

## Review

Carter, A., Lillis, T. & Parkin, S. (Eds.)(2009). *Why Writing Matters: Issues of access and identity in writing research and pedagogy*. Studies in Written Language and Literacy. Volume 12. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing [ISBN 978 90 272 1807 0]

The multi-disciplinary series *Studies in Written Language and Literacy*, which hosts this volume, presents studies on written language with particular emphasis on social and cultural dimensions of use. As the twelfth and most recent volume, Carter et al's contribution fits extremely comfortably within this series. Through the choice of contributors and their cross-references to key scholars within the field, several of whom have authored earlier books in the series, this work positions itself at the heart of academic literacy research and pedagogy.

It is apparent from the very outset, however, that this book has a particular purpose beyond bringing together a set of related articles within written language and literacy studies. As a festschrift to mark the contribution to the field of one of its notable scholars, Professor Roz Ivanič, it has a celebratory as well as informative function. And most fitting, given Ivanič's central concerns with identity, is the natural interweaving of the person and her work. Both through frequent images within the body of the book of Ivanič as individual, researcher and teacher and through the crafting of the collection as a whole, a strong message is sent out of the notion of multiple identities, and of the importance of identity/ies in understanding literacy practices.



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Contact and copyright: Earli | Kristyan Spelman Miller, Winchester University, UK  
[kris.spelmanmiller@winchester.ac.uk]

The volume is organised in three sections, each addressing a theme within academic literacy research, namely i) creativity and identity; ii) pedagogy; and iii) methodology. Each section comprises four chapters which explore the relevant theme from diverse perspectives, considering school, university, adult, novice and professional writers within international and local contexts. However, the novelty of this collection lies not in the choice of themes, nor even in the range of contexts and diversity of interests which its contents reflect. It lies in the interleaving throughout the collection of nine personal reflections on Ivanič by colleagues, distinguished scholars, friends (Cazden, Gee, Lu & Horner, Tusting, Fairclough, Janks, Russell, Street), who offer insights into her personal life history, their memories of encounters, their statements of appreciation. The interpolation of these personal reflections at appropriate points to connect with the theme of the section constantly reminds us of a number of key messages: the interdependency of identity and writing, the multifaceted nature of self, the inseparable nature of text from social practice, and the interrelatedness of research and pedagogy.

Following a preface presenting a personal history of Roz Ivanič's career and an introduction outlining the aims and rationale for the volume, the first section focusses on the theme of creativity and identity, exploring the centrality of identity in understanding the nature of writing. Lea's chapter (Chapter 1) addresses the student writer's identity within an academic context, and in particular the notion of ownership and authority as demonstrated through on-line textual interactions. The use of inserted comments, Lea argues, offers a site of negotiation, of rehearsal of authorial positioning, in the multi-layered construction of meaning. This is demonstrated in a novel way in the chapter, by replicating dialogue between voices in relation to an extract from one of Lea's own articles. This choice of presentation is effective, although, since the original text and the inserted comments are produced by the same person (Lea), this does not allow a full demonstration of negotiation in genuine peer-to-peer between interaction, such as on-line discussion and collaborative writing. Literacy practices in technologically mature (and maturing) environments, however, is an area which is entirely appropriate for this volume to address, and it is significant that the editors choose to open the book with this perspective.

In Chapter 2, Parkin provides insights from the work of an art student to articulate the notion of creativity in a multi-modal context. This chapter draws eloquently on the work of others, including Kress and van Leeuwen, to reveal the richness of the literacy event. Although this chapter does not address in detail the notion of digital literacy practices (see, for example, Kress (2003)), this theme is taken forward in the following chapter (Chapter 3), in which Edwards offers an interesting reflection on the effects of information technology on writing, and in particular on the identity of the researcher. He raises questions of the nature of legitimate knowledge, how research and knowledge gains authority and how it is disseminated. The availability of information and communication technology raises critical issues for the researcher of originality, and of the balancing of multiple identities. The final chapter in the first section (Chapter 4) by Hamilton and Pitt addresses the challenge to the notion of genre imposed by

social change. This important chapter summarises key aspects of change in the academic environment, such as the growth of mass Higher Education, shifting perspectives on knowledge and the availability of new technologies, and their implication for writing practices. These implications go to the heart of Ivanič's concerns about voice, identity, collaboration, and creativity.

The second section brings together four chapters addressing from different angles the theme of pedagogy. In Chapter 5 Carter provides a useful overview of Ivanič's framework of discourses of writing within a multi-layered nature of language. This chapter goes a long way to satisfying the reader's need for and interest in an exposition of Ivanič's theoretical ideas, by presenting a clear and accessible overview, before expanding these concepts through discussion within a specific pedagogic context. The case presented is of a dyslexic child struggling with the demands of education and writing in particular. Through the use of a record sheet of comments on reading and writing, Carter explains how the learner (and researcher) gradually develops within his/her community of practice. This example of a pedagogic approach to build on important theoretical ideas is both insightful and transferable to a variety of learning and teaching contexts.

