and intelligence of those who work with children. The major innovations in composition pedagogy turn out to have come not from Harvard, which those educated at Harvard tend to assume to be the case, but from the teachers of the very young, from the writers and teachers of “First Books,” Schultz tells an important and too long neglected part of composition’s story. I am grateful for her important book, a book anyone interested in composition’s history should read.

_Davis, California_


Reviewed by Brad E. Lucas, University of Nevada, Reno

Throughout her book, Cindy Johaneck portrays a near-crisis situation in the field of rhetoric and composition: she laments the “prominent place” of anecdotal evidence that belies “our rejection of the quantitative,” and warns us that the “near-abandonment of research that seeks and analyzes numerical data” will divide us “further into the more private worlds of personal stories” (11). She argues for an inclusive paradigm in composition and rhetoric studies, one that focuses on the type of research the field _needs_ versus the kind we _like_. And she assumes that what we _like_ is bad for the field. Many readers will find the arguments over paradigms, current-traditional rhetoric, and quantitative/qualitative debates familiar, but Johaneck takes a uniquely strident approach in championing the neglected realms of empirical research.

Readers unfamiliar with the field could walk away from this book thinking that composition scholars are on the brink of completely rejecting methodological rigor and—above all—any research involving math. As Johaneck has it, the “current climate” is a “new favoritism toward anecdotal forms of research” in a “battle for trustworthiness between a number and a narrative” (15). Elsewhere she cautions that “modern composition researchers seem close to the day when they abandon ‘traditional’ methods entirely” (51). Such sentiments are rife throughout _Composing Research_, and no doubt they will provoke discussion from all scholars interested in research. Some may be surprised that Johaneck so easily speaks on behalf of who “we” are and what “we” think about research in “our” field. She assumes that “the more comfortable world of the social, personal, anthropological, political, and literary arenas . . . have always
been of interest to many of us more than the scientific or mathematical” (14). However, one need not look very far in the field to see that such blanket statements are simply not true. More importantly, readers are likely to wonder why individual, human perspectives on reality are so threatening to the epistemological future of the field.

Johanek’s interest in quantitative research is neither shallow nor simplistic, and her argument for an inclusive view of research is quite welcome. The decades of polemic over methodology have taken on a greater sophistication in the past few years, informed by an ever-expanding body of theoretical considerations. Johanek’s readers may get the sense that she has not fully engaged the latest conversations involving feminist or postmodern theory. She argues that feminist researchers support research agendas based solely on political agendas. For example, she critiques Gesa Kirsh and Patricia Sullivan for encouraging methods “that fulfill certain ideologies rather than seek methods that adequately answer our research questions that emerge naturally from varied contexts . . .” (45). In another moment, she goes so far as to disclaim feminist research as self-limiting: “Highlighting the voices of women (including the researcher) seems to be the most important contribution feminist scholars can make to composition” (72). Johanek gives little credit to feminists who challenge traditional research that obscures and misleads in the name of scientific objectivity; instead, she denigrates feminist researchers—and almost everyone else—for avoiding quantitative research out of simple ignorance, fear, distrust, and dislike. Such a polemic undoubtedly applies to a portion of the field, perhaps even a majority, but one is left with the sense that Johanek has waved aside in-depth engagement for simple expediency. With more sustained, critical engagement, her critique could have provided a useful problematic to interrogate the uses of personal voice, anecdote, and narrative in research designs, but these are given only cursory attention.

In challenging the methods used in composition and rhetoric, Composing Research suggests a lucrative, but elusive hypothesis: to avoid the rigors of science, we have unwittingly lapsed into convenient and lazy storytelling. While it would be enlightening if Johanek would support this claim, there is little evidence—quantitative or otherwise—to confirm our overwhelming propensity for narrative and “our general anxiety about mathematics and statistics” (57). Instead, she draws from general sources about “innumeracy” in western culture and applies them to “our” scholarly thinking. She would have us believe that scholars are polarized to the point where qualitative and quantitative data are mutually exclusive, where
narrative methods are default positions for almost all scholarship, and
where “we” have become so misguided as to not see this about ourselves.
Perhaps more damning than anything else is her suggestion that
researchers have neglected or ignored context altogether—and one is left
to wonder how qualitative research could be guilty of such charges.

Responses to Composing Research are likely to diverge, depending
on whether readers are learning research methods, or if they are familiar
with the history of research practices. Johanek’s strengths will vary
depending on its use as either a critical work or as a textbook. She criticizes
the small core of book-length works on composition and rhetoric research,
concluding that almost all of them fail as textbooks. In her estimation,
Janice Lauer and William Asher’s Composition Research (Oxford UP,
1988) decontextualizes research and unfairly banishes statistics to the
book’s appendices; Mary Sue MacNealy’s Strategies for Empirical
Research in Writing (Allyn and Bacon, 1999) is valuable as an all-
inclusive textbook, but limited in its basic coverage; and Stephen North’s
The Making of Knowledge in Composition (Boynton/Cook, 1987) is
inadequate for its “methodological egalitarianism” in taking an “‘I’m OK,
you’re OK’ approach to methodological diversity in our field” (108). Such
critique appears to justify the debut of Composing Research as a suitable
text for courses in research, but Johanek’s evaluations seem unfair and
partial. Perhaps with the aforementioned texts as companion readings,
Johanek’s book could be useful for debate and discussion of a variety of
complex research issues touched on in the first half of this book.

