Transforming the conditions and lasting effects of racism will require more than catchy slogans, and ultimately, Schroeder provides a convincing analysis of how ostensibly multicultural curricula can continue to reproduce tacitly racist educations. Schroeder’s critique is important for compositionists and writing instructors who are interested in rethinking literacy instruction, especially those on diverse campuses like NEIU and my own. In particular, Diverse by Design argues that literacy has an important role to play in creating more authentic multicultural curricula, and provokes questions about the specific roles they might play in creating such an education.

Fresno, CA


Reviewed by Todd Ruecker, University of Texas

Over the last several years, second language (L2) writing scholars have turned their attention to identity issues surrounding multilingual writers in US academic institutions. These discussions have focused on areas such as the problems and limits associated with linguistic identity labels like ESL and non-native speaker, the ways that monolingual ideologies present in US academic systems work to devalue students’ diverse linguistic backgrounds and even erase their identities, and how linguistic identities are constantly shifting as students cross discourse communities and academic contexts. Having grappled with questions of identity and L2 writers in their research, the editors of Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing came together to create a collection that would “broaden the discussion of identity and second language writing across a variety of institutional contexts” (ix). The result is a truly valuable work for anyone interested in identity issues surrounding second language writers. Understanding that identity is complex, fluid, and multiple, the editors of this collection assembled chapters on a varied set of topics from a diverse group of voices, ranging from established scholars to graduate students. By examining identity from different perspectives, institutional positions, and geographical locations, the contributors to this collection help the reader gain a new perspective on the complexities surrounding identity in L2 writing.

The first section of this collection focuses on identity formation in a variety of contexts, including high school, college, graduate school, and workplaces. In the first chapter, Christina Ortmeier-Hooper draws on social identity theory and case studies of three students to examine the identities of L2 writers in a high school and the role that institutional labels play in
shaping these identities. She points out the problem of the English Language Learner (ELL) label commonly used by high schools, the stigma associated with this label in one particular school, and how students would alternatively distance themselves and embrace the label due to the needs of a particular situation. In chapter 2, Gwen Gray Schwarz draws on case study research from a group of Vietnamese Generation 1.5 college students as well as assimilation/acculturation theories to show how L2 writers’ identities are stifled by monolingual pedagogies and argue that composition needs to adopt composing models that acknowledge the hybrid identities of its students. Jun Yang’s brief narrative in chapter 3 provides a personal look into the challenge that many L2 writers face when people around them do not understand the difficulty of moving between cultures. In chapter 4, Terry Myers Zawacki and Anna Sophia Habib report on research in which they interviewed twenty-six immigrant students as well as faculty from fifteen disciplines to examine the expectations that faculty have for L2 writers across the disciplines. Zawacki and Habib explore a number of different issues, including the challenge writers face in negotiating the different expectations of US academic tasks and the way that professors make students feel inferior by rejecting the ways of writing that they bring with them to US colleges.

In the next chapter, Michelle Cox moves to a new context, workplace writing, and draws on situated learning and rhetorical genre theories to explore how one student moved from a successful undergrad career where her L2 writing background did not limit her, to a graduate program where she was largely isolated and also “outed” as an ESL student, and finally to an internship where she was once again highly successful. The last two chapters, by Eunsook Ha Rhee and Yichun Liu, are narratives that focus on the authors’ experiences negotiating their identities in a TESOL graduate program and as a novice EFL researcher.

The second section of the book focuses on L2 identity as a resource in multiple settings, including writing centers, secondary schools, and college classrooms. Gail Shuck’s “Language, Identity, Agency, and Context” is the first chapter in this section and focuses on how institutionally-imposed identities ignore the complexity of student identities. She uses case study data from four Afghan American women to argue that students see different linguistic identity labels differently, that contextual factors that affect the meanings of labels are always shifting, and that people are situated in a “constellation of social meanings” that affect their self-positioning related to institutionally-imposed identities (119). In the next chapter, Kevin Roozen and Angelica Herrera draw on a longitudinal study of a Latina from a Mexican American family in Chicago, Illinois. Here, they emphasize the importance of multiple literacies that students possess and urge teachers to “find ways of helping second language writers take up and contribute to academic discourse in a manner that respects and does justice to the literate experiences and identities they bring to the classroom” (158). The next two chapters, by Yutaka Fujieda and Soo Hyon Kim, are first-person narratives from graduate...
students who have negotiated the challenges of possessing different identities that come with knowing more than one language and living in multiple cultures. In chapter 12, Carol Severino, Matt Gilchrist, and Emma Rainey explore the value of having L2 writers explore and expand their identities through creative writing work at the university’s writing center. In the last chapter of this section, a Nigerian graduate student, Salako, explores how her lived identity as L2 writer teaching and studying in another culture helps her better relate to and subsequently support her L2 writer students.

