Trends in Writing and Technology

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Introduction to the Special Topic Issue on Teaching Writing with Technology

This Special Topic Issue of Writing & Pedagogy on “Teaching Writing with Technology,” guest-edited by Miriam Jaffe-Foger of Rutgers University, was commissioned by me after attending a panel organized by Jaffe-Foger for the spring 2011 College Communication and Composition Conference, entitled “Teaching, Translating, and Talking Language with Technology.” Several of the authors of the articles in this issue (Altman; Benda; Magrino and Sorrell; and Pozorski) presented in that 4 C’s panel, and this group of initial papers was augmented by others submitted to the journal or specially commissioned by Jaffe-Foger or myself for this issue (those of Ball; Collins, Hwang, Zheng, and Warschauer; Croxall; Hill; Pearson and Ellis; and Vengadasalam). In addition, our New Books Editor, Rodney H. Jones, commissioned two book reviews on multimodal composing (reviewers Anderson; Cowan), a subject of increasing importance for teachers of writing.

The overall shape of the Teaching Writing with Technology issue and its main content are primarily the work of the Guest Editor, in her conceptualization of the original panel and further efforts to bring additional authors and areas of content into the issue. The main work of revision and editing was accomplished by me in interaction with the individual authors over a two-year period. This issue has thus had the benefit of different kinds of conceptual and editorial input, a long gestation time, and the efforts of a number of people – primary among them the individual contributors. As summarized in the Guest Editor’s overview of contents which follows this editorial, the contributions describe uses of many different types of
technology in writing and writing pedagogy, including laptops, discussion tools in course management systems, social media, iPods, multimedia tools, and software for automatic translation and speech recognition. The focus of the issue is highly practical, offering advice and direction for teachers of writing at university and other levels of education. Many of the issues raised have hardly been examined previously in the writing literature, and so I expect that readers will find much that is new in the individual contributions.

**Potentials and Accessibility of Technology for Writing and the Teaching of Writing**

A driving force in the evolution of writing is the evolution of technology in terms of its features which are directly related to writing or which can be applied in ways that relate to writing and in terms of the accessibility of various types of technology to users. In addition to computer-assisted writing using word processing, when writers go online this opens a whole new set of affordances and potentials for communicating and collaborating with others; for accessing and making use of information in databases, websites, and others’ texts; and, in general, for applying other media and electronic tools in writing.

**Word Processors**

Computer-assisted word-processing tools have become increasingly available in the form of improved and ever smaller computers such as laptops and notebooks which facilitate all aspects of writing – from input to revision and dissemination of text. There is a long line of research and discussion of computer effects on learning and specifically on writing (see e.g. Pennington, 1991a; 1991b; 1992; 1993a; 1993b; 1996b; 1996c; 1999; 2003/2006; 2004a/2009; 2004b), which is being continued in the current work of Mark Warschauer and colleagues at the University of California at Irvine on the use of laptops in schools (e.g. Collins, Hwang, Sheng, and Warschauer, this issue; Warschauer, 2009). When married to Internet search engines, word processing software becomes a giant supplement to the cognitive resources, in both knowledge and memory capacity, of human beings, thereby greatly aiding research, the development of new knowledge and ideas, and the expression of these through language.

**Online Discussion Boards and Social Media**

Communication in online discussion boards, chat facilities, and social media is typically carried out in written form and so these electronic
communication environments are frequently linked to writing for educational purposes. Vengadasalam (this issue), starting from an analysis of the difficulties involved in facilitating online discussions through course management systems in writing classes, offers an approach to instructing, facilitating, and grading such online discussion, which “happens when participants post asynchronously in response to a topic they find interesting. A discussion can have several threads if there are several subtopics.” Her approach interactively builds and responds to discussion at an increasingly demanding level using a pool of items, which saves the teacher time and promotes student learning and involvement in the course topics. In a different kind of educational application, Magrino and Sorrell (this issue) show how social media such as Facebook and Twitter, which are very popular online environments for the out-of-class communication of teenagers and young adults, can be integrated into many different kinds of online courses for use by students “as dynamic components of the educational experience.” These online resources are widening the contexts of writing and the ways students and others participate in writing activities, as they bring more and more people into these new kinds of writing activities and are also being purposed to feed into students’ learning experiences, including their writing assignments.

Online Collaborative Writing

Collaborative work is facilitated by access to computers and the Internet and is increasingly seen as an important part of learning and the production of knowledge. Such collaboration includes interaction and feedback in the writing process as well as jointly produced and multiply authored texts. King (forthcoming) offers a critical review of different tools for online collaborative writing, their affordances, and the ways these might be used in writing classes. King’s pedagogy for collaboration is built on joint problem-solving, in which students:

all realize that they are expected to write together, and this leads them to treat the online space they are working in as a place of convergence in which they remain (at least periodically) aware of the contributions, alterations, and deletions of others and, crucially, maintain their common view of the enterprise via communication.

