

# FORUM

NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTINGENT, ADJUNCT, AND PART-TIME FACULTY (CAP)

9.1 FALL 2005

CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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### From the Editor

Janice Albert

When I asked the non-tenure-track committee to find another editor for *FORUM*, it was not because of burnout. Rather, I had looked around and noticed that *FORUM* was marginalized in a way that adjuncts everywhere are. That is, while the other CCCC journals rotate their editorships on a regular basis following a well-defined procedure, the *FORUM* editorship was an indefinite assignment, as though the prospect of continued issues would always be vaguely in doubt. While the editors of *CCC* and *TETYC* sit on the NCTE Executive Committee, the *FORUM* editor is sometimes included, sometimes not, and sometimes greeted with "Who?" The editorship needs to be treated with the same formal respect that all editorships are. Now, a committee has been formed and the search is on. Look around among your colleagues. Is there someone who likes to write, feels strongly about the English teaching profession, and is fairly well organized? Send the name of your candidate to Kristen McGowan at NCTE Headquarters, [kmcgowan@ncte.org](mailto:kmcgowan@ncte.org). Kristen will pass your nomination to the search committee. Don't delay! The committee hopes to have made its choice by the end of the year.

When I accepted this editorship in March of 2001, I took over from Bobby Kirby-Werner, whom I knew from the 1997 Washington DC meeting of the Councils of Learned Societies on the abuse of contingent labor. Bobby's work established the continuity of *FORUM*, and I wanted to build on her efforts to make the newsletter something that adjuncts and others could turn to with interest. In this job, I've been thoughtfully aided by Deborah Normand, Jim McDonald, and Laurie Delaney, chairs and co-chairs of the Committee on Contingent, Adjunct, and Part-time Faculty. On the production end, I could not have survived without the good humor and unstinting patience of Carol Schanche of NCTE headquarter's publica-

## About *Forum*

*Forum* is published twice a year by the Committee on Contingent, Adjunct, and Part-Time Faculty (CAP) of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. As editor, I welcome you to submit news items, book reviews, editorials, and/or articles related to non-tenure-track faculty in college English or composition courses. Submissions for the fall issue should be received no later than May 1; for the winter issue, the deadline is September 1. Note: Submissions will not be returned.

Submit your work electronically via e-mail or an e-mail attachment. Address your work to jmalbert2002@earthlink.net and put the words "Forum article" somewhere in your subject line. Submissions should include the following information:

- your name
- your title(s)
- your institution(s)
- home address and phone number; institutional address(es) and phone number(s)
- if applicable, venue(s) where submission was published or presented previously

For additional guidelines or information about *Forum*, contact Janice Albert, *Forum* editor, 565 Bellevue Ave., Suite 1704, Oakland, CA 94610 or phone (510) 839-1140.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified. Similarly, opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group, or the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

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tions staff. All NCTE members ought to be proud of the standards and professionalism of the Publications office, and the new editor will take comfort in this resource.

One might think that the editor of *FORUM* would be a part-timer, but that is not the case with me. I had already taught for 35 years as a fully tenured faculty member in the California community college system. Over the years, I had watched the part-time contingent grow from zero to about 60% of my department. I knew that these younger people had more training in composition than I had had when I began teaching, yet they were paid far less, received no benefits—yadda, yadda. We are all by now familiar with the differences.

Upon retirement, I thought to continue teaching a course or two, and so I applied to a variety of colleges in the area to see what that would be like. This is when I got my real education into the condition of employment for adjuncts.

My name became "staff." Because sections taught by part-timers are often the first to be cancelled, their names are often not included in the schedule. As "Albert," I had a reputation and even a following. As "staff," I had no history at all, and got the students who had enrolled late or who were avoiding instructors with established reputations in quality control. Tough sledding.

