

Editors' Introduction To Issue 10.1

With this issue, we welcome you to nearly a decade of *Literacy in Composition Studies*! We plan to recount and honor the work that has brought us this far in our spring issue, but for now we are delighted to welcome Al Harahap to our Editorial Team, as well as to express our appreciation to Kara Poe Alexander for stepping into the role of Submissions Editor. We send our heartfelt thanks to Chris Warnick for his ten years (so far!) of partnership with *LiCS* and wish him productivity and rest on his sabbatical this term.

This issue explores the ways literacy educators navigate constraints linked to context, dominant language ideology, and expectations about failure and success. A variety of sites are explored in this issue, from classrooms in prisons, classrooms as borderlands, and social justice community-engaged projects focused on children and families. All of the authors offer subversive ways to reimagine existing paradigms around common assumptions of literacy, including the dominant culture narratives about failure we are too often tempted to believe.

In “Prisons, Literacy, and Creative Maladjustment: How College-in-Prison Educators Subvert and Circumnavigate State Power,” Logan Middleton discusses the “literacy violence” that carceral institutions enact and perpetuate on incarcerated people. Building from this understanding, Middleton describes how “prison educators mobilize complex and highly situated literacy practices to subtly and quietly bend the rules in carceral environments” (1). At the beginning of his article, Middleton offers a rich exploration of literacy, which he calls a “chameleonic tool,” as a concept in relation to carceral environments. Middleton then reports findings from his ethnographic research into a prison education project linked to a midwestern university. Drawing on educator interviews, Middleton proposes using Herbert Kohl’s concept of “creative maladjustment” as a useful frame for understanding the seemingly modest ways these educators circumvent restrictions on their students and educational materials. Middleton concludes with a set of five implications for thinking about literacies-in-context in relation to power dynamics that are instructive for any literacy educator.

In his article “Using the Mother Tongue as a Resource: Building on a Common Ground with ‘English Only’ Ideologies,” Andrea Parmegiani provides a “constructive critique” of language rights discourse which, he contends, can too often be trapped in “a zero-sum game” of either privileging access to English or prioritizing languages other than English (26). As his primary example, Parmegiani describes a translingual writing program he began at his Hispanic Serving Institution, a program that necessitated finding common ground with “English only” ideology. The result is a dovetailing of Spanish writing courses and English as a Second Language writing courses within a learning community that nonetheless disrupts “unilateral monolingualism” (Horner and Trimbur 595), in spite of the fact that it foregrounds the need to facilitate English academic literacy acquisition. Through this example, Parmegiani illustrates how stepping outside the binaries offered by language rights discourses—or sneaking mother tongue languages “through the back door”—may at times be necessary to achieve diverse and effective language programs on the ground, as well as to further social justice-oriented literacy aims.

Thir B. Budhathoki returns to the oft-researched subject of literacy narratives, a popular

assignment in college writing classrooms, in “Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Literacies in Literacy Narratives.” Budhathoki argues that the role of context and interaction in students’ writing is understudied. To fill this gap, Budhathoki shares findings from a qualitative case study where he collected literacy narratives, reflective letters, personal interviews, and individual conferences with English monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual students. Results of his study demonstrate that when our classrooms adopt a “translingual orientation” to literacy, encourage cross-cultural conversations between students, and emphasize the role of “little” narratives, both English monolingual and bi- and multilingual students benefit (47). The literacy narrative assignment is thus an avenue to fostering a complex understanding of literacies among student writers and mutually enriching all students’ understanding of literacies. In this process, the writing classroom becomes a borderland space where the instructor and students become border crossers. That is, through the process of centering difference, the classroom becomes a space where teacher and students not only encounter diverse cultural and historical narratives, but they also use difference as a resource to pave the way for border thinking.

The final article returns to community-engaged projects, book-ending this issue. In “From Failure to Inquiry: Three Problem-Solving Strategies for Community Literacy Researchers,” Amanda Berardi Tennant, Carolyn D. Commer, and Mary Glavan offer three case studies of their own experiences of “failure” in community-engaged projects. The projects include a graduate student movement to persuade the university to establish affordable childcare, a rural literacy program for girls in Appalachia focused on digital storytelling, and the creation of an advocacy resource guide for parents of disabled children. This article offers a model for reframing and engaging differently with the “failures” and “disappointments” that may occur in community literacy work. This is a significant contribution to building resilience for these efforts, since perceived failure can result in “hesitance” to “approach . . . community based work again” (74). The dialogic exploration of these failures allow the writers to recognize that they were “attribut[ing] our disappointments to deficits of personal responsibility or systemic problems far beyond our control” (ibid). However, they discover that by using adaptive problem-solving frameworks “to analyze [their] initial, stigmatizing interpretations of [their] failed community-based work,” they are able to “transform” their initial sense of failure and recognize “unacknowledged consequences,” including generative effects on their continued scholarship and teaching (75). The authors offer their case studies as models for scholars engaged in community work to “transform failure into inquiry” (90).

Finally, Amanda Hayes reviews the book *Collaborative Learning as Democratic Practice: A History* by Mara Holt. Hayes writes her review from a unique position—as a former student of Mara Holt. This personal perspective allows Hayes to write through both a lens of admiration and one of critical engagement. She argues that “Holt’s history [of collaborative learning as democratic practice] can help us build upon and learn from the past, specifically in how it demonstrates the links among the composition teacher’s intentions, their theories of writing and democracy, and wider historical/ideological situations in the nation at large” (94). She notes that Holt brings us an in-depth understanding of “collaborative learning’s roots,” a history that has largely been missing from the field of rhet-comp (ibid).

As always, we hope readers will encounter this range of research exploring literacies across many sites and instantiations with the joy and interest we did. Happy reading, happy winter, and thank you for continuing to support and share literacy studies research with your networks and communities.

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