The final section of the collection, “Globalism and Technology: L2 Identity in the Twenty-First Century,” explores the complexities of L2 writer identity in the modern world. The first chapter, by Immaculée Harushimana, expands the collection’s scope to postcolonial Africa. Harushimana explains how not only African native languages are often marginalized, but that Africans who learn an African form of English are marginalized as well because their English variety is often seen as inferior. The author ends by arguing that “World Englishes confer on Africans the right to express themselves in African English varieties freely” and that there is a new group of “hybrid language writers” that have begun to take code meshing to a new level (223-4). Harushimana follows her more formal chapter with a narrative of her experiences as a French-speaking African in the US. In chapter 16, Mary Ellen Daniloff-Merrill reports on qualitative survey research on Nepali international students at her institution, which focused on their use of Nenglish, a mixture of English and Nepali, in their daily interactions.

Next, Stephanie Vandrick explores the “ways in which the ‘deficit model’ so commonly applied (consciously or unconsciously) to second language writers is, in the case of . . . privileged students, mediated by their social class privilege” (258). In the next chapter, the section shifts towards technology where Keven Eric DePew and Susan Miller-Cochran argue that examining writers’ activities in social networking spaces gives us a “unique window into the emerging multiliteracies of L2 writers, especially the way in which these writers compose their identities through multiple literate practices” (274). In a move that connects their work to Vandrick’s chapter, the authors acknowledge that writers who have access and are active in social networking spaces tend to be privileged ones. In chapter 19, Hana Kang discusses her experience as a trilingual (a Korean completing a PhD in Chinese linguistics in the US), the difficulties of being a “double minority,” and the ways her identities were reconstructed in different situations and how she used emails to construct her identity differently. In the final chapter, Youngjoo Yi works to extend L2 writing research by drawing on a situated learning theory focused on communities of practice as well as transnational theory. She uses these two theories to examine the writing and identity construction of two Korean writers, both of whom constructed their online writer identities in different online spaces using multiple languages and roles.

While this collection is certainly valuable as it is the first to focus exclusively on identity issues surrounding L2 writers, those looking for pedagogi-
cal suggestions will not find much of interest since this collection is clearly more oriented towards an audience interested in identity theory. Also, there are a few shortcomings. First, despite the fact that the collection does examine identity issues across different institutional contexts, the coverage of different contexts is limited as the vast majority of chapters and narratives are focused on US academic institutions. When international student voices are included, their narratives focus heavily on negotiating identities in US academia. Second, as is typical with composition studies research, the research methodologies in this collection are all qualitative and generally case-study based. By including other types of methodologies, such as critical discourse analysis or survey-based quantitative research, the insights provided by the presented data could be expanded.

Despite these shortcomings, Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing makes a timely and valuable contribution to the current discourses on the identity issues surrounding L2 writers. From Cox’s chapter focused on workplace writing to Vandrick’s unique discussion about social privilege among L2 writers, the chapters in this collection explore issues of identity from diverse perspectives, ensuring that there will be something of interest for a wide variety of researchers.

El Paso, TX


Reviewed by John W. Pell, Elon University

In the humanities, paperback re-issues are reserved for works that have significantly altered disciplinary conversations. Southern Illinois University Press’ 2010 re-issue of Sharon Crowley’s The Methodical Memory is no exception. Twenty years after its original publication Crowley’s historiographic critique of current-traditional rhetoric still stands as a high-water mark in Rhetoric and Composition’s theoretical development. Crowley’s text continues to remind the discipline of the pitfalls of theoretical and pedagogical apathy—the tendency, often as a result of institutional and political pressures, to avoid making critiques of “effective” (read: data generating) pedagogical practices and methods. The current economic climate continues to place pressure on universities in general, and writing programs in particular, to both cut program costs (primarily through the practice of hiring contingent faculty and increasing the number of available seats in each writing section) and to carry out endless assessments that demonstrate the effectiveness of a particular writing curriculum.