Blogs

Another online writing trend is blogging, that is, the writing of weblogs, “frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence” (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, and Wright, 2005: 142). A blog functions as a kind of online diary or journal that may include
audio and video along with text, that may incorporate links to other blogs and online sites, and that allows for response from visitors to the blog site. Herring et el. (2005: 143) describe the blog as “[forming] a de facto bridge between multimedia HTML documents and text-based computer-mediated communication, blurring the traditional distinction between these two dominant Internet paradigms, and potentially contributing to its future breakdown.” Levy (2009: 773) sees the main strength of blogs as “encouraging self-expression through informal writing.” The value of blogging for improving students’ writing may be in part the provision of an interactional space where students can express their opinions in interaction with others. Improvement in students’ writing may result as a by-product of writing more, or in a more engaged way, than they normally would – which may itself be an effect of their greater engagement in course activities. Pearson and Ellis (this issue), for example, describe how using semi-public, anonymous blogs to augment in-class discussion created a more student-invested and student-led course. They report that as the students became more active and engaged in the course in terms of offering their opinions, sharing ideas, and responding to the ideas of others, they improved their written communication.

**Wikis**

Another type of writing facilitated by computers and electronic connectivity involves the collaborative creation of documents via a wiki. King (forthcoming) describes a wiki as “[providing] a platform of ‘bundled’ features used in teaching programs for a number of collaborative tasks, including (but not limited to) online discussion, collaborative problem-solving, and collaborative writing. When used extensively in a course, students become familiar with the particular wiki’s interface and tools.” In Warschauer’s (2010: 4) view:

> Wikis turn traditional [computer-mediated communication] activity around. Whereas e-mail and chat facilitate informal, author-centric, personal exchange, writing on a wiki facilitates more formal, topic-centric, depersonalized exchange. Each edit makes a concrete contribution to a collaborative written product. A log of edits and their authors is relegated to a separate page, which a teacher can use to confirm who contributed what to a joint student product. Wikis are thus an especially powerful digital tool for collaborative writing and collective knowledge development.

Wikis therefore differ from other online discussion and writing tools in providing an especially good environment for creating large documents intertextually, rather than the short and singly authored documents which Herring et al. (2005) found are typical of blogs.
Language Analysis Tools

A wide range of language analysis tools offer capabilities for writing. One of the possibilities for writing is access to speech recognition software to aid writers with physical limitations, as in the applications described by Altman (this issue) and Hill (this issue). Another is access to search tools which analyze digital texts in ways that assist writers by greatly facilitating their locating topic-relevant or specific sources and sections within these. Other kinds of text analysis tools, such as concordancers (Berglund Prytz, 2009), which rapidly find and collate instances of specific lexical items and phrases across different texts, are important in language research and have educational applications in helping raise writing teachers’ and student writers’ awareness of language forms and their usage in specific types of text. Search tools also have applications in detecting plagiarism (Decoo and Colpaert, 2010) as well as for teaching students how to avoid plagiarism and properly reference the work of others (Conzett, Martin, and Mitchell, 2010). Online pedagogical resources have been developed which can build a customized corpus of learner texts and then use text analysis tools to help learners find their errors and improve their writing (e.g. Hegelheimer, 2006; Hegelheimer and Fisher, 2006). Other online tools based on language analysis may be of particular use for researching or writing text in a second language, such as translation tools which help writers access as well as produce texts written in languages that they do not know and which may also be adapted to specific educational applications in writing, as explored by Benda (this issue) for Taiwanese students’ written English.

Mobile Devices

Other new options for writing are provided by hand-held mobile devices such as cellphones with keyboards and auto-text features that facilitate input and dissemination (if not revision) of text and with connection to the Internet and other media and electronic resources. Using handheld mobile devices connected to the Internet increases portability for relatively limited, small-text writing purposes such as taking notes or sending messages, and their use for other purposes (e.g. recording interviews or taking pictures as aspects of research) may also be connected to writing tasks. Some of the new work on use of hand-held mobile devices in education (see e.g. Berge and Muilenburg, 2013; Díaz-Vera, 2012) incorporates attention to writing, though this is still in early stages with few applications or research studies so far published. Yet it seems clear that these hand-held mobile devices are promoting changes in the contexts, the modes of participation, and the forms of writing at least as much as the introduction of word processing did and as much as other Internet-facilitated modes of communication are also doing.
Multimedia

