compositionists, then there are several benefits and only a minor limitation. For graduate students, Inman offers a wonderful model of scholarship, with a comprehensive literature review, a strong theoretical framework, a section on practice, and a call for future research in chapter 6. The limiting aspect of this book is the sometimes too general descriptions of computer technology/applications. Although he explains some technologies and computer applications, such as MOOs (114), Inman’s descriptions may not be extensive enough for one initially entering the community. This was not supposed to be a nuts-and-bolts book, but more footnote descriptions or appendix entries about computer technologies/applications may be in order to help the uninitiated.

Reno, NV

Multiple Genres, Multiple Voices: Teaching Argument in Composition and Literature, by Cheryl L. Johnson and Jayne A. Moneysmith. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 2005. 120 pages.

Reviewed by Timothy Barnett, Northeastern Illinois University

As one student cited in Cheryl L. Johnson’s and Jayne A. Moneysmith’s Multiple Genres, Multiple Voices notes, the traditional research paper often inspires little thought on the part of students: “[A]nyone can write a research paper because somebody already wrote it for you. You grab from everyone else . . . with little or no personal ‘pizzazz’ . . .” (2). Multiple Genres, Multiple Voices is Johnson and Moneysmith’s response to this issue, and the text will interest instructors primarily interested in pedagogical strategies rather than theory. As the authors note, their book “is not . . . about the nature of argument. It is a book that presents a method of teaching argument that is flexible and adaptable. . .” (2). However, while the authors have created an accessible book that offers many classroom exercises, Multiple Genres, Multiple Voices would benefit greatly if Johnson and Moneysmith were more willing to theorize—not about the nature of argument necessarily, but about the complex pedagogical questions their work raises. The author’s choice to address pedagogy is perfectly reasonable, but I believe that their privileging of classroom strategies over pedagogical theory limits the success of their work.

The book’s first chapter, “Multivoiced Argument: A New View,” defines the Multivoiced Argument (MVA) as follows: “In an MVA, writers create an argument . . . by using multiple genres written from different points of view. Genres might include a letter, a dialogue, a report or even a poem—in addition to the traditional essay. Students bolster their argument with research . . . creating an organic whole. . .” (2). Students might, for ex-

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ample, construct an argument regarding gun control in the context of a political race. They would write a number of documents (e.g., candidate speeches, NRA pamphlets, newspaper profiles of the candidates), all of which would need to be carefully researched and written in a particular voice and for clear (and varying) audiences. Taken together, this conglomerate of texts creates a multi-layered narrative about gun control that delivers an argument to the writer’s intended audience.

Chapter 2 discusses using the MVA as the centerpiece of the writing or literature class, and my review focuses on this chapter because of the authors’ claim that it is the book’s “core” and because it accurately reflects the major strengths and weaknesses of *Multiple Genres, Multiple Voices*. Chapter 3 considers more simple ways instructors can use MVA pedagogy, while chapter 4 looks at some of the complications of revising and evaluating MVAs. Chapter 5 concludes with a too brief but welcome look at some of the authors’ theoretical influences along with a useful annotated bibliography. The book also includes an appendix made up of two successful student MVAs, and the authors have created a web site with additional student examples and pedagogical suggestions to accompany their text.

The strengths of chapter 2, and of the whole book, are several and include the directness of the writing and the specific and varied classroom exercises the authors provide. The authors offer twelve steps for teachers to consider when teaching an MVA and support these steps with numerous student comments and examples from student texts. What concerns me, though, is how little new material is in this chapter, with the majority of it focusing on traditional concerns about research papers (how to distinguish an issue from a research problem, for example). The authors do discuss the specific challenges MVAs bring about, but this material often only hints at the many intriguing pedagogical opportunities and challenges raised by MVA pedagogy. For example, the authors note, “Our MVA students tell us that they often take our advice [about research] . . . seriously . . . because the MVA gives them an expanded and more accurate concept of what research really is” (14), and this assertion is supported by Melanie, a student whose MVA is one of two featured in the book. Melanie’s MVA considers the controversy raised by Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* at a fictional high school. In order to demonstrate that Atwood’s tale is actually more real than many think, she writes a minister’s (and parent’s) protest to the book; a school librarian’s response to the minister; a teacher’s writing assignment for the novel; an academic article; etc. In an illuminating comment about her MVA, Melanie notes: “to write Ms. Johnson’s article and assignment sheet, I researched the methods that teachers use to teach *The Handmaid’s Tale* . . . [To] make the church bulletin more realistic, I read [church] bulletins . . . I read reviews of *The Handmaid’s*
I researched the censorship history of *The Handmaid’s Tale* . . .” (15). These comments suggest that MVAs ask writers to think in new ways about research and how to move their inquiry beyond “fact-finding” and into considerations of genre, voice, perspective, audience, and context. However, the authors do not follow up on the rich issues suggested by this statement and simply conclude by stating that Melanie “sought material that helped her represent differing views accurately, exploring types of research that never would have occurred to her before. Because students use source material differently in different genres, they often learn far more about research in an MVA . . .” (15).

