EDITORS' COLUMN

We are delighted to report that the copious flow of manuscripts, mentioned in this space in the last issue, continues unabated. Topics related to the teaching of writing to non-native speakers of English appear to be particularly popular, so much so that we welcome the advent of a new journal—also published by The City University of New York—focused on this area. An announcement and call for papers for CUNY ESL appears elsewhere in this issue.

There is one aspect of the wealth of submissions that we feel we must comment on. This is the tendency towards ever more pages given over to statistical tables and graphs. Although quantitative documentation is certainly necessary in some instances, we have to admit to an uneasiness about evidence and arguments that cannot be expressed in direct, simple English prose. *JBW* is, above all, a journal of *writing*, and the texture as well as the content of the articles it presents should reflect that fact.

If there is a theme to this issue, it is that many researchers and practitioners within the field of basic writing are returning to topics generally considered outside the scope of the "new paradigms" that have emerged in recent years. Thus this issue contains articles on handwriting, acquainting basic writing students with library resources, and approaching ESL literacy through literature. Another theme to emerge is the strengthened view of writing instruction as a complex of interrelated activities and not as a list of isolated skills.

In the first article, Linda Meeker describes the steps taken over the past four years at Ball State University to reshape its developmental writing program as an integration of listening, speaking, reading, thinking, and writing, with an accompanying shift in the public perception of the program through changes made in the titles, course and catalogue descriptions, text selections, and syllabi.

Following Linda Meeker, Jacqueline Costello argues for the reading and writing of narratives, along with the sharing of

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.1990.9.1.01

freewritten responses to and questions about narratives, as a useful way for ESL composition students to work on reading comprehension, rhetoric, and relevant grammatical structures, while they are also developing analytic skills necessary for other college courses.

In the third article, Donald McAndrew studies differences in the overall fluency and syntactic structures of fast and slow handwriters. Fast handwriters are able to bring more moments of attention and engagement to their writing, which emerges more richly modified and syntactically complex. Slower handwriters have less time for such opportunities. The study ends with some speculations about the effects of scribal fluency on composing, both for traditional college students and for basic writers.

Making a fundamental distinction between the rhetorical and syntactical strengths of ESL writing students, Barbara Kroll discusses the implications of considering these two components in making more careful placement decisions. She goes on to suggest a curriculum based on improving these particular writing skills.

Boyd Koehler and Kathryn Swanson present the results of a three-year study in new methods of teaching fundamentals of bibliographic instruction to basic writing students. The principal elements of the plan include active collaboration between a librarian and an English professor; working in small groups of similar abilities; individualized instruction; a Library Hunt Exercise preceding a hands-on approach to library materials; using an online computerized library catalog; and in-depth feedback sessions.

In the final article, Kyle Perkins and Sheila Brutten show that for both native and non-native language users, the teaching of writing is best approached as a holistic entity with the focus on meaning, function, and purpose, and not as a set of separate skills.

Bill Bernhardt and ***Peter Miller***