

Editors' Introduction to Issue 3.2

While taking disparate approaches to researching and conceptualizing literacy, the authors in this issue demonstrate the struggle—for the individual, among a peer group, during a historical crisis—of embodied actors. Clay Walker develops a theory of literate agency called discursive readiness potential; Faith Kurtyka presents a sorority girl's acts of literacy as gendered acts of leadership; and Kirk Branch reconstructs the nineteenth-century congressional debate on the literacy test, highlighting how, despite the debate's transparency, positive associations about literacy enabled "the greatest political swindle in American history."

In "Composing Agency: Theorizing the Readiness Potentials of Literacy Practices," Clay Walker draws on research in embodied cognition and neuroscience to theorize how previous literate experiences emerge as potentials for action, a phenomenon he names "discursive readiness potential." Walker describes discursive readiness potential as "a discursive muscle memory" that "involves revising our connections among mind, body, and world"; it thus challenges the ideological model of literacy by acknowledging the role cognitive, embodied, and material practices play in literacy events. Approaching literate activity in terms of discursive readiness potential also has several implications for composition theory and pedagogy. By suggesting that metacognitive activities allow writers opportunities to practice and generate strategies and processes they can draw on in new situations, this article adds to the possibilities for facilitating transfer. It also challenges the skepticism of sentence-level pedagogies, suggesting that such pedagogies cultivate the "practice of practice" involved in discursive readiness potential.

In our second article, "Get Excited People!": Gendered Acts of Literacy in a Social Sorority," Faith Kurtyka answers the call for "broader, deeper" research on women's rhetoric by studying a sorority as a pre-professional group. Utilizing third-wave feminist linguistic analysis, Kurtyka traces how the rhetorical strategies "Polly" uses allow her to try on different leadership identities and tactics while balancing the emotional labor and gendered expectations of her management role. Kurtyka codes rhetorical patterns within the sorority e-mails and discourse-based interviews with Polly. From identifying rhetorical strategies ranging from silly humor to "nudges of encouragement" in the sorority communications, Kurtyka paints a picture of situated literate action. Combined with an analysis of Polly's use of rhetorical strategies over time, Kurtyka's essay demonstrates the gendered decisions at play as a writer composes "documents that balance a tension between the personal and the organizational" (39), ultimately arguing that opportunities for such experimentation and negotiation may serve women as helpful stepping stones toward successful leadership in other rhetorical situations.

Kirk Branch's "A Mockery in the Name of a Barrier": Literacy Test Debates in the Reconstruction-Era Congress, 1864-1869" examines nineteenth-century congressional discourse about literacy as a prerequisite for voting rights. Through his analysis of the congressional debates that eventually led to the Fifteenth Amendment, Branch demonstrates that by exploiting the "beneficent glow" associated with literacy, enemies of African-American male suffrage were able to obscure their racist intentions with the positive connotations of literacy. Branch argues that even though it was always evident, even

within congressional debates, that literacy tests would be used as a way to specifically disfranchise African Americans, the tests' long political life is a testament to the power of literacy's associations. Literacy provided a way to talk about the problem of enfranchised freedmen without resorting to racial categories that was difficult to contest, even though all were aware of the consequences.

We close the issue with a book review and a continuation of our ongoing symposium. Rebecca Kling's Symposium contribution "Ante Up: Econocide and the Literacy Game in U.S. Prisons" draws on the author's personal experience as a prison research assistant to demonstrate how collaboration, reflection, and resource allocation are of central concern to composition in both the university and the penal system. Drawing on Wilkey and Cleary's article, "(Un)rigging the Literacy Game: Political Literacies that Challenge Econocide," Kling challenges teachers and students alike to move "beyond one's own narrative as a means of empowerment." Stephanie Rae Larson's review of *Reimagining Process: Online Writing Archives and the Future of Writing Studies* rounds out the issue by providing a critical take on Kyle Jensen's reassessment of process pedagogy and theory vis-a-vis materialism.

Appearing between our last special issue on *Community Literacies and The New Activism* and our upcoming special issue this fall, entitled *The Transnational Movement of People and Information* (guest edited by Kate Vieira, Rebecca Lorimer Leonard, and Morris Young), this issue's pieces continue to move our understanding of embodiment and embodied actors forward. We hope readers enjoy this bonus issue as much as we did

Brenda Glascott, *California State University, San Bernardino*

Justin Lewis, *University of Nevada, Reno*

Tara Lockhart, *San Francisco State University*

Holly Middleton, *High Point University*

Juli Parrish, *University of Denver*

Chris Warnick, *College of Charleston*