A different situation, concerning EFL students in the Korean educational system, is taken up by Lee in Chapter 6. Here Ivanič's notion of writing as social practice rather than as skills is highlighted with clear reference to the model of the multi-layered nature of writing (see Chapter 5). The explanation for writing in this study draws substantially on the socio-cultural and political context as a means of explaining approaches to learning as accommodation rather than as creative challenge.

In Chapter 7 Camps provides a further discussion of EFL writing, focusing on research into advanced writers working on a portfolio of drafts. The author's stance again reinforces the central notion of writing as social practice, and from a study of students' revision processes, he concludes that writing processes are far from linear and staged. Although the study provides valuable data and insights into writing, and includes discussion of the use of technology, in some crucial ways the representation in this chapter of cognitive approaches to writing is problematic. In particular, the claim that 'the cognitive approach, which sees the different stages in this process, such as pre-writing, organising, drafting and revising, as taking place neatly and sequentially' (p130) appears to misrepresent early process research, including that of Flower and Hayes (1981) themselves, and subsequently Flower (1989, 1994) which propose a cyclical, non-linear representation of writing. This discussion would also have benefitted from a more comprehensive overview of more recent models of writing (for example, Hayes, 1996) which clearly acknowledge the significance of external and socio-contextual features in the writing process. A further issue which may have been highlighted more is the nature of this writing event as collaborative (rather than individual). The dynamics of a collaborative writing event will surely impact significantly on the nature of writers' revision processes.

In Chapter 8, also, Scott and Turner, consider collaboration, not only with fellow academics, but with student co-researchers, an approach enthusiastically espoused by Ivanič. In Scott and Turner's work, this collaborative pedagogy is demonstrated with L2 writers as together they embark on the mediation of academic literacy. The strength of this pedagogic approach is evident in the discussion of the complex social act of writing.

In some senses it is difficult to draw a clear line in the work presented in this book between pedagogy and research, given that they are mutually supporting and reinforcing. The third section, under the heading of methodology, brings together a number of papers which share an interest in Ivanič's contribution to research methodology. One significant approach is referred to as 'talk around texts'. In Chapter 9, Lillis reveals how this method constitutes 'a fundamental contribution to writing research' (p. 169), which involves going beyond the text through the detailed opening up of writer-participants' observations. This approach further reinforces the centrality of the writer as collaborator. It also achieves the gentle but persuasive challenging of convention in research, and the questioning of external authority. In this chapter, Lillis adds an interesting dialogic layer, signalled by the use of italic font, to indicate personal commentary on Ivanič's contribution to the research.

Chapter 10 pursues the same thread of the 'talk about texts' methodology, but with a refreshing change of focus. Sing and Hall adapt Ivanič's methodology in their work with UK primary schoolchildren, and amply demonstrate the strength of this approach in revealing their underlying theories, beliefs and decisions concerning the use of punctuation. In Chapter 11, Walkó illustrates a methodological approach which combines case study and textual analysis of two undergraduate writers to explore thesis writing. In the same way as Lillis, Walkó uses italics to present personal commentary on the relationship between this work and Ivanič's. In the final chapter of the section and the volume (Chapter 12), Qadir takes us back to an international context to explore issues of researchers' identity in collaborative research. The findings are helpful in reminding us of the importance of the broadest socio-cultural and political context in which literacy practices take place, as well as Ivanič's ground-breaking attempts to reduce the distinction between researcher and researched.

In sum, the chapters reviewed here present an admirable mix of theoretical presentation, exemplification and illustration through new research, and creativity and reflection. As may be expected in a festschrift, there is little challenge to Ivanič's position. The areas where my own interests (and identity) as a reader led me to expect more discussion have been hinted at above: namely in the areas of the interplay between social and cognitive conceptions of writing, and in the impact of technology in its diverse forms on literacy events, for example, through the range of modes of on-line and digital communication. A riposte to any such a criticism, of course, is the argument that this collection has to be defined by the subject in question, that is, by

Ivanič's contribution, not that of others, to the field. In that respect, this collection more than satisfies.

Mention has already been made above of the careful crafting of the book in terms of the interpolation of reflections between the chapters. Far from appearing cloying and sycophantic, these personal statements, reminiscences and accolades serve to strengthen the argument at the heart of Ivanič's work. They appear well paced, and natural and help to make the volume memorable, engaging and refreshing. What is more, as a reader taking on the identity of reviewer as I approach this volume, I, too, found myself inevitably drawn into a more personal level of reflection on Roz Ivanič, based on recollections of shared conferences and ignited by the inclusion of a casual photograph towards the back of the book. And of course, this effect is precisely what was intended.

Finally, the choice of title, *Why Writing Matters*, emphasises a number of key concepts which resonate throughout the collection. These recur throughout reflections and chapters alike, and appear to help summarise the personal as well as the professional dimensions of Ivanič's presence in the field: enthusiasm, collaboration, respect and generosity. The volume clearly achieves its purpose as a celebration of Ivanič's legacy, but beyond this, in its own right constitutes a valuable contribution to research and pedagogy in academic literacy practices.

### **Kristyan Spelman Miller**

University of Winchester, UK

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