

*From the Editors*

# Rethinking and Re-evaluating Transitional Periods within Postsecondary Education

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Students placed in developmental courses have often been referred to as transitional students (Paulson & Armstrong, 2010) or students in transition. These terms simply refer to the idea that developmental students moving from high school to college are experiencing a transitional point in their educational experiences. As educators who work with these students through these transitional periods, we understand that there is more to this idea than just a simple transition. Students are faced with transitioning from one academic environment to another and with this come the need to understand culture, context, diverse academic demands, and the Discourses that are used and expected in this new environment.

Recently, there has been much discussion regarding the changing population of current college students. Today's college students are less likely to be "full-time residential financially dependent student[s]" (Carnevale, Smith, Melton & Price, 2015) and more likely to work full or part time, be raising children, be English Language Learners, be returning vets and/or be first generation college students. With such a diverse population of students sitting within our classrooms,

perhaps we, as educators or administrators, are in a transitional period as well.

During this transitional period, perhaps we need to rethink and re-evaluate the pedagogical choices we are making in the classroom so that we are best meeting the needs of all students and helping our diverse population of students negotiate this new academic environment. The articles presented in Volume 44 encourage you to do just that – rethink and re-evaluate current teaching and research practices so that all students, especially the nontraditional college student, are supported and encouraged during their transitional period.

**Nicola Blake's** reflective article "Using Visual 'Bait' to Hook, Engage, and Empower New Community College Writers" challenges students to negotiate the edges (Perl, 1994) of their lives, thoughts and experiences through the use of photo journals. Using their neighborhoods as texts, Blake provides a safe and supported environment for students to engage with the writing processes expected in college courses and beyond. For these students, often transitioning from high school English classes to college First Year Writing courses, the familiarity of the "text" with

photo journals allows for reflection and dialogue, in both their writing and through class discussions, that is often missing from the more formal and structured writing assignments.

In “Transitioning Counter-Stories: Black Student Accounts of Transitioning to College-Level Writing,” **Jamila M. Kareem** focuses on the high-school-to-college transitioning experiences of racially marked students, who are often absent from the conversation. Her work encourages all educators and administrators to bring the voices and experiences of racially marginalized students to the discussion and dialogue of high-school-to-college transitions and the transition into other academic areas beyond First Year Writing.

**Davonna Thomas** encourages post-secondary literacy educators to move beyond traditional developmental reading curriculum by sharing her research on incorporating literature circles within the developmental reading classroom. Her article “*Really? That Counts? A Sociocultural Examination of Post-Secondary Literature Circles*” discusses qualitative findings that indicate that using literature circles in a developmental reading classroom addresses the “dialogic turn” (Wilkinson & Son, 2011) which promotes discussion, agency, inquiry and collaboration to increase comprehension.

In **Ren VanderLind’s** article “A Sociocultural, Semiotic, and Cognitive Model of Postsecondary Literacy,” she explores a new model of literacy practices and processes

that builds upon the work of Steven B. Kucer (2014). Her work encourages educators to take a new stance on what is involved and included in postsecondary academic literacy, particularly the complexities of the reading and writing tasks placed upon students.

We hope the work presented in Volume 44 provides the necessary support and resources to help you consider the transitional period students are experiencing as new or returning college students. In addition, we hope the information shared will encourage you to rethink and re-evaluate your own teaching practices and research methods.

We appreciate the authors for allowing us to share their work and for showing us the importance of helping both our students and ourselves through transitional periods within our academic careers. We are forever grateful for their support and service to the field of college literacy and learning. We are also very fortunate to have a dedicated group of reviewers who not only contribute their expertise but their time and energy to make the *JCLL* a success. And, finally, we thank you, our readership, for your dedication to college literacy.

We are also excited to announce guest editors Samantha NeCamp and Connie Kendall Theado for a Special Issue for the *JCLL* Volume 45. This issue will focus on the question *What Does Working with Literacy Look Like in Adult Educational Contexts?* Volume 45 is expected to be published in April 2019.

## References

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