

EDITOR'S COLUMN

The essays in this *JBW* issue, the second I have had the privilege of editing, competed with approximately forty others that arrived in our mails while space remained in these pages. This statistic tells me that teachers and scholars, experienced and new alike, continue to be inspired by the hopes of young men and women who lack the skills—though not the motivation or intelligence—to thrive in academic settings.

This statistic also helps justify the confidence in *JBW* implied by the recent grant awarded us by the Exxon Educational Foundation. We asked for the funds after our reorganization in 1985 when we realized that *JBW* was not reaching nearly the number of readers it could and should. Exxon agreed with our assessment and gave us a grant earmarked for one purpose: to increase our readership and thereby stimulate additional scholarship in the field of basic writing. Here are some excerpts from our letter of application.

More than ever, the needs of underprepared students demand the energetic attention of higher education. The demand of other priorities—critical thinking, computer technology, writing across the curriculum, and the like—threaten to sweep basic writers under the rug We seek to bring our training in close reading of texts and in critical analysis to the teaching of underprepared students We need therefore to get the word out. We want to reach the thousands of faculty teaching basic writing and ignite their enthusiasm for scholarship in the field.

To fulfill the mandate of the Exxon grant, we have organized a one-time, direct-mail campaign to tell faculty and administrators across the United States about *JBW*. The Scovill Group, experts in professional-development projects in the humanities, has served as consultant. The mailing will go out in late summer 1986. Indeed, many of our present readers who are on the mailing lists we have gathered will receive our material. The expense of “merging and purging” lists is enormous, so we wish to apologize officially to our valued readers if they get our introductory mailing—we hope the material can be passed along to colleagues who might want to subscribe.

Now to matter related to this issue. First, we welcome to the *JBW* Editorial Board nine additional scholar/teachers. Their names appear on our masthead along with our original group. These new members have been participating in our review process for about one year, starting soon after our previous issue was full. The services of all members of our Editorial Board are invaluable. *JBW* also called on a small group of external readers for specialized expertise. Alice M. Roy and Irwin Weiser, now part of the new group on our Editorial Board, were external reviewers from January 1985 through July 1985. Others were: Joanne Sher Grumet of The College of Staten Island and Joseph Trimmer of Ball State University. We thank them most gratefully.

Our collection of essays in this issue begins with the inaugural address of Richard Lloyd-Jones, University of Iowa, when he was installed in 1985 as President of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). When I heard his talk to an audience of hundreds of elementary, secondary, and college teachers and administrators, I knew immediately that his message was universal. *JBW* is honored to be the journal of record for Lloyd-Jones' historic speech.

Next we present a trio of essays about instruction in basic writing. Christopher Gould and John Heyda draw on their national survey of instructional emphases in basic writing to ask stimulating questions about the social agenda underlying our curricula. Katherine J. Ronald and Hephzibah C. Roskelly view listening as an act of composing and describe an innovative program for basic writers that fosters conscious listening and attentive writing. Ann B. Dobie, after reminding us that spelling can influence students' job opportunities, offers helpful techniques for teaching spelling with minimal intrusion on the central activities of our basic writing classroom.

Our second trio of essays concerns ESL students in basic writing classrooms. Warren Herendeen, a skilled storyteller as well as an expert in linguistics, literature, speech, and composition, narrates tales of tricksters and dilemmas that capture ESL students. Elizabeth Taylor Tricomi draws on Krasden's theory of second-language acquisition to offer thought-provoking insights for first-language writing teachers who seek to improve their students' control of Edited American English. Ann M. Johns demonstrates an inventive use of schema theory to help ESL students revise more successfully by learning to develop categories of reader expectations.

We conclude this collection by focusing on word processing, a new tool for teaching composition. Randall G. Nichols gives us a rich array of examples to explain his observations and conclusions about the effects of instruction in word processing on the composing processes of basic writers.

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