

Foreword

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Having been a writing project groupie for most of my professional life, which now is stretching into a third decade, I will begin with some history. My first memories of *The Quarterly* are of a rather small-scale, local-looking, newsletter-like publication, with many stories about writing project goings-on and with a few articles by writing project teachers and site directors. When I joined the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1981, the writing project was noticeably taking off as an organization. Foundations were asking to provide funding; new sites were springing up, and more and more teachers and university faculty were familiar and eager to affiliate with the National Writing Project. The project was even gaining name recognition with the general public.

With the new stature of the project, Director Jim Gray was feeling the need for a new public face that was at least in part to be reflected in *The Quarterly*. In 1985, UC Berkeley secured funding for the National Center for the Study of Writing, and as Center director, I worked with Jim and other writing project colleagues to bring together, on a number of fronts, the work of NWP and the new Center. The Center needed a way to communicate to a larger community. Along with the writing project, we wanted to build connections between the communities of research and practice, develop a strong cadre of teacher-researchers, welcome teachers into the world of university researchers, and provide opportunities for university researchers to learn from practitioners. The Center's slogan was "practice-sensitive research and research-sensitive practice." *The Quarterly* of the National Writing Project and Center for the Study of Writing, as it was to be called, became an outlet that gave life to that slogan.

With Melanie Sperling as editor and Miriam Ylvisaker as her associate editor, and with the infusion of funds from the federal government, we were able to treat *The Quarterly* to a makeover. We used better paper, we got an ISSN number with the Library of Congress, we devoted sections to research and practice and their intersections. Although not a refereed journal, *The Quarterly* grew to become a unique publication outlet befitting the organizations it represented. Over time, the Center completed its work and *The Quarterly* editors changed. Under the recent editors, including Art Peterson as the most long-standing, *The Quarterly* has continued to reinvent itself, as most significant long-standing publications do.

The articles in this last print issue of *The Quarterly* provide a history of the unfolding of ideas in the National Writing Project. We see Marian Mohr's focus on teacher research in 1980, and Stephen Marcus' writing on computers in 1990, concerns that have only lately moved to the forefront in many educational circles. So when those who have written more recently for *The Quarterly* address issues like freedom of speech (Sarah Rider), race (Janice Jones), and standards and equity (Tom Fox), we know to pay attention. All the articles in this final issue show how the project has always been ahead of the times.

Moving into digital form, the NWP's journal continues to shift with the times. I personally look forward to joining the new generation of online readers as this new iteration will offer searchable text, easy access to articles by topic and author, and availability any place, any time, as long as a computer is nearby. For me, these days, that's most of the time. I expect the digital publication will continue to uphold the formidable tradition of innovative ideas that came to us through the National Writing Project and often found their first published airing in *The Quarterly*.

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