As I have elsewhere remarked, “In the contemporary era, writing has become increasingly linked to an array of other media, a trend which is increasing the demand for blended multimedia competencies and for what has come to be known as multiliteracy…” (Pennington, 2009). New books on digital composing such as Jones and Hafner (2012) stress multimodality, an increasing focus of attention for pedagogical practices, as in Miller and McVey’s (2012) edited collection on *Multimodal Composing in Classrooms: Learning and Teaching for the Digital World*, reviewed by Cowan (this issue) or Palmeri’s (2012) *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*, reviewed by Anderson (this issue). Palmeri (2012) builds a case for multimodality as being part of the foundations of writing. It is moreover increasingly accepted that digital literacies and multimodality are an important part of composition in the present era and so should be taught within composition curricula, and that different kinds of non-print texts are part of what 21st century students must learn to “read” and “write.” A forward-looking pedagogical example is the activities provided by Ball (this issue) that involve students in rhetorically analyzing and producing multimedia webtexts.

Some Caveats

Levy (2009: 773) observes “the substantial limitations of generic commercial products for teaching and learning writing,” noting, for example, that blogs tend to require considerable monitoring and moderation from the teacher to operate successfully over time in an educational setting. Different blog programs also offer varying degrees of functionality – for instance, in terms of levels of interactivity, levels of access, and visual capacity – and so it may be advantageous to review a number of systems before finally setting on a particular blog provider.

Pozorski (this issue) points out that the transition from out-of-class to in-class uses of technology is not always straightforward, as she found in her attempts to make podcasts a central feature of her instruction. Pozorski cautions that teachers need to consider the costs and benefits of using students’ favorite out-of-class technologies such as iPods, cellphones, and social networking sites as devices and sites for academic work.

Students may not be able to automatically transfer their out-of-class electronic practices to educational use and may moreover resent being asked to do so. In general, students need instruction and guidance in using electronic tools for educational purposes. A study at University College London looking at Internet searches and reading online found
that the current generation are not very adept at using the Internet to find sources, as “…most visitors to scholarly sites view only a few pages, many of which do not even contain real content, and in any case do not stop long enough to do any real reading” (UCL, 2008: 31). What they seem to be doing instead is what the UCL researchers call “power browsing” of titles, contents pages, and abstracts. In the view of Pozorski (this issue), use of digital tools requires rethinking them as part of the university context. In addition, Croxall (this issue) addresses the problem of “tool fatigue” when course writing involves mastery of new technologies and offers practical suggestions for avoiding it.

Writing Trends

The technological affordances and contexts for writing online are opening up the options for writing beyond traditional modes, conventions, and genres and creating whole new writing spaces and forms. In the current era of writing online we can witness a more fluid writing process leading to new kinds of language and new conventions for written text, more malleable writing both in the sense that conventions are in an evolving stage and in the sense that writers are less tied to concrete printed text, a higher degree of hybridity with other forms of media and text, and a higher degree of intertextuality both accepted and expected. In an online context, the sense of what writing is, as Levy (2009: 733) notes, “has broadened, reflecting contemporary thinking in multiliteracies and the combination of the word and the image in the creation of multimodal texts…. “ We can witness new genres in evolution, based on text which is constrained as well as unconstrained, shorter as well as longer, fragmented as well as comprehensive, hybrid and multigeneric as well as increasingly “monogeneric” and specialized. Many of the changes seen in written language are related to other social and historical trends which predate the computer and the Internet but have now become interconnected with these technologies.

Creation of New Language and Changing Writing Conventions

Creative languaging and destandardization of writing are occurring as a result of the facilitative effects of writing on computer, access to and ease of use of a wide range of texts and multimedia online, and the popularity of social media and cellphones for communication. Many new types of language have been created in electronic contexts, such as e-prefix coinages that can describe all things electronic and the massive development of texting abbreviations to facilitate short-message communication. Other
sorts of abbreviations have evolved in computer contexts, such as new lexical forms meshing orthographic and numeric symbols, such as H8 (“hate”) or GR8 (“great”), which I have labelled (Pennington, 2004b) *hybridnyms*. Another trend is the mixing of the symbol systems of different writing systems, such as in code-mixed advertisements, and of graphic with iconic modes of representation (Pennington, 1996a), which is greatly facilitated by creation and publication with electronic technology.

**Short-Text Writing**

Several features of the current use of electronic devices and online environments can be seen as constraints that are tending to shrink the size of texts. One obvious effect of using mobile devices for writing is to greatly reduce the size of the keyboard and the screen with consequent effects on the size and shape of text, as in the rapid rise of short-message and texting abbreviations and the popularity of short-message communication and creative expression through services such as in Twitter. Texts are shrinking also with the urgency of wanting to respond and to update information frequently.