As a newcomer, I relied on the administration to orient me to the rules and folkways of my workplace. What I got instead was a series of rude shocks. I had to ferret out answers to basic questions such as these: Would my paycheck be mailed to

me or kept in a locked drawer somewhere (held, not mailed)? When would these checks become available? (6 weeks after the start of the semester) How was I supposed to get copies made when the reproduction office closed at 5 p.m. and my class started at 7 p.m.—come out two hours early? (yes) Why were there no copies of my textbook on the shelves of the bookstore? (the bookstore always short orders; all the copies have been sold; yes, you will have to re-order to supply your entire class) I asked to teach 1B next semester, but I've been assigned to 1A. What happened? (a full-time faculty member wanted that class) I'm teaching a night class and it's very dark on campus during the winter. How do I contact Campus Security in an emergency? (no response; we all know that no response is campus-speak for "There is no Campus Security in the evenings"; truly, we were on our own)

At the same time, as I continued to socialize with my tenured former colleagues, I learned of the increased number of perks they were receiving. Several were now engaged in Workload Banking, a program in which instructors can accumulate hours of credit by teaching an overload for several semesters. For each 15 units, they are able to take a semester off with full pay and benefits. I can remember when faculty argued that our load should be only 15 units because that was the maximum number of student contacts for us to be able to do a fully professional job. Yet, faculty now were able to justify teaching 18 or 21 hours a semester in order to bank the extra hours. At this rate, one might take a sabbatical in the year 2000, and follow it up three or four years later with a semester off, which, including summer, might mean January to August or June through December. I began to get really angry, and I noticed a change in my thinking: instead of lamenting that work was going to part-timers, I was aggrieved that it was being taken from them.

It is widely held that campus administration is the cause of the woes of part-timers, but I've come to think it is the lack of unity and vision within the profession itself. We who have been fortunate enough to enjoy full-time, tenured employment really must open our eyes to the future of our profession if a two-class system of employment continues to prevail. I believe that in the long run, we will either see lectureships and adjunct employment go away or we will see tenured employment go away. Organizations such as CCCC and NCTE can play a major role in shaping that future.

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### **Remembering John Lovas**

With this issue featuring our PEP recipients, FORUM wishes to acknowledge the leadership of our colleague John Lovas, who died in June 2005. As Associate Chair of CCCC, John was instrumental in the creation of the PEP program, acting on the motion of the Business Meeting of 2001. The first grants were awarded during his term as Chair in 2002. His generous spirit lives on in this new and successful program.

### From the Co-chair

James McDonald

Labor issues had an unexpected role at the 2005 CCCC Convention in San Francisco. Because of a union-management dispute at the convention hotel, the CCCC moved the convention from that hotel to the Moscone Convention Center rather than ask its members to cross a picket line. Inside the convention, at least a dozen sessions and special interest groups (SIGs) addressed labor conditions and faculty organizing or discussed contingent faculty perspectives and experiences in composition teaching and assessment. Some sessions describing innovative programs at individual institutions included presentations by contingent faculty and teaching assistants as well as the schools' WPAs and tenure-track faculty to provide a truly comprehensive portrait of the program.

Adjunct faculty are underrepresented at conferences like the CCCC, and it is often easy to discuss writing programs with little of the perspectives of the contingent faculty who teach many of the classes. It is important that some proposals make a point of including part-time faculty as presenters and that other presenters consider the importance of faculty status and working conditions in their analyses of writing instruction.

Other sessions focused on labor issues and working conditions, some concentrating on specific labor and organizing practices, others discussing the wider contexts and implications of labor practices in higher education. At the Non-Tenure Track Faculty SIG chaired by Laurie Delaney, everyone in attendance had an opportunity to describe local working conditions and organizing efforts and discuss strategies for change. A session organized by the CAP Committee featured Chris Storer, Theresa Knudsen, and Bob Samuels, leaders of the part-time faculty associations of California and Washington state and the University of California system faculty union, discussing strategies for organizing contingent and tenure-track faculty. Other sessions discussed the impact that outsourcing and distance learning are having on faculty working conditions and how labor perspectives can be integrated into the teaching of writing.