Melanie’s example provides an excellent opening to discuss how “students [writing MVAs] use source material differently in different genres” (as well as in different voices and perspectives) and what the value of such work is. In particular, I would like to hear more about how Melanie used her research to create distinct rhetorical situations that together tell a coherent story. How did she manage the different forms of research and writing required for her text? In what ways did Melanie use research to create effective forms, moods, and settings in her writing, and how does this use of research complicate the idea that research is simply a tool for stringing together other people’s ideas? How does students’ use of research to create a narrative/argument affect their conception of academic writing—and ours? I believe the authors when they suggest that MVAs promote new kinds of research and thinking, but, by failing to more fully theorize and support their claims here and elsewhere, Johnson and Moneysmith miss valuable opportunities to more seriously advance their pedagogy.

Johnson and Moneysmith follow up on some of these questions in practical ways when they discuss how to help students “select genres to fit the audience and argument.” One very helpful activity they provide in this section of chapter 2 asks students to consider how writing in various genres and voices will affect their research and writing. The exercise further asks students to consider how individual genre and voice choices will affect their MVA’s intended audience and contribute to the overall purpose of their project. This is a complicated and valuable assignment if students are to seriously engage in MVA writing, as student comments again attest to. For example, in her MVA on media images of women, Jen writes diary entries in the voice of a woman battling an eating disorder, and she notes that these entries “will be a huge appeal to ethos, because this young girl will be talking about her problem in total honesty . . . in the sense that diaries are private, she would be the only one reading them” (21).

Like Melanie, Jen is also seriously engaged with issues of writing and authority, but Johnson’s and Moneysmith’s own ethos is compromised because they do not interrogate Jen’s provocative statement further. Questions like the following are simply left in the air: How do writers rely on “honesty” to make
arguments, and what are the different kinds of “honesty” we can use to create ethos? What kind of research will allow a student to write convincingly in the “private” voice of someone struggling with an eating disorder? Are there ethical issues when students write in “other” voices? In this case, the writer is someone who has had an eating disorder, but what happens when a white male student decides it would be “cool” to take on the voice of a Black woman? Finally, how can this student writer usefully question her notions of “public” and “private,” since readers will know they are reading a fictionalized private text rather than the “real thing”—and how can such questions contribute to her growing rhetorical awareness?

Such questions, of course, are not the only ones that could or should be asked of comments such as Jen’s. However, I want to conclude this review by suggesting that a more rigorous interrogation of the assignments and pedagogical strategies they offer, and the student comments they cite, would help Johnson’s and Moneysmith’s book reach readers like me who struggle teaching the traditional research assignment and who are open to alternatives. *Multiple, Genres, Multiple Voices* suggests compelling pedagogical and theoretical questions about argument, research, voice, context, and narrative, and I believe in the great potential of MVAs. However, the authors’ limited analysis of what seem to be complex pedagogical problems takes away from the strength of their book and makes me question how much I can rely on them to inform my pedagogy. I hope that Johnson and Moneysmith will continue working through the issues that MVAs raise—their commitment to this pedagogy and to their students is clear and inspiring—and that they will in the future be more open to theorizing the various complications of MVA pedagogy. Such work will give me, and others, a more secure foundation for including MVAs in the classroom.

Chicago, IL


Reviewed by Lee Nickoson-Massey, Elon University

Writing assessment—the theories and practices of evaluating student writing—has long been a source of consternation (and often a source of great anxiety) for compositionists. Although we devote great time and energy to developing methods of instruction that might best promote our students’ writing