**Long-Text Writing**

In contrast to the constraints of size and urgency in some types of electronic contexts that are tending to produce short-text writing, other computer capabilities and online environments have an opposite effect, affording writers virtually unlimited capacity to produce text. The writing of long texts is facilitated by computer memory and cut-and-paste capabilities as well as by the possibility of collaboration by multiple authors. Both word processors and search tools are valuable resources for writers constructing large documents. Writing any kind of long document is physically aided by computers, which can store and aid in revision of large chunks of text. The creation of long documents of an academic type, such as a research report, a Ph.D. thesis, or a research monograph or book, is also facilitated by the ease of access to sources through electronic search and connectivity. In addition, as wikis such as Wikipedia show, computer tools are especially useful for creating documents that can continually grow and change, including creative digital works intended to be generative and interactive.
Conversational Writing

One trend seen in electronic environments is to write in a form that is relatively informal and conversational in register, and that tends more to the personal and the everyday in terms of topics. Kuper (2013) celebrates this trend, which he sees as spreading out from interactive online communication to other written media:

Day by day, prose is becoming blessedly more like speech. Social media, blogs and emails have hugely improved the way we write.... [T]exts, blogs, emails and Facebook posts are infecting other kinds of writing, and mostly for the good.

Online writing modes that allow or encourage this more informal, familiar, and natural communicational style of writing have expanded the opportunities and also the attraction of writing for many people. As Kuper (2013) comments:

Before the internet, only professional writers wrote.... Email kicked off an unprecedented expansion in writing. We're now in the most literate age in history.... By 2006, the analysis firm NM Incite had identified 36 million blogs worldwide; five years later, there were 173 million. Use of online social media rises every month. In fact, writing is overtaking speech as the most common form of interaction.

Technicalized Writing

A different trend in writing is the continuing development of specialized registers of language and textual genres in different fields and communities of practice – both academic disciplines and other specialist groups such as online gamers. This trend is a long-term one – over centuries¹ – that is facilitated (both supported and promoted) by technology which improves opportunities for communication by specialists in each field and facilitates publication and access of texts in each field.

Interactive and Collaborative Writing

The facility of writing as a form of personal expression and informal communication with others online is creating more and more contexts and opportunities for writing interactively and collaboratively. These include writing as:

- an aspect of an ongoing discussion of a topic;
- a way to give feedback in intermediate stages of drafting a written work;

¹This trend is not limited to the past centuries; it has been happening for centuries.
a form of response to a text once it has been created and posted (e.g. in a blog or social media site); and
• a way to jointly create texts by writing and commenting on different sections of text as they are produced.

Interactive and collaborative writing can be motivating and synergistic, resulting in better text, more ideas, and more developed ideas than can be created alone.

Repurposing of Text and Hybridity

The kinds of written works which people create online are often highly intertextual in the sense of building significantly on others’ work and reusing and repurposing previously created digital material in sampling, remixing, and “mashing up” of “used” text from print or electronic documents, along with audio and visual content, such as from existing music or video files, in highly creative ways. In addition to digital versions of print texts that often include augmentations such as hyperlinks, digital photos, artwork, and video, there is a thriving new area of “born digital” (Strickland, 2009) creations, in which “the writer uses images, sound, structure, links, and other coded elements to make works that can only be accessed with the use of computing devices. A sizable body of these works now exists....” (Strickland and Coverley, 2012: 347). Such works may also be created by writers working collaboratively with others who have computer coding skills or, increasingly, by moderately knowledgeable computer users – which includes a large number of writers in the present day – who learn ways to adapt and revise the lines of code created by others to make small alterations that they can use in their own works. Interactive creative works that incorporate print text are exponentiating (see Bolden, 2012, for some examples), and these now include multi-dimensional works, such as the museum displays of Sarah Kenderine providing “omni spatial visualization” of written texts (e.g. Kenderdine, Lancaster, Lan, and Gremmler, 2011). The new capabilities of online production with 3-D printers offer the potential for producing 3-dimensional constructions of print and other media by the “average” home computer user.

Literacies Large and Small

Literacy, both reading and writing, is now evolving in partnership with computers and electronic technology and environments, with profound effects on the nature of writing (i) as a process of communication and expression and (ii) as text produced through these technologies and environments and through the processes supported and promoted by
them. As I wrote at the beginning of this century summarizing research and trends affecting writing in electronic environments: “in the contexts of computer-mediated communication, writing is moving in the direction of, on the one hand, a more social construction of the activity and interactivity of writing, and, on the other, of a more media-saturated construction of text as existing within a rich nexus of [audio and video] resources” (Pennington, 2003: 304). These changing constructions of literacy in an Internet context are situating writing within everyday and popular culture activities while also facilitating highly specialized literate and creative activity.