The 2005 CCCC Convention was the most successful year so far for the Professional Equity Program. To improve the representation of adjunct faculty at the convention, the PEP Program distributes grants to contingent faculty covering convention registration, a year's membership in the CCCC, and some funds for travel and lodging. During the first years of the program, a number of grants went unawarded because of the small number of nominations for PEP awards, and the CCCC expanded eligibility for the program so that past recipients may apply for a

second grant. The San Francisco convention was the first year that all PEP grants were awarded, with almost eighty contingent faculty wearing yellow ribbons signifying that they were PEP recipients. A Thursday evening reception was held to welcome and recognize these recipients. You can find information on the CCCC Web site at [ncte.org](http://ncte.org) to nominate yourself or contingent faculty in your department for PEP grants to attend the 2006 CCCC Convention in Chicago.

The main issue at the meeting of the CAP Committee was how to revise and update the CCCC Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing. Originally drafted in 1989 after the passage of the Wyoming Conference Resolution, the resolution needs to address changing conditions, including the impact of computer technology on the teaching of writing. The CAP Committee is also interested in learning about the work that state and regional associations in English and composition studies do to try to improve contingent faculty working conditions. Do you belong to a local association that recruits part-time faculty for membership and officer positions, addresses contingent faculty issues in its conferences and publications, or organizes members around faculty labor issues? If you do, or if you have concerns or suggestions about revising the CCCC Statement, please let me know at [jcm5337@louisiana.edu](mailto:jcm5337@louisiana.edu). The CAP Committee would like to develop ways to encourage, publicize, and support local associations in their efforts to improve conditions for adjunct faculty.

Finally, because the CCCC is conducting a search for the fourth editor of *Forum*, and because I chair this space with my co-chair Laurie Delaney, this is my last column under the editorship of Janice Albert. Janice has been a wonderful editor, working hard with little support so that contingent faculty have a voice here on important teaching and labor issues. She has put much effort into recruiting adjunct faculty authors, devising topics for articles of interest to part-time faculty, working closely with writers who were often submitting their first essay for publication, and tactfully prodding tardy writers like me when deadlines have loomed. Because of Janice's leadership, *Forum* has grown into a more important publication for contingent faculty, especially now that it is available online as well as inside issues of *CCC* and *TETYC*. Janice is one of the most generous, capable, and joyful people I know, and *Forum* and the CCCC are much the better for the work she has done here.

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### Support for Adjuncts at CCCC

Janice Albert

After three years of trying, CCCC achieved a major success this year with its Professional Equity Program (PEP), a special effort to enable adjuncts to afford to

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attend the conference. Many barriers confront part-timers, from the fact that their colleges won't adequately fund their attendance to the possibility that transportation and hotel costs might eat up a month's pay. But this year, over 60 new PEP recipients and 14 past PEP recipients were able to join their colleagues at Moscone Center in San Francisco. Co-chair Jim McDonald wrote a letter of welcome, inviting PEPpers to attend sessions geared to their interests, and to pick up copies of *FORUM* at the SIG table in the Exhibits area. CCCC sponsored a meet-and-greet reception at 7 a.m. for newcomers on Thursday morning. Later that evening, Wadsworth Publishing hosted a reception for adjuncts at the Clift Hotel.

So, how was this outreach received? I asked PEP grant recipients to respond to the question: What was the high point of the conference for you? A sampling of their thoughts appears below.



A newcomer to the CCCC convention, I floated down the Moscone Center escalator completely unaware of what I was walking into. I was lucky enough to get a "behind the scenes" view as a volunteer with the Local Committee. As the hordes of people rushed the registration and information desks behind which we volunteers huddled, I was amazed that all these people were experts in English. An entire convention of English nerds. What a beautiful thing! I noticed the lack of security personnel at the conference, but I guess terrorists aren't really interested in further debilitating our students' writing skills by wiping out the country's grammar experts. The highlight? Seeing my personal heroes like Victor Villanueva. Now post-conference, I realize that I've become more than just a card-carrying NCTE member. Next year, I'll be one of those English nerds, rushing the registration desk.

