Beyond this crucial message, *A Taste for Language* is important in the model it offers for combining the ethnographic details of literacy with a theorized understanding of how specific, material realities provide a richer picture of literacy education, one that can hopefully feed back into our work with both programs and individual students. Although *A Taste for Language* will probably not persuade non-believers of the importance of a unionized, self-governing workforce and revamped (non-positivistic) models of assessment for both teachers and students, it does provide a usefully situated, historical understanding of why composition and literature too often seem fundamentally invested in different goals due to the types of capital they aim to instill. Watkins persuades us that the very differences which have led to division and hierarchy might actually join together in an enriched version of English studies that takes seriously the intersections of both material and cultural capital. As a field becoming more comfortable with mixed methodologies such as Watkins provides, I hope that we can continue to populate our scholarship not only with the experiences and voices of our past and present students, but also with a closer examination of their written texts—artifacts that make visible the contradictory, striated, and recursive nature of literacy and the (classed) desires that motivate education.

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**Works Cited**


Reviewed by Kathleen Mollick, Tarleton State University

First-year writing courses are meant to introduce novice writers into academic discourse in various ways and to serve as a gateway to research in their major and possibly at the graduate level. For writing program administrators, trying to implement change to one’s own courses, let alone guiding fellow faculty through the evolution of the profession, can be daunting. In many colleges and universities, the added demand that undergraduate writing courses focus on teaching students how to engage in research can be particularly stressful, when some faculty members either lack the time to produce research due to increased teaching loads and increasing departmental service, or that the demands of research keep faculty from devoting much time to incorporating that into first-year writing courses. And yet despite the demands on one’s time and the ever-growing list of what
composition should do for undergraduate writers, including serving as a platform for undergraduate research, the compelling and cogent discussion of how research can play a crucial role in English Studies provides a rush of enthusiasm for the reader who reads *Undergraduate Research in English Studies*, edited by Laurie Grobman and Joyce Kinkead.

Neither Grobman or Kinkead are new to the discussion about the role of undergraduate research in first-year writing curriculum. In 2009, Grobman situated her discussion of the relevance of undergraduate research as a way to reinvigorate English Studies, in part as a response to a statement made by Joyce Kinkead that “there is a paucity of understanding and knowledge of undergraduate research among professionals in composition and rhetoric” (qtd. in Grobman 196). Grobman made the argument that undergraduate research as it occurred in the composition classroom should be viewed as a continuum which “recognizes the attributes all authors share, despite different levels of expertise or differences in language use” (Grobman 180). In this collection, both argue that undergraduate research is particularly needed in the humanities, since the humanities are slowly joining the effort to participate in this movement (Grobman and Kinkead xiii). The articles that comprise the four major sections of the book demonstrate the continuum that Grobman spoke of earlier, and for those faculty who may struggle with this latest part of composition studies, or who may wonder how they will adapt their own research practices to a level that would be understandable to first-year writers, the articles are both challenging and stimulating.

“Mentoring Undergraduate Researchers in English Studies,” the book’s first section, is aptly named, given that many of the other articles that follow in other sections refer again and again to the concept that faculty mentors inspire undergraduates to engage in research. Grobman and Kinkead speak of “illumination” of the issue of undergraduate research as a key to this collection, which is evident from the articles that follow (xi). David Elder and Joonna Smitherman Trapp address the give and take that occurred in their student/mentor relationship. Their differing views of the strengths and weaknesses of their collaboration together comes together at the end, when they speak with one voice at the conclusion of their article, advocating that the undergraduate research relationship carries with it the aspect of long-term friendship (9). This back-and-forth exchange carried on between Margaret Earley Whitt and Matthew Henningsen provides a slightly more pragmatic view of the student/mentor relationship by taking the audience on a chronological ride through their time together as Henningsen helped Whitt develop an annotated bibliography for a course on AIDS-based short fiction (14). Jane Greer’s fascinating discussion of the potential brought to undergraduate research by non-traditional students introduces us to three of the students she has worked with, and argues that not only may the more traditional sources of research (such as university libraries and university archives) be used for non-traditional research, but that many non-traditional students lack access to college and university resources in their own com-
munity. Greer encourages potential faculty mentors to “be in tune with local research resources, such as the outreach programs of public libraries; county historical societies that may seek volunteers to engage in projects to preserve local history; and local chapters of professional organizations that may welcome ‘amateur’ members” (42).