The situating of writing within everyday and popular culture activities can be observed in “the tendency [of students] to encode literacy practices [on the Web] within verbs ‘finding,’ ‘making,’ ‘chatting,’ ‘watching,’ ‘searching,’ and seldom ‘reading’ and ‘writing’” (Romano, Field, and De Huergo, 2000: 208). As writing has moved into the background of many kinds of online tasks, becoming merely the “invisible” mode of carrying out a social or popular culture activity, it has greatly expanded its relevance for people, notably, students. The increased linkage of writing to such activities can be viewed as an expansion of what might be called, following the discussions of “Big-C” Culture versus “little-c” culture (e.g. Lafayette, 1978; Seelye, 1974) and similar oppositions as applied to creativity (e.g. Luckenbach, 1986; Stein, 1987), “little-l” literacy, contrasted with “Big-L” Literacy.

To understand the distinction I have in mind, we need to look at how the “Big-C” versus “little-c” contrast has previously been applied. “Big-C Culture” refers to the great products of human culture, generally considered to include great works of literature, art, and music. These great works, which are much admired and remarked, are opposed to deeper – less noticed and remarked, and also more mundane – products of human culture in the way of beliefs, values, and practices, which are termed “little-c culture.” The little-c domain can be seen as that of vernacular culture, and various types of practices considered to fall under the heading of popular culture can also be considered forms of little-c culture. Turning to the Big-C versus little-c distinction in creativity, Merrotsy (2013: 474) summarizes it as follows:

...Big-C Creativity [refers to] the kind of clear-cut, genius-level creativity that is reserved for the eminent and the great. On the other hand, little-c creativity refers to the everyday, common, or garden-variety creativity that may be found in most people....

Big-C Creativity is generally known only in retrospect, based on its outcome, the way that outcome is received, and the effect(s) which it has. Typical Big-C outcomes are Big-C cultural products of literature, art, and music; but creative genius may also result in other kinds of Big-C outcomes such as scientific discoveries, new technologies, and other new products.
Big-C Culture and Big-C Creativity intersect in producing the kinds of outcomes that gain societal recognition as having value beyond a personal or individual level, as representing a high level of achievement among human beings, and as helping to advance the society.

On the basis of these little-c and Big-C distinctions, I want to define “little-l literacy” as ordinary personal literate acts or processes, and the products of such acts or processes, situated within everyday, vernacular culture activities. These literate practices include reading and writing magazines and newspapers as well as websites, in addition to letter- and diary-writing, blogging, and writing in Internet social media contexts such as Twitter and Facebook. These are forms of literacy which are linked to little-c or vernacular culture and little-c, everyday or personal creativity. I will then define “Big-L Literacy” as unusual, remarkable, or advanced literate practices (acts or processes) that link reading and writing to Big-C Culture and Big-C Creativity in literature and arts as well as in the eminent or highest level literate products of higher learning in the way of Ph.D. theses, journal articles, and research monographs. In defining Big-L Literacy to include as high-level literate products not only great works of literary prose and poetry but also of academic writing, I am asserting that the highest level literate products of higher learning should stand alongside the highest level literate products of creative writing, within the same category of higher literate achievements of human culture which have value beyond a personal or individual level, represent a high level of human achievement, and help to advance a society. The long-standing tradition of including only great literary works within great literature seems hard to justify, given the degree of eminence, knowledge, culture, and creativity involved in these other sorts of great achievements of written language.

Within this broadened view of literacy, it is possible to describe electronic resources and environments as supporting literacy of both types, little-l and Big-L. The current trend to simplify or “naturalize” written text into the more ordinary and familiar linguistic form of conversation, in addition to the trends to personal content and short texts as facilitated by social media, blogs, and other electronic environments promoting interactive discussion and response, can be considered little-l literacy trends that are linked to writing and reading in electronic contexts. The ongoing technicalization and specialization of language in different fields and communities of practice, and the creation of long and complex, impersonal or nonpersonal texts, on the other hand — as facilitated by the availability of specialized content on the Internet as well as by the capabilities of word processing, cloud storage, and search engines, among other kinds of software — can be considered Big-L Literacy trends that “denaturalize” writing in the sense of
promoting written language as increasingly specialized and complex – in a sense, increasingly “eminent,” high-level, or advanced.

At the same time as writing with electronic resources and in online contexts are linked to trends moving writing in both more conversational (little-l) and more specialized (Big-L) directions, the available resources and contexts for digital activity are also functioning as a new “third space” for creation of “intermediate” or hybrid products blending little-l and Big-L properties. For example, wiki documents are often created through little-l literacy processes of online response and collaboration together with what may be considered the Big-L Literacy processes of searching and incorporating information from published sources in order to provide authoritative and up-to-date information and to document information and claims. The result is often a document that is relatively specialized in content and language, while at the same time being accessible and not highly technicalized. Wikis can thus be seen as new hybrid forms of electronic literacy that combine Big-L and little-L literate practices.

