class, and I believe they can further contribute to the discussions of service learning and community writing we have with students in our undergraduate and graduate classrooms.

Pittsburgh, PA


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One could potentially argue that despite its burgeoning as an institution in the last four decades, today’s two-year college is rapidly approaching the death knell of middle age; however, a close examination of the essay collection contained in *The Profession of English in the Two-Year College* illustrates just the opposite. Editors Mark Reynolds and Sylvia Holladay-Hicks are to be commended for compiling a treasure chest of reflective and thought-provoking essays that effectively capture the stories of yesterday’s teaching pioneers, while promoting the crucial role occupied by the two-year college as a significant voice in the postmodern chorus of academic scholarship.

In the Preface to this volume, Reynolds and Holladay-Hicks state that their reasoning for this book “grew out of the editors’ conviction that a historical record of the early years would be valuable for the profession and for future instructors” (vii). Paramount to our appreciation of this text is the reminder that “[d]uring the early years of the 1960s and 1970s, when the great growth in the number of two-year colleges occurred, there were no models for two-year English teachers, so they had to create themselves” (vii). The three-tiered collection addresses the issues of identity, curriculum, and professionalism—all within the scope of the two-year college system from the perspective of those who occupied its classrooms in the early years.

The first set of essays, grouped as “Creating Identities,” begins with a piece by Reynolds and a humanities chair at Alabama’s Davis Community College. Reynolds’s essay provides a compelling overview of the two-year college teacher as a “knowledge maker” as he examines the teacher’s role as a “generalist,” which, in his view, solidifies the teaching expertise of the two-year college instructor (1, 8). Mary Slayter’s “Creating Our College, Our Community, and Ourselves,” Marilyn Smith Layton’s “Lives Worth Fighting For,” and Richard Williamson’s “The Lesson Plan” all offer anecdotal descrip-
tions of how each author arrived at and acclimated themselves to their new environments.

The next group of essays, “Creating Curriculum,” begins with Barbara Stout’s “Evolution of a Writing Program” and continues with William V. Costanzo’s “Lessons from a Cactus: Divergent Teaching in a Converging World.” Costanzo, who has been active in the national media literacy movement throughout his thirty-five year career, examines the links between literacy and media culture, literature and film, and composition and computers. Dee Brock also examines the relationship between technology and learning in her essay titled “Curriculum Innovation: Pursuing Technology in Teaching Composition,” followed by Alan Meyers’s “Coming of Age in ESL: Memoirs of a Reluctant Pioneer.” Meyers’s piece is particularly poignant as he details his early efforts in teaching non-native speakers of English, the majority of whom came from more than 100 countries and spoke over 70 different languages.

The third and final group of essays, “Creating Professionals,” begins with Mary Sue Koeppel’s “Roger Garrison (1918-1984): Teacher of Teachers.” Koeppel (a faculty member at Florida Community College at Jacksonville and the longtime editor of *Kalliope, a Journal of Literature and Art*), pays homage to Garrison, citing his influence in the uses of the process approach to writing, the conference method, and efforts to broaden staff development. In addition, Koeppel details Garrison’s creation of the National Institute for Teachers of Writing and the National Master Teacher Seminars (originating in 1969 and continuing successfully for over two decades afterwards until colleges and universities began replicating their own forms of Garrison’s teacher seminars), the latter of which offered distinct opportunities for teachers to come together and have time to share ideas and pedagogical approaches. Garrison’s premises for developing master teachers continue to resonate to this day: “Well facilitated shoptalk can be the highest form of staff development; When teachers of various disciplines mix, creativity is enhanced; The collected wisdom, creativity, and experience of any group far surpass any one expert or speaker; Success in teaching lies in the ability to teach a few ideas extremely well” (94). In her essay “Developing a Writing Philosophy,” Elizabeth Nist examines the various writing philosophies she encountered as a student and as a teacher beginning with the Traditionalism in the 1950s and continuing—through subsequent decades—with Expressivism, Cognitivism, Social Constructionism, and a Personal Philosophy in the 1990s. The collection continues with Ann Laster (an award-winning specialist in technical communication) and Beverly Fatherree (a colleague of Laster’s from Mississippi’s Hinds Community College), as they share a professional dialogue in the essay “Reminiscing about a Two-Year Regional Conference: Two Voices/One Viewpoint.” In the first of the final two essays, Ellen Andrews Knodt approaches the controversy over teaching versus
research, and in doing so, looks at the Doctor of Arts and the program’s early efforts to provide a viable teaching degree for those classroom scholars who desired greater training in teaching than the research-oriented Ph.D. could provide. Knodt’s essay offers viable approaches for initiating change in graduate English programs to better meet the needs of future faculty. The book wraps up nicely with Howard Tinberg’s “Teaching English in Two-Year Colleges: A Review of Selected Studies.” Tinberg asserts that the two-year college English programs are at the forefront of fashioning their “own kind of scholarship and research” (142), and his conclusion that “the work of teaching English in the two-year college looks to be just as exciting in the first decades of the twenty-first century as it has been in the last thirty years” echoes the optimism for the future of two-year college English teaching that is honeycombed throughout each of the preceding essays in this timely work (144).