Sarah Reichel  
San Francisco State University



I felt loved.

That sounds silly, but it is rare when an adjunct feels appreciated and respected. However, at CCCC with the "PEP winner" ribbon around my neck, people were very interested in who I was and what I said. They understood that adjuncts teach most composition courses and so are the major practitioners of what researchers develop; our input about applying their methods is actually valuable to researchers.

I have found that interest in the opinion of a person with a master's degree is uncommon in academia, so it was refreshing to be at CCCC where interest was common indeed.

Maren Bradley Anderson  
Western Oregon University, Oregon

My favorite session was a “guerrilla” session that developed when the originally scheduled program was cancelled. We were all strangers who just happened to be at the same place at the same time with similar interests. I made more personal connections and ranged more widely in this forum than any other I was involved in. Long live guerrilla sessions! Long live improvisational CCCC!

Terry Elliott  
Western Kentucky University, Kentucky

The most valuable aspect of my first CCCC Conference was meeting other instructors of pre-first-year composition and realizing that the struggles I face in California are common across this country. I found that students in New York and Missouri have trouble reconciling spoken and written language. I discovered that the Service-Learning curriculum I have tried in San Jose works equally well with students in Boise. Most important, I learned that teachers from every part of the United States care as much as I do about their students and hope to guide these under-prepared academics to the joys of learning.

Betsy Gilliland  
San Jose State University, California

As both a teacher of composition and a lover of literature, I was thrilled by Jo Hammett's presentation about her father, Dashiell, and the follow-up panel discussion on *The Maltese Falcon*. Inspired, I toured Dashiell Hammett's apartment at 891 Post Street, watched as it was dedicated as a national literary landmark, and then lunched with Hammett's family, scholars, writers, and artists at John's Grill, a

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setting in which Sam Spade himself once dined. I even saw the plaque at Bush and Burritt where Brigid O'Shaughnessy gunned down Miles Archer! Never before have I been steeped so completely in art and history. I thank the CCCC for a memory that will endure a lifetime.

Mary Jo Garcia  
Palo Alto College, San Antonio, Texas

While I've certainly done my share of venting about unengaged students, believing in my students is what keeps me going. The common thread in all the presentations I saw at the CCCC conference was the optimism about and real interest in students displayed by presenters like Nancy Sommers, Andrea Lunsford, Dave Eggers, and the staff of 826 Valencia. I came away with a new resolve to continue listening to my students. I've also started talking to local writers, artists, teachers, and others about the possibility of starting a tutoring center like 826 Valencia in my city.

Amy Anderson-Powell  
California State University, Sacramento, California

I thoroughly enjoyed my first CCCC conference. Undoubtedly, for me the highlight of the conference was the featured Stanford presentation with Andrea Lunsford et al., which clearly showed us just what the student participants were capable of after their four years of writing at Stanford.

Linda Sarmecanic  
San Jose State University, California

For me, the highlight of my first CCCC was the opportunity to talk with experts in the field whose work I have read and admired. In particular had a wonderful visit with Mike Rose, whose work was the focus of my thesis. Making the personal connection with senior colleagues personalizes their scholarship and helps me feel part of the whole conversation.

Sara Jameson  
Oregon State University, Oregon



The weather in San Francisco was perfect for the CCCC Conference—merely walking from the Powell Street BART station to the Moscone Convention Center was delightful. The representatives at the PEP booth made me feel welcome and pointed me in the right direction to start enjoying the conference. I especially benefited from the sessions I attended on grammar: not only did they confirm for me that colleagues across the country struggle as I do with the same grammar issues in student writing but also with how to incorporate grammar into the curriculum. I took home several creative ideas for addressing this bugbear in composition classes.

