

Editors' Introduction To Issue 11.1

Issue 11.1 of LiCS offers two articles and two book reviews of current monographs, all of which help us rethink or update our prior understandings or practices. The two authors published in this issue both think critically about digital technologies—how self-sponsored writing participates in economies (Luther) and how to interrogate algorithms (Shultz Colby)—while the two book reviewers explore Latinx linguistic practices (Burke Reiffman reviewing Rosa) and ungrading as both theory and practice (Schwarz reviewing Stommel).

In “DIY Delivery Systems: Rethinking Self-Sponsorship Through Extracurricular Literacy Narratives,” Jason Luther challenges composition studies’ frequent conflation of “self-sponsored” DIY writers and their writing with agentful countercultural or punk praxis. By placing these “self-published” projects into the “extracurricular public sphere” that exists today, Luther reminds us that contemporary DIY writers are as likely to be “using proprietary, cloud-based software such as Canva or Adobe InDesign, promoted on Instagram or TikTok, crowdfunded by Kickstarter, and sold using Venmo, PayPal, or mobile credit-capturing, card-swiping devices such as Square” as they are to be assembling paper with staples and rubber bands. Luther argues that the tools many DIY writers use today to mediate and circulate their work are importing “neoliberal sensibilities”— particularly “an entrepreneurial subjectivity”— into self-sponsored writing. Luther invites us to not only consider this landscape in future research but also in our “public-oriented composition classrooms.”

In “Theorycrafting Algorithms: Teaching Algorithmic Literacy,” Rebekah Shultz Colby proposes theorycrafting as a method for interrogating algorithms and algorithmic circulation. A literacy practice used in online gaming communities, theorycrafting is a system that tests the impact of variables on gameplay, thereby learning more about “the algorithms running the outcomes of their play” (26). Shultz Colby demonstrates how she adapts theorycrafting to a first-year writing class in which students produced research examining how algorithms structure their engagement with content on TikTok and Google search. Such a pedagogy, Shultz Colby argues, “not only teaches valuable algorithmic literacy tactics but also teaches [students] how to use these same logics to effectively circulate their own rhetoric online” (34).

This issue features two book reviews. The first is Jennifer Burke Reifman’s consideration of the recent monograph, *Looking Like a Language, Sounding Like a Race: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and the Learning of Latinidad* by Jonathan Rosa. Burke Reifman’s review explores this in-depth ethnographic study on the intersection of race, ethnicity, and language, highlighting how Latinx linguistic practices are intertwined with racioethnic identities, thus challenging the traditional assimilationist language instruction rooted in white hegemony. Ultimately, Burke Reifman argues that Rosa’s work contributes significantly to writing studies, highlighting the complexities of race, language, and identity in educational settings.

In Virginia Schwarz’s review of *Undoing the Grade: Why We Grade, and How to Stop* by Jesse Stommel, we are invited to consider how to challenge traditional grading systems. Stommel, known for his expertise in digital humanities and critical pedagogy, advocates for “ungrading”—a critical examination of grading practices rather than just an elimination of grades. The book, combining

new and previously published work, delves into the harmful effects of ranking and standardization in education and the implicit biases in educational technology. Schwarz considers how Stommel emphasizes the need for humane, compassionate education and discusses practical ungrading strategies while acknowledging their varied applicability across different contexts. The book encourages educators to rethink grading and its impact on students, making it a valuable resource for teachers across disciplines seeking to foster a more equitable and understanding educational environment.

As we embark upon a new year, we hope the above pieces provide renewed food for thought. As always, thanks for reading!

—*Brenda Glascott, Justin Lewis, Tara Lockhart, Juli Parrish, and Chris Warnick*