The book’s second section, “Conducting Research Responsibly,” focuses on the role of methodology and inquiry in all research activity, and how these practices can be applied at the undergraduate level. Deaver Traywick’s article will strike a chord with anyone who has ever had an unsuccessful experience with an IRB office. He asserts that “no single authoritative source exists on teaching RCT [Responsible Conduct of Research] to undergraduate composition researchers” (52). Traywick then traces the evolution of ethical research from the Nuremberg Code to federal guidelines today (53). Not only does Traywick call on faculty mentors to educate students in the ways of navigating and negotiating ethical standards in research, but he also calls on faculty mentors to educate themselves in these same ways, the better to guide their mentees (67). Jacqueline McLeod Rogers then provides a thorough description of the theory and methodology for a course she teaches in ethnography at the University of Winnipeg. Rogers clearly outlines her choice of ethnography as the driving genre of the course and then concisely describes the course’s theoretical and ethical framework (75-79). Part of describing the process by which she designed the course comes in the section “The Research Project: Writing the Proposal and Seeking Ethics Approval.” Rogers addresses the stresses involved with getting IRB approval for student-based research projects, yet her strategy of having students filling out IRB forms in sections and in groups makes the case that finding creative ways for students to navigate the necessary paperwork to engage in research is possible and worth pursuing (80-81).

The third section of the book, “Disseminating Research and Scholarship,” concentrates on how undergraduate research results can be shared with others both within the university and beyond. Marta Figlerowicz’s article is notable for its frank discussion of the failures she encountered in some of her research projects as well as its discussion of the kind of financial support that Harvard offers its student researchers. Her ability to address how failure in her research projects helped her as much as her successes should be required reading for undergraduate and graduate majors alike, since rejection for conferences and publication is a component of engaging in research as a novice and as an expert (116-117). Figlerowicz’s experiences with undergraduate research at Harvard, however, provide a stark contrast to the funding opportunities at smaller state universities. She had the opportunity to apply for funding that Harvard extends to its undergraduate students, which, “in the academic year 2007-2008 . . . exceeded $1,500,000” (110). For faculty whose universities are undergoing extensive budget cuts, Ted Hovet provides hope for those wishing to provide students with cost-effective ways to present their research to an academic audience. He
describes an increasingly popular one-day English conference at Western Kentucky University that uses a $1,000 grant that provides “publicity, printing expenses, refreshments, and awards” (104).

The book’s fourth section, “Case Studies Across the Discipline of English,” contains case studies of literary and composition undergraduate research projects. The English fellows program at Utah State University is the focus of the project undertaken by Christine Cooper-Rompato and her student research fellow, Scarlet Fronk. They discuss their experiences working together on a topic relating to medieval studies and the negotiation involved in the student-faculty mentor relationship. Evelyn Funda reflects on her sustained mentor relationship with her student, Amanda Marinello, which leads to Marinello discovering a research area of her own after initially assisting Funda with her research (152). In Kinkead’s conclusion to this article, she identifies “synergy” as the hallmark of the student-mentor relationship, among other factors, that makes the program at Utah State University so notable (159). Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle provide hope for faculty who despair when year after year composition students struggle with their research-based writing. Downs and Wardle believe that their approach shows “that teaching contributive research in the first year can have important benefits, even if the student does not actually end up making a contribution” (178). They believe that their approach “should result in better transfer (generalization) of writing-related knowledge to other courses” (178).

What makes this collection so notable is its belief in the ability of faculty to create a challenging and rewarding research experience that encourages undergraduate students to engage in research ranging from topics in literary studies as well as composition studies. In Laurie Grobman and Joyce Kinkead’s introduction to the book, they assure their audience that “The times they are a changin’” (xiii). They are, but with a collection of articles that are accessible to those who are new to the profession and those who are veterans of it, this book provides a reliable guide as to how to get started.

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Works Cited