

questions, and helpful input based on her personal and teaching experiences as well as introductions to published works that address issues of class that place discussions of class in the theoretical framework deserving of such an important topic.

Kingsville, Texas

Works Cited

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- Grimes, Michael, and Joan M. Morris. *Caught in the Middle: Contradictions in the Lives of Sociologists from Working-Class Backgrounds*. Westport: Praeger, 1997.
- Lubrano, Alfred. *Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2004.
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Teaching Writing with Latino/a Students: Lessons Learned at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, edited by Christina Kirklighter, Diana Cárdenas, and Susan Wolff Murphy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007. 240 pp.

Reviewed by I. Moriah McCracken, University of Texas–Pan American

During my first week at the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), I was handed a text I had never seen before: *Teaching Writing with Latino/a Students*. As I began skimming the articles, I couldn't help but wonder what my colleagues knew that I didn't. As a teacher-researcher interested in the effects of place on students and academics identities, I was not naïve enough to believe that I could simply transfer the courses I used at a mostly Anglo, private university in North Texas to a majority Hispanic student population in the Rio Grande Valley. But as a native Texan, I did assume the students and I would be able to share in Texas pride, and I was open and ready to have them teach me about my new place. Now that I have been in the classrooms of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) for one semester, teaching both undergraduate and early college students, and I am still torn between viewing my students as either [1] a contextual and unique student population, one influenced by the Valley's undeniable border identity, or as [2] typical eighteen- to twenty-year-old college students, millennials struggling to make sense of and find relevance in college life and college demands.

Teaching Writing with Latino/a Students did not provide any easy answers for my dilemma. Drawing on narratives, qualitative studies, and even casual conversations, the text offers a variety of approaches “to meet individual student needs as they connect to identity and heritage, language, and geographic region” (7). Though the editors divide the text into four sections, I found two dominant themes in the essays: connecting and resisting.

The first dominant theme of the collection is the need for teachers of writing to connect Latino/a students’ embedded resources into their new academic environments and endeavors. For example, Jody Millward describes Latino/a students as being surrounded by a series of concentric circles (37): the student stands in the middle of the circle, and each outer ring represents a new and divergent context which shapes her academic experience—family and cultural community, academic community, political and economic community. Millward argues these circles do not operate independently from one another, and students may find the greatest academic success by building and negotiating “bridges” between each community, a point made by Sandra Starkey (47). Not only do faculty need to remember that students are surrounded by intersecting and interpenetrating community networks, but they should also help students make meaningful connections between home and school through the deliberate use of familiar pedagogical approaches. For example, Diana Cárdenas and Susan Loudermilk Garza adapted a technical writing course to include a service-learning component, which ultimately helped students see “how their individual, smaller, grassroots efforts can lead to larger social change” (142), while a graduate class at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi sponsored its annual University Author’s Day with a focus on community literacy, which allowed the groups to unite and build on the strengths of each. In both cases, students were asked to use their experiences and associations to engage and benefit their communities, and faculty members were provided real-world scenarios to help prepare students for “possible future endeavors with Latino/a students” (227). Another pedagogical technique faculty members used to help students bridge their personal and academic lives was through the use of narrative; as Robert Affeldt notes, the narratives help students use their heritage as a “resource rather than viewing it as an encumbrance” (208). More importantly, students who were “building narratives” were able to move beyond cultural divisions in order to connect, using their experiences to critique, to engage, and to challenge the dominant discourses of those surrounding them.

Understanding the communities in which students are embedded often demands that writing teachers complicate commonly held assumptions about Hispanic students’ proficiency in English and in Spanish in order to create more individualized and heterogeneous definitions of bilingualism (Newman 24). This call for a complication of traditional notions of language use connects with the second, and perhaps most compelling, theme of the

collection: writing teachers need to resist traditional ideas about Latino/a students' under-preparation for academic work. Recognizing that many Latino/a students are labeled and categorized because of their (perceived) language inadequacies, be they in English or Spanish, several of the contributors challenge traditional monolingual views of bilingualism by pointing out the heterogeneous fluency and experience of Latino/a students with English and with Spanish. Rather than focusing only on language abilities (or inabilities) with English (or Spanish), the contributors challenge educators to move beyond bilingualism and into biculturalism (Baca 152) and transnationalism (Utakis and Pita 121) as we work with heritage language and monolingual writers.

