

Spring 2019

Editors' Introduction

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Recommended Citation

Feigenbaum, Paul, and Veronica House. "Editors' Introduction." *Community Literacy Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2019, pp. 1-3. doi:10.25148/clj.13.2.009066.

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Editors' Introduction

Paul Feigenbaum and Veronica House

As we look toward the third Conference on Community Writing, taking place in Philadelphia in October, we can't help but marvel at all the extraordinary work happening across the United States and beyond. Community literacy, in all its variety, takes us on a journey through different communities in order that we learn from them about the complexity and beauty of human existence. In this issue, we move between a prison cell, a physical therapy retreat, a kitchen table, an archive, a writing center, and a classroom in order to explore the many ways in which writing encourages healing, self-revelation, and transformation.

Our first peer-reviewed essay, "Typing Corrections: An Exploration & Performance of Prison (Type)Writing" by Alexander Rahe and Daniel Wuebben, is a rather atypical looking journal article. For reasons that will become clear as you read, the piece's co-authors wrote their respective sections on Swintec 2410cc typewriters while simultaneously employing an astonishing array of typing-related metaphors in order to compose an original and (literally) impressionable reading experience. In turn, the editors—in consultation with the authors and the journal's publisher—decided to publish the essay in its original typeface and with minimal copyediting. For one reason, a traditional copyediting process would have posed considerable material challenges. But perhaps more importantly, we decided that to "correct" the handful of mechanical errors sprinkled throughout the manuscript would in many respects undermine both the integrity and the spirit of the essay itself. After all, among the many insights articulated in Rahe and Wuebben's compelling and provocative piece is that errors are part of the human condition. Their article also asks us to recognize that for a number of material, social, and political reasons, some errors are much more easily corrected than others; indeed, the process of correcting an error can be quite complex and uncertain, and many errors can never be entirely corrected. Depending on the circumstances, sometimes leaving an error uncorrected might make the most sense. Beyond reflecting on the "chain of corrections" in prisons, the manuscript offers an illuminating firsthand account of the constraints faced by writers on the inside as they pursue various writing-related goals, from personal expression to connectedness to advocacy.

Kate Vieira's article, "Writing's Potential to Heal: Women Writing from Their Bodies," explores how writing can be used as a healing tool in community-based group settings. Vieira delves into writing produced by women seeking therapy for physical ailments. Through participant interviews, observation, and powerful examples of the participants' writing, she studies writing as an embodied and social practice that aids in the experience of physical healing. Ultimately, Vieira understands the curative potential of writing as a tool that can amplify the way people experience the healing effects of body-based therapies.

In “Writing From ‘The Wrong Class’: Archiving Labor in the Context of Precarity,” Jessica Pauszek analyzes an ambitious, transnational effort to establish print and digital archives of working-class community publications associated with the *Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP)* in England. Having participated as one of the leaders of this project over several years, Pauszek reflects on the joyful discoveries, the intimate acquaintances, the physical and emotional labors, and the logistical and material challenges she and numerous collaborators experienced as they negotiated a rather daunting task—namely, to collect, sort, and curate the massive array of materials composed over several decades by FWWCP members. As Pauszek details, many of these materials were previously un-archived and scattered through much of England. Through these reflections, Pauszek conceptualizes a theory of archival precarity, and she considers the implications of this theory for community-literacy practitioners who partner with, and seek to archive the work of, marginalized populations.

Nancy Reddy’s “‘The Spirit of our Rural Countryside’: Toward an Extracurricular Pedagogy of Place” studies a wide array of archival documents from the Wisconsin Rural Writers’ Association (WRWA), founded in 1948, to examine how rural people across the state have used creative writing to record and preserve the history, culture, and folklore of a rural way of life. Reddy’s study of these “extracurricular literacies” examines how authors used writing to foment rural identity and engage in civic and community work in ways that both solidify rural identity and challenge literacy stereotypes of rural citizens. We learn that while many of the writers were initially seen as odd or out-of-place by their communities for their desire to write, the writers found creative ways to blend writing with their civic lives. Through her examination of several original texts, Reddy concludes that writing became a practice that connected public and private lives in order to enrich both and contribute to the vitality of rural communities.

Interestingly, while Pauszek’s and Reddy’s areas of study are very different in terms of time, place, and the communities involved, their pieces resonate in that both feature people in extracurricular contexts challenging deficit-based cultural assumptions about their literacy capabilities and, in turn, claiming their identities as writers.

Our next article is “Centering Partnerships: A Case for Writing Centers as Sites of Community Engagement,” by Amy McCleese Nichols and Bronwyn T. Williams. Building on recent community-literacy scholarship on writing centers—including those housed within and beyond the academy—Nichols and Williams argue that various “writing center values” uniquely equip these spaces to facilitate best practices of community literacy. These values privilege long timelines, radically dialogic approaches to learning, and assessment methodologies that transcend quantifiable metrics. The implications of these values are further illuminated via the authors’ experiences at the University of Louisville Writing Center, in particular through their evolving partnership with a local nonprofit.

Our Project Profile for this issue, about the Drake Community Press, is by Carol Spaulding-Kruse. Through a discussion of the Press’s most recent title, *A Spectrum of Faith: Religions of the World in America’s Heartland* (April 2017), Spaulding-Kruse ex-

amines the community press as a space that brings together students with diverse and often non-mainstream local community partners through the research, production, publication, dissemination, and celebration of each text it publishes. Ultimately, she shows the ways in which a community press can work to inform the civic dialogue necessary to create social change.

This issue also features two interviews with community-literacy practitioners. In the first, Paul Feigenbaum talks with Floyd Jones and Denise Jones, who are respectively Executive Director and Program Director at Youth Enrichment Services (YES), a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit that has empowered underserved youth for more than two decades. In this wide-ranging discussion, Floyd and Denise describe the origins of YES, which began as an effort to enhance self-efficacy and to fight summer learning loss among public housing students in rural West Virginia. They also discuss YES's evolution into a year-round, urban-centered mentorship program that facilitates cultural and academic enrichment and professional development for public housing students in Pittsburgh. Finally, Floyd and Denise address how YES has taken advantage of various resources and opportunities to negotiate the financial, political, cultural, and social challenges of youth-engaged nonprofit work.

In the second interview, Veronica House talks with another West Virginia native, David Jolliffe, about his work as Brown Chair of English Literacy at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, from which he retired last Spring. Jolliffe shares his experiences traveling around the state and connecting to organizations, both large and small, to collaborate on literacy projects. In a discussion of some of his favorite projects from over the years, Jolliffe offers valuable advice to community literacy practitioners for how to develop meaningful and impactful projects, how to reach out to potential donors, and how to build lasting community relationships.

We are also delighted to have eight new book reviews. As always, we are grateful to Jessica Shumake and Saul Hernandez for their work editing the Book and New Media Review section. We are likewise thankful to the eight scholars who contributed reviews for this issue.