The highlight of the conference for me, however, was the session with Nancy Sommers on responding to student writing. I often use her essay "I Stand Here Writing" in my composition classes, as it is so affirming in urging students to use their own voices and the "dictionaries of their lives" in their writing. The video about students' reactions to teacher comments shown at the session, as well as the booklet for students used in the Harvard writing program, was valuable to me. At the same session, I was pleased to see David Bartholomae, whose essay "Inventing the University" has been a staple resource of mine for understanding developing writers.

Jeanne Rodgers  
California State University, Sacramento, California



While the entire conference experience was eventful, I would have to say that the highlight for me was Mike Rose's presence and presentation. During my TA-ship here at Eastern, we read his *Lives on the Boundary*. Additionally, we discussed his teaching philosophies in our pedagogy classes. I came to embrace and to incorporate many of his teaching philosophies within my own teaching. Therefore, it was a pleasure to meet and talk with him. Additionally, his presentation was wonderful. I wish we could fund our own writing center here with some kind of similar enterprise—the Pirate Store. As it stands now, we have no budget for the center. Its operation relies on English graduate student staff and budgetary leftovers.

Robin Casady  
Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico



As a first-time participant in CCCC, I discovered that the conference is difficult to process in the moment—so many diverse ideas, so much collected energy—but in retrospect, my event highlight was the first time a fellow attendee said, “Tell us your story” and then listened, with full attention and no agenda except understanding. To find resonant response from an engaged audience—that is the best example of why a professional community like CCCC is so vital for *all* writing teachers, but especially contingent ones. We realize that our narrative matters, that we matter, that we are connected.

Tina Whittle  
Georgia Southern University, Georgia



I came to the conference with a curiosity to observe people who have committed their lives to teaching. From the nervous graduate students delivering their first conference papers, to the seasoned CCCCs attendees sharing stories with colleagues, everybody seemed satisfied, curious, and genuinely passionate about what they do. The highlight of the conference for me was calling my partner from a pay phone in Chinatown to say, “I can hang in there with this career after all. If I look as happy as these people do in twenty years, I’ll know I am in the right profession.”

Alyson M. Indrunas  
Cascadia, Everett, and North Seattle Community Colleges, Washington



Many of these statements contained words of thanks and even mentioned their nominator by name. Nominations are already open for next year. The NCTE Web site lists new awards at <http://www.ncte.org/groups/cccc/highlights/118146.htm>. Contact Kristen McGowan at NCTE Headquarters to nominate yourself or someone you know and want to encourage.

**For the Suggestion Box: Office-Sitting**

Maren Bradley Anderson

As an adjunct, my office space is normally a cramped room on the top floor of a 100-year-old building. The building, Todd Hall, was once a girls' dormitory and housed two girls per 8'x12' room; now the rooms house either single tenure-track faculty or up to three adjunct professors. With a few shelves on one end, a typical room is exactly big enough for one desk, one computer, and two chairs—just enough space for one teacher and one student. This means that there isn't even room for more than one person to work at a time, let alone hold concurrent office hours. These conditions are better than the school where I worked previously that crammed 20 or more part-time faculty into one office with three desks, no computer, and sundry items in storage.

However, my main complaint with Todd Hall is the lack of an elevator. I have arthritis, so trekking up and down three flights of stairs many times a day is arduous and treacherous. I was exploring alternative office space to no avail when a faculty member decided to go on sabbatical for a year. She offered to let me and one other adjunct "office sit" for her while she was gone. Even though we were still sharing and the office wasn't much larger than the one we left in Todd Hall, there were only two of us, and we were in a building with an elevator near the department office.

