphasis). Attuned to the linguistic pluralism present in classrooms, they find at hand the already formed and forming impetus to reshape curriculum and professional unity around a “transcultural ethos”—which they define as “a programmatic stance that affirmatively and actively works to engage with the distinctive markers of global-local language shifts and encourages the negotiation of these shifts among local stakeholders.” For MacDonald, DeGenaro, and their colleagues, the “ground up” portion of their title means collaborative inquiry into the rich, performative potential of language choice, strategies, codes, and reflection of monolingual and multilingual students, as well as broader frameworks for instructors’ reading and assessing these performances. Their model of programmatic change, informed by these awarenesses, suggests a vertical, not linear, trajectory for moving forward, in which a wide swath of stakeholders posit and engage “evolving, dynamic learning goals for BW” in a “dialogic process.” “From the ground up,” in other words, roots stakeholders in the *here* and *now* of present capabilities, needs, and envisioning around translanguaging, empowering all invested learners, whether student, instructor, or program administrator, to lead together.

Next, in our third article, “Developing Translingual Disposition through a Writing Theory Cartoon Assignment,” Xiqiao Wang continues the place-based ethos of translanguaging as it informs BW classrooms, offering a writing theory cartoon assignment as a “pedagogical enactment of translanguaging” which purposes “a space for teachers and student writers to describe, analyze, and strategize ways of negotiating language differences.” Taking aim at the apparent gap in the theory and pedagogy of translanguaging-

ism, especially as these potentialize a critical consciousness for students about their own and others' translingual practices, Wang's pedagogy mirrors the bridge-building advocacy of MacDonald and DeGenaro's program reform—as it too responds to “transformed . . . cultural and linguistic realities on and off campus” of a midwestern university. As Wang envisions it, allowing students to cartoon-theorize the language negotiations required across platforms of language diversity—ones in fact current “in all communicative acts”—is a key to fostering basic writers' self-perceptions as “agent who [regularly] draw on their multilingual repertoire to navigate” complex rhetorical acts. The assignment, more widely figuring Basic Writing as an arena of activity, encompasses teachers and students in another reforming of the classroom as authority-space. To use Kraemer's term, a “spatial dynamism” excites a crosshatching of invitations: for teachers, it is the invitation, or “exigency,” “to reconsider the role of their own language repertoire and pedagogy,” and for students, it is the encouragement to lead through striking artistic renderings of translingual self-awareness.

Finally, in our fourth article, “Cultivating Places and People at the Center: Cross-Pollinating Literacies on a Rural Campus,” Wendy Pfrenger reinvests the place-based quality of Basic Writing theory and pedagogy by rooting rural literacies to academic competence, broadly (re)contextualized. Her interviews of peer writing consultants working under her directorship at a regional, highly “place-identified” writing center of Kent State University reveal a range of stances toward education that, while marking these peer tutors as “non-traditional,” uniquely qualify them to serve as mediators in a third space for individuals and communities seeking welcome and inclusion. Since many of these writing consultants grew up and still reside in the same community, their literacies bear the imprints of shared interests and understandings of rural life and culture. Defining place-based literacy in a rural context, Pfrenger proves the literate and pedagogical talent of her writing consultants especially apt for negotiating “the dissonance between students' success in extracurricular contexts and their perceived inadequacies in academic contexts.” The place-based ethnographic approach of Pfrenger's study makes every case against the originary notion of Basic Writing pedagogy as a kind of traveling elsewhere: both her writing consultants and their students, facing socioeconomic landscapes of “divi[sions] within by barriers of opportunity” and across “the surrounding region by deepening poverty,” support one another's challenges to discover and grow their literacies in the present moment. Pfrenger elaborates the homegrown yield—community-based literacies, rural-cultural leverage for teaching and learning, and the

productive use of dissonance—as a new “pragmatics of place.”

The authors of this volume try to reclaim the space of Basic Writing classrooms for students and teachers in fuller, more complicated recognitions of contexts, talents, and purposes. They remind us that, rhetorically, “to teach” gains in meaning when we use it transitively, by linking it not to *what* but to *whom*: Whom do we teach and from what vantage point? Where do we mark the vital center points of our intersections with students, and what kinds of spaces support these center points? What are the collaborative activities of inquiry that happen there? These are certainly very large and useful questions for evolving the place- and travel-based ethos of Basic Writing.

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