While its polemics can be distracting, Composing Research has
much to offer new researchers. It streamlines research into a practical
focus, circumventing the histories of research in the field and
concentrating solely on methodological approaches. For example,
throughout several chapters—in a series of lengthy asides—Johanek
illustrates the uses of statistical analysis by presenting a hypothetical study
of bowling ball effectiveness. For researchers of all backgrounds, this
common application of quantitative analysis is clear and accessible, and it
suggests effective ways of presenting such methods to researchers
considering their own analyses.

The second half of Composing Research is the theoretical core of
Johanek’s study. She deploys David Annis’s 1978 article “A Contextualist
Theory of Epistemic Justification” (American Philosophical Quarterly
15) to re-establish the rhetorical dimensions of composition and rhetoric
research, necessary because “we are often coerced by our own field’s
scholarship now to reject traditional research methods” (90). With the use
of Annis, she builds an epistemological taxonomy from three disparate theories, conflating not only perceptual positions from composition (Janet Emig) and theories of rhetoric (James Berlin), but also types of writing centers (Andrea Lunsford) to argue against the "competing epistemologies" in the "artificial dichotomy" of quantitative and qualitative research (95). Perhaps most intriguing are Johanek's brief connections between Annis's general epistemological framework and the theories of Aristotle, Wayne Booth, and James Kinneavy. Here readers may see the utility of the Contextualist Research Paradigm as a heuristic for rigorous research. Johanek's epistemological taxonomy offers a series of questions for researchers to consider their projects in terms of personal aims, audience concerns, and evidential needs. Moreover, she provides two chapters to demonstrate how such an approach can be used for both previous and future projects.

The most compelling of the two chapters is a type of retrospective case study, wherein Johanek revisits Eileen Oliver's 1995 study published in Research in the Teaching of English ("The Writing Quality of Seventh, Ninth, and Eleventh Graders, and College Freshman"). To understand the rhetorical and methodological decisions made in the process of a research study, Johanek questions Oliver in a series of email interviews. Composing Research includes the full text of Oliver's report, interspersed with her retrospective comments about her process—an archival protocol analysis, of sorts. Through Johanek's off-the-cuff oral history approach, readers may find not only a deeper understanding of empirical research, but see the uses of conducting historical work focused on previous studies. Such interactive storytelling could indeed be a powerful method for new researchers to learn research dynamics first hand from experienced scholars.

Finally, readers will find a direct application of Johanek's heuristic paradigm in a small-scale study to determine the effects of red ink responses on student papers. She tests this piece of composition folklore as a means of showing how the right questions can guide a scholar through a research project, and this type of study serves as an excellent example of a small-scale research project that encompasses vital research concerns. Johanek concludes with final appeals for the field to rethink its research practices, asserting everything from an all-inclusive research agenda to the use of APA style in our professional publications. With these claims, as with the rest of Composing Research, readers are likely to wonder how Johanek envisions the discipline, past and future. She implies that simply fortifying stories with numerical data and another new rhetoric will
resolve decades of epistemological debate in our field. Ultimately, we are left wondering who Johanek stands against, and where we might find any scholar who would argue against research to be rich in context, driven by inquiry, and as inclusive as possible (to include counting numbers).

Reno, Nevada


Reviewed by Renee Schlueret, Kirkwood Community College

"Through A Lens Widely" might be the subtitle for _Cinema-(to)-Graphy: Film and Writing in Contemporary Composition Classes_, an eclectic and imaginative selection of scholarly essays that argue for the integration rather than mere "use" of film in the composition classroom. Drawing from diverse theoretical approaches, Ellen Bishop and her contributors posit that, since film is a shared literacy among students and instructors, providing the formal tools for interpreting and decoding this genre and its complex interplay among audience, culture, etc. will yield cogent and sophisticated student readings of film and culture. Readers will find a variety of essays ranging from those that pose broad questions about film theory and its use in composition courses to detailed synopses of films and sequenced activities to emphasize self-reflection, close reading, and field research. Within individual essays, this anthology achieves its goal of reaching a broad range of composition educators who teach in diverse academic settings. I would also contend that the anthology appeals to teachers of women's studies and culturally-based theme courses who ask students to rethink their assumptions about gender, race, identity, and so forth.

In "Part 1: Critical Frames," the writers consider how to reconcile the traditional divisiveness between film and composition and how to meaningfully analyze film texts and contexts. In "Interpreting the Personal: The Ordering of the Narrative of Their/Our Own Reality" Patricia Caillé posits that documentaries are a unique medium that "foreground their relationship to culture and [that] the independent low-budget character of their production" (10) facilitates student understanding of the documentary as "personal vision" rather than definitive truth—an autobiographical construct investing a single voice