Since then, I have been moving from office to office on this floor, office-sitting for professors who go on sabbatical. The college is installing an elevator in Todd Hall as we speak, so I expect to return to sharing a small office when it is finished. Nonetheless, the time I have spent in the main building has been invaluable because I have built relationships with many tenured and tenure-track faculty, including heads of departments and divisions. I know names and faces of my colleagues, and, more important, they know me. This visibility helps increase my odds of landing classes because the people who make the schedules know who I am and have seen me interact with students during office hours. Even conversations around the copy machine have made a difference.

I strongly suggest that other adjuncts look into the possibility of office-sitting for faculty on sabbatical. Most faculty members are happy to have someone they know in their offices while they are gone, and colleges are happy to have that space used. Plus, adjuncts who office-sit are "freeing up" space in their former offices in which the college can put other part-timers. Because gaining visibility is not easy for adjunct faculty, ferreted away in the dark, cramped corners of our colleges as

we are, office-sitting for tenured or tenure-track faculty is a pleasant way to make connections that may help our careers.

*Maren Bradley Anderson is adjunct professor at Western Oregon University where she has been office-hopping for three years. In addition, she teaches writing and literature online through the University of Phoenix, and scores essays online for the Educational Testing Service.*

### Book Reviews

*Disciplined Minds*

by Jeff Schmidt, Rowman and Littlefield, 2000

Reviewed by Richard Lloyd

The biographical blurb on the back cover of *Disciplined Minds* informs us that the author, Jeff Schmidt, "was an editor at *Physics Today* for nineteen years, until he was fired for writing this provocative book." Given this tantalizing information, the reader anticipates quite a hot potato, and indeed this book is a vigorous polemic against the sort of career that Schmidt nonetheless managed to occupy for just less than two decades. To be more accurate, it is an assault on the formal education that entitles one to hold such a position, with graduate departments presented as nightmare spaces of petty humiliation and brute indoctrination.

Schmidt defines a professional job as one that requires post-graduate credentialing, largely inferring the content of actual professional work from the training process. He argues that various boundary-maintaining events, such as qualifying exams, hide their deeply ideological functions behind the façade of neutral meritocracy. Disguised as tests of competence, what the various trials of graduate work really instill is an ethic of conformity to prevailing social relations.

Schmidt argues that the apparent autonomy of professional work necessitates a far more rigorous standard of socialization, in one memorable chapter drawing parallels between professional training and the literature on brainwashing and cult indoctrination. What sort of person does the disciplinary apparatus of the universities aim to produce? "The qualifying attitude is an uncritical subordinate one . . . . The resulting professional is an obedient thinker, an intellectual property whom the employer can trust to experiment, theorize, innovate and create safely within the confines of an assigned ideology."

Within the already narrowed focus on the training aspect of the professions, Schmidt primarily offers as examples the eccentric strata of physical and social scientists whose trade requires doctoral work. While he indicates that professional work claims 1 in 8 of this country's employees, the PhDs he actually focuses on are

a bare 1 in 100 of the adult population. About MBAs and JDs, Schmidt has little to say, and about MDs only slightly more, although many would agree that medical residency is an excellent example of the sort of inhuman training regimen he decries. Instead, Schmidt mainly looks at doctoral programs in physics, and spends a great deal of time grinding axes with his own alma mater, the University of California at Irvine.

The notion that examinations are designed to rank and order individuals within pernicious hierarchies, producing in the process thoroughly indoctrinated and docile subjects, will not be novel to anyone familiar with the work of Michel Foucault. Nor will the implication of scientific rationality in the destructive designs of the military industrial complex shock anyone who has encountered the critical theories of Herbert Marcuse or C. Wright Mills. There is an oddly retro feel to Schmidt's critical project, amplified in his anachronistic opening vignette about *Wall Street Journal* reading, suit and tie clad "organization men" taking the train in from Westchester County to Wall Street. Still, the well-seasoned nature of this critique does not necessarily invalidate it.