Another “intermediate” category is small-text poetry, such as the two examples below from the Orange SMS Shorthand Poetry Competition: Shortlist (2002):

2&4
2 see & 4 see,  2 tell & 4 tell,
2 taste & 4 taste, 2 get & 4 get,
2 give & 4 give.

ODE 2 MY BIKE
Oh bike so beauTful & pink
U transport me all over the cT
If only I could
Make people C
Your spindly metallic beauT

Such creative forms originate within little-l literacy contexts but nonetheless have some of the attributes of the Big-L and Big-C (Creative and Cultural) genre of poetry. These kinds of products, though they have some of the attributes of little-l literate products, may cross over to be regarded as Big-L Literate products – that is, if they are seen, once created and considered by others, as great works of literary Creativity and Culture.

Artists are repurposing conversational as well as literary and academic texts for creative expression, digitally meshing little-l and Big-L writing that would not normally be found together in one context. They may incorporate digital features such as animation, hypertext, video clips, and sound files. It is common for creative digital texts to be composed of individual segments or fragments, each of which is an individual “media-unit” – such as a line or stanza of poetry, a paragraph or anecdote, a picture or other non-print digital element – that can stand on its own and/or be combined in different ways to make texts of different lengths and structures. These may be at
any level of literacy, from very ordinary or even fragmented bits of conversation, to some of the greatest lines from novels or poems. In some cases, new genres are being formed that are recognized, at least by some, as Big-L/Big-C literate genres.

Conclusion

As I noted some time ago, “more and more of our literacy practices and products – and indeed our cultural practices and products – are moving onto the Internet” (Pennington, 2001: 20). In the digital age, we can witness both increased little-l literacy in the form of more informal and social writing (and reading) processes and products, incorporating forms of little-c culture and creativity and involving increasing numbers and variety of people. At the same time, we can observe digital tools and environments expanding the opportunities for people to participate in and produce Big-L Literate and Big-C Cultural and Creative products. While more and more people are performing little-l literate acts, especially on the Internet, Big-L writing, especially of the academic kind, facilitated by computers and the Internet, is becoming increasingly specialized and inaccessible to the masses.

Yet the more writing and reading are performed in and in relation to Internet contexts, the more they are evolving into something altogether new. Thus, beside little-l literacy and Big-L Literacy it seems increasingly necessary to posit a new, third category of digital literacy, or literacies. The existence of highly creative works, important new ideas, and other culturally significant products being generated collaboratively in connected electronic “third-space” environments rather than by individual artists or geniuses working alone and in isolation from others, as well as the creation of a range of hybrid and “intermediate” products combining little-l and Big-L properties, would seem to require some rethinking of the traditional distinctions made between Big-C and little-C culture and creativity to bring them up-to-date in the digital era. Such rethinking of notions of culture and creativity can complement the current changing notions of literacy within electronic contexts (see e.g. Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum, 2013).

Note

1 Halliday (1993) and Halliday and Martin (1993) discuss this trend in relation to the rise of science. It may also be related to the increasing numbers of speakers of a language – in the current era, the English language – and its increasing use over time in different domains, and hence to its age as well as its power and status.
References


**Upcoming Issues**

The journal will expand in 2014 to publish one open topic issue (Spring), one special topic issue (Winter), and one other issue (Summer) – either open topic or special topic – per year. Submissions are no longer being accepted for any of the Volume 6 (2014) issues. Submissions for all issues of Volume 7 (2015) are now being accepted, including the Spring 2015 open topic issue and the Summer and Winter 2015 special topic issues (see Calls for Papers below).
UPCOMING SPECIAL TOPIC ISSUES

Vol 6(2) Summer 2014  Feedback on Writing  Guest Editor: Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth, New York University

Vol. 6(2) Winter 2014  Children's Writing: Perspectives on Teaching and Learning  Guest Editor: Sherry Taylor, University of Colorado at Denver

Vol 7(2) Summer 2015  Orality and Literacy in the 21st Century: Prospects for Writing Pedagogy  Guest Editor: Rosalind Horowitz, University of Texas–San Antonio

Vol 7(3) Winter 2015  Writing Assessment  Guest Editor: Jane Lockwood, City University of Hong Kong

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REVISED CALL FOR PAPERS Vol 7(2) Summer 2015
Special Topic Issue

Orality and Literacy in the 21st Century

Prospects for Writing Pedagogy

Twenty-five years ago, Comprehending Oral and Written Language (Horowitz and Samuels, 1987, Academic Press) was published. Chapter One of that book began with the following statement, which still holds:

In the next century it will be virtually impossible to pursue the study of written language and literacy without attention to oral language.... Speculations are that 100 years from now, not only will there be a mingling of research perspectives, but since features associated with oral and written language and social-psychological factors associated with language processes are constantly in a state of flux, our very object of study will also change dramatically. The lexis, grammar, and larger structures of oral language and written language may become alike, with the norm being a writing that is largely indistinguishable from speech. (p. 1)

We are soliciting contributions for a special topic issue on “Orality and Literacy in the 21st Century: Prospects for Writing Pedagogy.” The issue will address attributes of orality and literacy that are gaining heightened attention world-wide and that we believe will significantly influence the nature of classroom instruction in writing. Scholarly examination of oral and literate cultures and spoken–written expression and their cognitive representation will influence the pedagogical practices that are advanced in the 21st century in educational policy, teacher education, and classroom learning and teaching.

The special topic issue will include articles in the categories of critical essay, empirical research, pedagogical reflections, technology-focused or internet-focused articles, and reviews of books to be published in the period from Summer 2013 to Summer 2015. We are seeking articles relevant for any level of education or type of writing pedagogy or practice, such as the following topics and areas of inquiry:

- The evolving nature of orality and literacy, historically and culturally – How are changes in orality and literacy reshaping writing pedagogy? How have the oral and written dimensions of language, whether primary or second languages, been characterized by scholars and how might different perspectives have influence on pedagogical practices in writing?
- The functions of oral vs. written communication among individuals and/or in given social groups or communities – Are the functions
of the oral and written dimensions of language changing within specific cultures or social-contextual settings, and if so, how are these changes influencing writing pedagogy?

- **Interactions of oral and written expression and knowledge development within different academic disciplines** – How is spoken language used to support writing tasks, genres, and writer-reader goals of different academic disciplines? How do oral and written modes of communication interact in contrasting types of knowledge domains, such as in science versus history?

- **Ways in which forms of speaking influence writing** – How do speech styles and genres work as precursors to writing, and how do they strategically enter into and follow writing? How do discussions influence motivation and processes of writing and the products that are produced by learners? How can students in classrooms progress from spontaneous utterances to more planned discourse?

- **Spoken versus written input to writing** – What is the comparative value of spoken versus written feedback or other kinds of contributions on students’ writing?

- **Linkage of oral and written competence across languages or dialects** – How might students’ oral or written competence in their primary language be used to support or enrich writing in another language? How can writing pedagogy incorporate bilingual or bidialectal competence?

- **The role of the body in oral versus written expression** – How do the mouth, ear, eye, hand, or larger human body contribute to the production of written discourse, such as through incorporation of specific features of oral language, gestures, or overall performance? How do visual and manual processing contribute to writing when writers use specific tools such as pen, computer, or hand-held devices? How should connections between mind and body be studied or employed in writing pedagogy?

- **Timing and prosody of speech and writing** – How do timing and prosody through features such as intonation units, punctuation, and utterance/sentence length differ in speech versus writing? How are the rhythmic elements of language and discourse conveyed in writing? How might these be taught to developing writers?

- **Voice in speech and writing contexts** – How is voice conveyed in specific speaking and writing contexts? How do writers adjust voice to geographic space or social-situational contexts? How can voice be defined and developed in the writing curriculum?
• **Audience awareness or interaction in speaking versus writing** – How is audience incorporated into acts of speaking versus writing, and what are the pedagogical implications?

• **Cognition and consciousness in speech and writing** – How does written language influence cognition and consciousness differently from speech, and what are the implications for teaching and learning how to write for cognitive development? In what ways are differences in speech and writing as modes of meaning and thinking incorporated into educational curricula?

• **Methods of oral and written discourse analysis** – What methods, including with technologies, may be useful for the analysis of spoken and written discourse, and how can they be applied to writing pedagogy?

Contributions to this issue may come from researchers and practitioners from a range of disciplines, such as Rhetoric and Composition, Communication, Psychology, Culture Studies, Linguistics, Education, Media and Information Technology, as well as from those interested in writing in specific disciplines. A range of methodologies are welcomed, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method empirical studies as well as historical or issues-centered analysis and pedagogical description and critique. Contributors may suggest an issue or topic that is not listed but that may be germane to the theme of this special issue.

