

## EDITOR'S COLUMN

This Editor's Column for the second volume of the Journal of Basic Writing on graduate education finds me in a contemplative mood.

Two stories.

*Story one.* It is early summer and students from across the state of Arizona are congregating in Flagstaff to a late mountain snow, traveling by car, by bus, and by train for the STAR (Successful Transition and Academic Readiness) Program. They come from small dusty townships in the deep southern recesses of Arizona. They come from big cities ringed with mountains and settled in winter smog. They are from first-generation college homes. They are from places of deep economic need. They are Latinx, African-American, Native-American and/or, more and more, identify with multiple cultural backgrounds.

Some arrive with tremendous writing skills. Others, of course, are basic writers but have wonderful skills in various other areas. My own group of eighteen contains students who have just aged out of the foster care system, students whose parents are in prison, students whose parents who are in drug addiction programs, students whose families are constantly in fear about their immigration status, sometimes their very lives. These students have just left high school. They are just beginning college.

In this one month, my instructors and I will cram a semester's worth of work into the "Rhetoric in the Media" class I first created twenty-plus years ago and update each spring. We will introduce them to the NAU campus, all of its secrets, its very special places. Our students will transition from being those high school students into full-fledged college students. They will come to know the larger Flagstaff community. They will visit Sedona's red rocks and Jerome's haunted sidewalks. They will cheer one another as they climb across ropes courses in those first few days and hold each other's hands as they go deep into caves just several weeks later. They will take part in volunteer efforts around helping animals without homes, building community gardens, and supporting LGBTQ issues with Pride in the Pines. The people to their left and their right will become their best friends for the month, for the academic year, for the next four years, and for many years beyond that. And, throughout their time here, they will begin to see themselves as scholars and writers and thinkers moving through this world. And when we have our parties on the last days of our classes, they will know something profoundly that they could not have anticipated one month ago.

We have arrived here. We belong here. This is our campus, our educa-

tion, our chance to make a difference in this world.

*Story two.* STAR ends, as it always does, with many tearful goodbyes. The students travel back home until late August when they will move back and once again reclaim the campus as their own. Suddenly a wildfire breaks out in the mountains right above town. It writhes through the ponderosa pine trees. Firefighters from across the country beat back the fire, save people, animals, and structures. We all hope that we have escaped the worst. And then we learn that the burn has occurred mainly across the Spruce Watershed, a key place on the mountain where water funnels down into neighborhoods. When the monsoons hit, the water will rush over the scorched earth as if it is glass, carrying churning mud and burnt trees along with it. My husband and I live right at the base of the Spruce Watershed. Ours is among the first homes that could get flooded if the water overtops its low banks.

Firefighters and city crew members shift into flood mitigation mode, pile up sand bags and put up large concrete barricades near our home. My husband and I collect the few things that really matter to us into two backpacks and one box—pictures, important papers, a change of clothes, computers. Now we will have to be ready to leave any time the rains come—maybe with hours to spare, maybe minutes. The house we have renovated over the last ten years seems all popsicle sticks now, our possessions completely senseless.

The flood waters will alter this landscape in ways we cannot yet imagine, leave behind a kind of devastation. In its place will be something entirely different. I watch as the smoke haze weaves through the forest, shafts of sunlight illuminated in new ways. We will surely need time to mourn the old, to embrace whatever the new landscape becomes. And with this, we will find healing and renewal through change.

This issue.

I am so happy to edit the second volume for *JBW* on graduate education at this pivotal time in my own life and in our changing landscape of Basic Writing history, theory, and practice. The main theme of this issue is professionalization in graduate education. These essays take the concerns addressed in the first volume a step further, addressing issues such as: What can corpus studies teach us about both graduate student involvement in our scholarship as well as how to best reach basic writers and other students (Peele et al.)? What sorts of assignments might we design and what approaches might we take that will best help teachers of basic writers (Buell)? How are stakeholders represented in our scholarship and what effects might this have for the future professionalization of graduate students (Reid)? What

is the deeper history of graduate instruction in Basic Writing practice and theory and how might it inform how we approach graduate education as the discipline continues to grow and develop (Gleason)? How might the stories of the discipline of Basic Writing shape graduate students' education as well as the future of our scholarship (Parisi)?