Schmidt's argument lacks the conceptual rigor evinced by the best of his critical forebears; happily, it also lacks the commitment to impenetrable, jargon-filled prose. While breezy and accessible, *Disciplined Minds* is also very often an annoying little book, filled with unwieldy generalizations, multiple internal contradictions, and plainly personal vendettas. Moreover, Schmidt's proposed strategies of resistance to professional indoctrination follow an unreconstructed Marxist design every bit as ideologically dogmatic as the system he criticizes. Nonetheless, those of us who have navigated the sort of system he describes, with whatever degree of success, will likely be forced to concede that he also very often gets it right.

All of us have encountered the sort of sinister and egotistical professors that populate the pages of this book, and all of us have weathered examinations that seem more tests of endurance and conformity than instruments of enlightened pedagogy. Very likely, most of us, like the hapless grad students Schmidt depicts, have awakened at some point or another to wonder just how the process of "professional socialization" managed to take us so far from our original, idealistic visions of the academic life. For those of us now employed in the professorate, this book poses the uncomfortable challenge of examining to what extent we now contribute to the reproduction of a "soul-battering system" of professional indoctrination.

But how did Jeff Schmidt himself manage to negotiate the minefield of professional training and employment while not being turned into an ideological clone? He did so, he tells us, by being a "radical professional," and he offers a detailed blueprint for how to achieve this contradictory status. Unless you have a pretty

good cushion in your bank account, I recommend following these provisions with prudent restraint. Given the practical design of radical professionalism—basically the relentless subversion of an employer's intentions, as well as of the overall capitalist system—one cannot help but think that more than this book was implicated in Schmidt's eventual dismissal from *Physics Today*.

*Richard Lloyd* is assistant professor of sociology at Vanderbilt University. His book, *Neo-Bohemia: Culture and Capital in Postindustrial Chicago*, will be published by Routledge in October of 2005.

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### *New Strategies in College Teaching*

edited by Stephen Dragin, Allyn and Bacon, 2002  
Reviewed by Jessica L. Evans

Allyn and Bacon's *New Strategies in College Teaching*, which compiles chapters excerpted from eight Allyn and Bacon higher education texts, may offer several chapters of use to adjuncts—particularly those without practical experience or theoretical grounding in pedagogy—but comprehensively, the text proves far more successful in explicating longstanding theory and strategy than offering essentially “new” advice.

Perhaps the most problematic assumption driving this text is an ambiguous notion of what exactly “new” denotes. Chapter one offers an overview of changes inherent among college campuses within the last generation but—considering it explicitly specifies its audience as part-time instructors—disregards that these changes have been apparent throughout classrooms for at least two decades. Certainly, the majority of professionals within the field today recognize that their students may vary in age and ethnicity, may work part- or full-time jobs, and may come from “dysfunctional” or “blended” families; in fact, the instructors themselves may exhibit these characteristics. Likewise, recent recruits in higher education would be hard pressed to have never encountered Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (1983), and if not, one might be better off exploring the original source or one of its numerous incarnations rather than the two-paragraph synopsis presented here. At the end of the first chapter, however, appears a gem, “What Students Want from College Instructors,” which emphasizes efficiency, sensitivity, and a positive approach to interaction with students. An adjunct would surely benefit from reviewing Lyons’s list of expectations students have of teacher conduct, such as “consistently positive treatment of individual students, including a willingness to spend extra time before or after class meetings . . .” and “classroom demeanor that includes humor and spontaneity.”

The first section of the text addresses three well-established theoretical approaches to teaching—Cognitivism, Behaviorism, and Constructivism—all of which are imperative for adjuncts to acknowledge. In chapter three, Baicco and DeWalters approach a problem-solving theory of teaching from cognitive and behaviorist perspectives, respectively, classifying its primary processes as a) assessment and identification, b) planning and implementation, and c) evaluation. Problem solving finds the “distinguished teacher” analogous to an airport terminal; teachers serve as “a radar-like system that scans and interprets the learning environment.” As such, instructor intuition and the ability to interpret simultaneous mixed signals from students are the most common characteristics of successful teachers. Baicco and DeWalters illustrate problem solving in action as well, tracing the steps in two professors from the identification of a problem through implementing a creative plan to alleviate this problem, and finally to evaluating whether the plan effectively achieves its aims.