Thus, these essays not only challenge traditional ideas about Latino/a students' language fluency and its relationship to college preparation, but a few of the contributors also resist the notion that *only* students can be under-prepared, especially when the articles draw attention to the idea that faculty members are not equipped to work with Latino/a students. Focusing on students' lack of success for nonacademic reasons, Barbara Jaffe connects student failure to teacher training, which she suggests is not currently emphasizing "both cognitive and affective skills within a basic writing curriculum" (170). Using her research with the *Puente* Project Model, Jaffe argues that teachers can be taught to better counsel students in "personal and academic issues" if they are first taught about a workshop community approach to writing instruction (171). When given the time and resources to experiment with *la familia* approach to writing groups, faculty members were able to "freely experiment with and discuss new teaching methods and materials" because they shared a close connection (181).

For Beatrice Méndez Newman, the teacher preparation is less about time and access to workshop groups and more about disciplinary training. In fact, she argues faculty members need "new understandings, new pedagogies, and specialized training in rhetoric and composition" (17), which may better prepare instructors to "juxtapose traditional understandings about teaching, learning, and writing with new understandings about access, agency, and academic success for Hispanic students" (33). Newman even resists traditional ideas about instruction, offering compelling arguments for why Latino/a students may be best served by direct(ive) instruction (32). What draws all of Newman's recommendations together is her position that not only should Hispanic students' "cultural and ethnolinguistic identities" (19) be integrated into the classrooms but also that instructors must lead the way in by having malleable practices and pedagogies, a point reinforced by Dora Ramírez-Dhoore and Rebecca Jones, who conclude that their previous pedagogical practices and theories needed to be altered, using the "students' particular cultural space as [their] mediator" (77).

What I have found insightful and powerful about *Teaching Writing* is not only its focus on a historically underrepresented student population but also its discussions about the connections between student identity and heritage, language, and geographic region—messages writing instructors across the country can benefit from, even if they are not currently teaching at an HSI. All writing teachers could benefit from timely and affective training workshops (Jaffe), just as we can use reminders that students enter our classrooms with diverse, complicated, and interweaving discourse experiences. These strengths also represent a weakness in the collection. There are articles whose original context were the student dynamics of an HSI, but the final conclusions offered in *Teaching Writing* are unrelated to working directly with Latino/a students; some of the essays even move away from student needs all together, thus creating an uneven feeling to the collection as readers struggle to understand how each article responds to or builds on the others. Writing teachers looking for research-based suggestions will find helpful strategies and pedagogical suggestions for working with Latino/a students, but I suggest the book be read with a pick-and-choose approach rather than as a holistic and definitive statement on the fastest growing student population in the nation.

Edinburg, Texas

Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process, edited by Gesa E. Kirsch and Liz Rohan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008. 192 pp.

Reviewed by Charlotte Hogg, Texas Christian University

As the title suggests, the purpose of this edited collection is to explore the realities of conducting archival research, or as Lucille Schultz says in the foreword, “reading an archive not just as a source but also as a subject” (vii). Contributors assume that their subjectivities—as well as how these subjectivities affect their research process and vice versa—should be articulated. At the outset, the editors clarify that this text is not a how-to for archival research (and they kindly direct readers toward other resources that do touch on more traditional research practices). What this book offers the field is an important discussion of the process of archival research as something that not only should be unearthed but examined and that, despite the perception that conducting archival research is an isolating endeavor, interactions with everyone from archivists to family members can be critical to research. Central to the text is the belief that personal connections can “make all the