Lynn Reid's very important "Disciplinary Reading in Basic Writing Graduate Education: The Politics of Remediation in JBW, 1995- 2015" notes that while various graduate programs and essays on graduate training have sometimes addressed Basic Writing concerns, there is often far less attention paid to "concrete pedagogical models for how to address the politics of Basic Writing." Reid traces the history of the concept of the "politics of remediation" as well as how graduate students have been socialized in the midst of various institutional changes. Taking JBW as her primary site of inquiry, Reid first examines how other scholars have analyzed themes and trends in the journal. She then provides both a close and distant reading of the journal's essays from 1995-2015 to suggest how often and in what contexts various stakeholders are mentioned. After detailed study, she concludes that "Within JBW, there are clear patterns in the way that authors recount stories about facing the politics of remediation: state legislators and administrators are evil and greedy; institutions enact disembodied policies; the general public fails to understand the work of Basic Writing; and Basic Writing experts are stalwarts of social justice working against these difficult odds." While this work has been quite valuable, she argues that graduate education also "must move beyond close reading of a few scenarios and instead read across texts to locate patterns that might help us to strategically position our work for stakeholders we may have forgotten or opportunities we may not have considered."

"Teachers, Researchers, and Communities of Practice: Building a Corpus to Support Graduate Education," by Thomas Peele, Vivian Stoll, and Andréa Stella, offers a tremendous examination of the value of corpus studies for Basic Writing as a discipline. Tom and his two graduate students at City College of New York, CUNY, reveal the ways in which this research can better help us all to understand students' writing as well as to construct potential beneficial approaches to pedagogy. They also describe their experiences both analyzing student writing and developing research projects based on their corpus. They close by suggesting that one of the main purposes of their project is "to make students aware of the rhetorical moves associated with conventional academic genres so that they are more familiar with the genre conventions of academic writing and to make explicit connections

between the genres we study in the classroom and the genres that exist, in Mary Soliday's words, 'in the wild.'"

Barbara Gleason includes the voices of some of her graduate students—Anita Caref, James Dunn, Erick Martinez, Lynn Reid, and Maria Vint—as well. This very compelling essay, "Forming Adult Educators: The CCNY MA in Language and Literacy," traces the crucial history of the Language and Literacy Master's Program at City College of New York, CUNY. Gleason shows the ways in which the program has prepared graduate students especially well to become professionalized in basic writing theory and pedagogy as well as to go on and have very successful careers in a range of areas. Throughout the essay, various graduate students from the program share their own experiences with coursework and teaching. In the end, the authors suggest that "In presenting the MA in Language and Literacy as a model, we recommend that other graduate program administrators, faculty and students consider expanding curricula to include a blend of adult learning, TESOL, language studies, composition and rhetoric, and basic writing studies. We also recommend that graduate programs consider expanding program missions to include forming educators for multiple professional pathways rather than focusing on one or even two professional careers."

"It's Not Just About the Teaching: Integrating Basic Writing History and Theory in a Master's Level Graduate Seminar," by Marcia Z. Buell, introduces us to her excellent Seminar in Basic Writing Theory and Pedagogy at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. Seeking to weave theory and pedagogy together, she notes that "[t]heorized pedagogy means making decisions about practice that rely on thoughtful and reflective applications of theory. Such applications encourage educators to not only seek methods that work, but to also to question why and how they should be applied to particular contexts in order to best serve basic writers." Buell shares her curriculum for the course as well as explains the wide range of innovative pedagogical approaches she takes so as to best introduce her graduate students to scenarios and issues that they will encounter in basic writing teaching and administration.

Finally, Hope Parisi's essay, "Who is the Basic Writer? Reclaiming a Foundational Question for Graduate Students, New Teachers, and Emerging Scholars," encourages us to trouble the history and teaching of Basic Writing for graduate students by revisiting BW's impetus for stating "for whom we work and what that focus means." The question of who is the basic writer, while expressing concern for students, has also been attuned to the interests of stakeholders with policy agendas that limit access as well as to our own

disciplinary priorities. Dating back to open admissions and Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*, the question persists in relevance, especially now as the students for whom BW is for may seem to gain more opportunities for support outside of BW programs. These shifts, Parisi shows, link the discourses of Basic Writing, access and placement, and social justice and the two-year college. In these ways, the question permits a wide range for voicing a still needed ethos for Basic Writing's future.

It's been a sincere joy and honor to bring together all of these important voices for the two special issues on graduate education and Basic Writing. Just as my Flagstaff community is seeing its way through the fires and the floods, in our discipline we are always—whether we might choose to or not—facing hard challenges, pushing through what is known and seemingly settled, and envisioning the new. And our research and teaching are always so much stronger because of our deep commitment to our students, our unwavering dedication to pull together in the face of difficulties.

I wish the very best to you all.

**--Laura Gray-Rosendale of Northern Arizona University,**

Guest Editor