Following this, Huba and Jann offer a fair but condensed explication of the constructivist viewpoint of learner-centered teaching as defined by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). This chapter provides discerning questions, such as “What enduring issues and problems do students address in my class?” “How do I help students think and behave like members of the discipline?” and “How do I reveal to students the qualities that make an assignment excellent?” which could potentially prove useful to an adjunct readership.

The text as a whole then logically progresses to the practical implementation of constructing a course—course components, including syllabi, texts, and conducting tests. Royse enumerates the basic components of a syllabus and the arrangement of their placement skillfully and thoroughly, offering parenthetical commentary within his list for further insight. Again, this list will prove highly effective to new professionals entering the field but may seem self-evident to those currently teaching. Within this chapter, of particular use is Royse’s “Selecting a Text”; here Royse offers careful consideration of price, requirements, audience, length, organization, and a text’s ability to stimulate thinking.

Chapters seven and eight discuss the importance of the feedback loop; that is, improving instruction by collecting feedback from students on the quality of the learning experience at key points during the course. Chapter eight is invaluable to adjuncts in that it offers several clearly denoted methods for encouraging feedback, including unique activities such as “Turn to your partner” and “Critical Incident Questionnaire,” as well as samples of such activities. Additionally, Huba and Freed offer advice on matters of decorum: instructors should avoid a defensive response, misplaced humor, or self-deprecating behavior.

The latter part of the text, which centers primarily on the political aspects of a

university or college setting, offers little for adjuncts and part-timers. Few writers need to be told what a refereed journal is, what simultaneous submissions are, or to avoid using clichés or colloquialisms in scholarly articles. Likewise, Chapter twelve's list of political mistakes might possibly elicit offense from sound-minded instructors: Royse advises not to speak ill of one's colleagues and not to have sex with students. Finally, the text's discussions of promotion, tenure, and how to remain an effective advisor to graduate students are irrelevant for an adjunct readership and insufficient for those to whom they apply.

As a whole, then, *New Strategies in College Teaching* takes a broad approach with little depth. It can serve, however, to initiate interest in the primary texts that compose this compilation and it might make a formidable primer for graduate teaching assistants looking to gain a basic and wide-reaching understanding of theories and techniques that work.

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### **FORUM Is Searching for Its Next Editor**

*FORUM* is the newsletter of the Committee on Contingent, Adjunct, and Part-time Faculty of NCTE and CCCC. Working closely with the NCTE Publications Office, the editor of *FORUM* develops material for two 16-page issues a year, published as inserts in the Fall issue of *CCC* and the Spring issue of *TETYC*.

The editor of *FORUM* develops articles and reviews of interest to member-subscribers who may be lecturers, new faculty in adjunct positions, graduate students seeking employment, and others, including tenured faculty, who seek to bring equity to those employed in part-time composition teaching positions. In addition, the editor reports to the CAP Committee during the annual meeting of CCCC. NCTE reimburses the editor for expenses to a limit of \$1,500.

If you are interested or know someone whom you wish to recommend, please contact Kristen McGowan, [kmcgowan@ncte.org](mailto:kmcgowan@ncte.org). **The deadline for applications is October 1, 2005.**

Questions about current processes and practices may be addressed to the outgoing editor at [jmalbert2002@earthlink.net](mailto:jmalbert2002@earthlink.net), or either of the CAP co-chairs, Jim McDonald, [jcm5337@louisiana.edu](mailto:jcm5337@louisiana.edu), and Laurie Delaney, [l.delaney@stark.kent.edu](mailto:l.delaney@stark.kent.edu).

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