This volume demonstrates the degree to which beginning instructors were forced to be pioneers in the two-year college by creating new and innovative curricula, while tailoring more flexible instructional methods to the needs of a new kind of college student—among them, working adults and struggling immigrants. In the lead essay, Reynolds refers to these instructors as “knowledge makers,” arguing that “it is probably in the teaching of non-traditional students that two-year college teachers have produced the most valuable knowledge” (1, 9). If we are to accept this claim, then perhaps these essays might serve as a teaching primer for scholars new to the academy as today’s two-year colleges face higher enrollments and an increased populace of first-generation college students eager to fulfill their own goals and dreams.

As I reflect on the value of this text and approach the end of this review, I’m compelled to make this dual confession: As a product of a two-year college system that engendered many of the teaching approaches outlined in this book, I entered future classrooms feeling more confident about how to learn. As an adjunct instructor in that same two-year college system, I enter current classrooms confident about why I teach.

Des Plaines, IL
I have to admit to a bit of discomfort while reading Raúl Sánchez’s *The Function of Theory in Composition Studies*. That discomfort comes from a suspicion that, though Sánchez may not have nailed the problem with the sometimes over-theorizing of composition on the head, he has come close enough that those of us who are drawn to theory the way others are drawn to chocolate should feel a tad uncomfortable. As the word “function” in Sánchez’s title suggests, he is not so much interested in an overview, history, or even theory of composition theory, as he is in how theory functions in composition. Since *Of Grammatology*, “function” has indicated the what-something-actually-does hidden behind stated purposes and goals, the implicit lurking behind the explicit. Revealing that hidden function is, at best, an exercise in one-upmanship—unless one wishes to launch a fifth column attack against that theory.

In consequence, *The Function of Theory in Composition Studies* is not so much a book of theory as it is a manifesto. And both its strengths and weaknesses flow from Sánchez’s tendency toward the broad gesture one might expect from that genre. Sánchez argues—sometimes vehemently, often with frustration—for a break with current theories of composition that have tied composition to hermeneutics. Sánchez argues that the interpretive goal of hermeneutics focuses not on the text, but “something else” (20) behind the text. And thus, theories of composition are tainted by hermeneutics because they approach writing as representational. In contrast to the Enlightenment concept of representational, where writing represents the world, in hermeneutic theories, writing represents a something else that turns out to be the hermeneutic system itself. In a neat tautology, hermeneutics looks at writing and sees evidence that the system it has constructed is, in fact, there. Sánchez, holding firm to the post-structuralist orthodoxy that writing represents nothing more than itself, or more writing, argues that any theory that seeks what is beyond writing is suspect.

Thus, hermeneutics has created “a stable body of knowledge” that is naturalized through its analysis of writing (20). Sánchez would reduce the (tautological) hermeneutic circle formed by knowledge to “a title, a name, given to valued collections of statements, always and only after the (f)act of their production” (180). In this reversed causality, theory is itself a “function [or effect] of writing” (3), and thus has nothing to say about writing. Not only is knowledge actually an effect (along with the autonomous subject), but the