For articles in all categories other than book reviews, interested potential authors should send their email and postal addresses along with a provisional title and draft article or detailed abstract, summary, or outline of contents by email or hard copy by post to the guest editor. For best consideration, submit this by 1 June 2014 or at your earliest convenience. Also send a 75–100 word biographical statement that includes highest degree and where from, current institutional affiliation and job title, and major achievements. For book reviews, please notify the guest editor of relevant books to appear in the period of Summer 2013 to Summer 2015 and whether you would like to be considered as a possible reviewer of a specific book or books, for which the reviewer would receive a free copy. If you wish to be considered as a reviewer, also send email and postal address along with a 75–100 word biographical statement that includes highest degree and where from, current institutional affiliation and job title, and major achievements.

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Potential contributors will be notified within two months of submission of a decision about their proposed contribution and, if positive, given feedback towards a first or revised draft. The final deadline for complete papers to be received is 1 December 2014. Both the guest editor and the other editors of the journal will work closely with selected authors to aid in producing a unique and memorable issue on this important topic.

REVISED CALL FOR PAPERS Vol 7(3) Winter 2015
Special Topic Issue

Writing Assessment

Thirty years ago, writing assessment appeared to be the intellectual domain of a relatively few testing experts worldwide and to be the commercial domain of even fewer commercial testing agencies. The main activity revolved around the generation of valid and reliable summative scores for a range of gatekeeping purposes such as university entrance, job promotion, and immigration prerequisites. However, the field of testing and assessment has opened up in a remarkable way over the last two decades, embracing and supporting classroom writing pedagogies at schools and universities, and embracing and supporting a range of workplace and professional writing needs. So in 2015, what is this thing we call writing assessment, and how and why has the change come about?

The changes are multifaceted and are not confined to changes in pedagogy, but also involve changes in, and the potentials of, new technologies and the new demands of the globalized world around us. In pedagogy, language teachers now talk and practice “assessment for learning,” seen in the adoption of a range of formative assessment practices for diagnostic and writing improvement purposes. In addition, these same teachers in decentralized school and university contexts take more responsibility for the design and use of “assessment of learning,” that is, summative assessment of their students’ work.

Students today construct writing in different ways using new technologies, and writing assessment practitioners are exploring the possibilities
of using automated scoring and feedback. These new practices must ultimately change how we currently assess writing both formatively and summatively.

Finally, in our globalized world, questions are being asked about what constitutes good writing in the different contexts and audiences for which we write. How do we assess, for example, the business correspondence of a Chinese business manager writing to her colleagues in the Asian region where the recipients are also second language writers (and readers)? All of these contexts, changes, and questions set a broad agenda in this call for writing assessment contributions from colleagues researching and practicing in this area.

Invitations for papers on writing assessment broadly fall under the following themes:

(i) Writing assessment practices and policies in primary and secondary schools
(ii) The link between pedagogy and assessment in schools and universities
(iii) Re-evaluating high stakes writing assessment in different contexts
(iv) Writing assessment in local and global workplaces
(v) Writing assessment technologies and possibilities
(vi) Formative writing assessment practices and the place of feedback

Contributors may suggest an issue or topic that is not listed but that may be germane to the theme of this special issue.

We seek articles in all categories, as follows:

- **Featured Essay** A mid-length or full-length article which argues a controversial point, advocates for a specific theoretical position or type of practice, reviews issues, or presents new ideas about writing assessment;
- **Research Matters** A full-length article which presents empirical research (e.g. comparative research, developmental study, ethnographic research, case study, issues-centered survey, etc.) on writing assessment;
- **Reflections on Practice** A mid-length referenced discussion of practices relating to the assessment of writing;
- **From the eSphere** A short, mid-length, or full-length discussion or description focused on new technologies or new uses of familiar technology and/or the internet in writing assessment;
- **New Books** A short review or full-length review article on books published or to be published in 2014 or 2015 that center on writing assessment.
For articles in all categories other than book reviews, interested potential authors should send their email and postal addresses along with a provisional title and draft article or detailed abstract, summary, or outline of contents by email or hard copy by post to the guest editor. For articles in all categories other than book reviews, interested potential authors should send their email and postal addresses along with a provisional title and draft article or detailed abstract, summary, or outline of contents by email or hard copy by post to the guest editor. For best consideration, submit this by 1 August 2014. Also send a 75–90 word biographical statement that includes highest degree and where from, current institutional affiliation and job title, and major achievements. For book reviews, please notify the guest editor of relevant books to appear in 2014 or 2015 and whether you would like to be considered as a possible reviewer of a specific book or books, for which the reviewer would receive a free copy. If you wish to be considered as a reviewer, also send email and postal address along with a 75–90 word biographical statement that includes highest degree and where from, current institutional affiliation and job title, and major achievements.

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Potential contributors will be notified within two months of submission of a decision about their proposed contribution and, if positive, given feedback towards a first or revised draft. Both the guest editor and the other editors of the journal will work closely with selected authors to aid in producing a unique, cutting-edge issue on this important topic.