

Editors' Introduction

This issue of *Research in the Teaching of English* is the first in our term as interim co-editors following Sandra Stotsky's resignation to devote more time to her scholarly work. Before we introduce ourselves and share our vision of *RTE*, we would like to thank Sandra for making the transition to our interim editorship as smooth as possible. Because our editorial terms have overlapped, we will be publishing some articles that Sandra brought through the review process. We will indicate in the table of contents of each issue those manuscripts that Sandra accepted under her editorship.

We would also like to welcome three new members to the Editorial Advisory Board: Bob Fecho, who teaches in the Crossroads learning community at Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia; Kris Gutierrez, who teaches at UCLA, and Carol Lee, who teaches at Northwestern University. We look forward to their contributions to the vision and direction of *RTE*. We also note with great sadness the recent death of former *RTE* editor and board member Alan Purves. Alan's memory will continue to inspire us in our efforts to continue the tradition of excellence of which he is an integral part.

Our own sense of *RTE's* mission is a consequence of our professional experiences. Each of us began teaching in 1976 and spent over a decade teaching English in high school. During that time we have been influenced by a wide variety of research conducted from a wide variety of perspectives. In our own research, we have considered a range of questions in a variety of sites, both in schools and outside schools, and have used a number of different approaches in our investigations of those questions. We have studied our own teaching as well as the teaching and learning of others. As editors, we are committed to publishing manuscripts that maintain *RTE's* tradition of excellence while reflecting the diversity of sites, methodological perspectives, and ontological orientations that have enriched literacy studies in recent years. This commitment stems not only from our experience as teachers and researchers, but also from our understanding of the title of the journal and its implications. We began to think about the title of the journal prior to beginning our term as editors when the issue was raised by NCTE's Standing Committee on Research. We have continued to talk about what the title might mean to readers and potential contributors with one another and with colleagues. As a result of our deliberations, we have developed the following definition for the terms in the title of the journal:

Research: In the last ten years, conceptions of what constitutes research

Submit an Article

Send your manuscript to Dr. Peter Smagorinsky, Editor, *Research in the Teaching of English*, University of Oklahoma, College of Education, Department of Leadership and Academic Curriculum, Room 260. Also send one copy to Dr. Michael Smith, Editor, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, School of Education, 10 Seminary Place, Durham, NC 27706. Send sufficient first-class postage for return to reviewers and, for the return of the manuscript, in a separate envelope. (Please do not use metered postage.) Manuscripts submitted simultaneously to *RTE* and to *Journal of Curriculum Studies* should be double-spaced, using both sides of the page consecutively, with the title page as page 1 and the first page of the article as page 2. Although the original copy of the manuscript should be retained by the author until final acceptance, photocopies of the manuscript, appendices, and artwork should be submitted in a form suitable for reproduction. All references and citations should follow the fourth edition of the *Manual of Style* of the American Psychological Association. List the author's name, the institution with which the author is affiliated, and work telephone numbers and mailing address. *Make sure to list it as well.* To facilitate the review process, the author's name should not appear elsewhere in the manuscript. The Running Head should be typed on the top of each page and should appear on the other pages. The author is responsible for providing the contact information from the body of the manuscript.

Manuscripts accepted for review by three outside reviewers and approved by the editor and the editorial board. Manuscripts accepted for publication usually expect a decision within four weeks. Manuscripts that are not published in *RTE* are returned to the author. Manuscripts accepted for publication are returned to the author before final acceptance.

have changed. Bruner, Wells, and others, for instance, have argued that narrative should be regarded on equal footing with traditional analytic approaches as a way of understanding and relating human experience. This belief has become institutionally embedded in NCTE, with such memoirs as Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* and Victor Villanueva's *Bootstraps* being awarded the Council's highest research awards. Teacher-research is gaining in stature, with Cochran-Smith and Lytle among others arguing that its emic (insider's) orientation provides important insights into situated classroom practices. These two movements are indicative of the reconsideration taking place in the field of education about the nature of what we call research and how we conduct and write about it. In our own editing of *RTE*, we wish to embrace multiple approaches to conducting research. In addition to traditional analytic approaches, we wish to consider teacher-research, historical articles, narratives, and other modes and genres through which researchers are now conducting inquiries. We also would like to publish data-driven conceptual articles, review articles that use prior research to gain new perspectives on important issues, and articles that make theoretical arguments about research methodology.

in: Discussions of the name of *RTE* often overlook this preposition. *Research in the Teaching of English* suggests that the research reported in *RTE* should be something that takes place in English classes. With so much research pointing to the importance of understanding literacy practices in many contexts, we question whether we should limit the research published in this journal to that which is conducted exclusively in English classes. Heath's *Ways with Words* exemplifies a research tradition that identifies the ways in which students' community literacy experiences affect their success in performing according to school standards. This tradition suggests the need to look outside schools to understand the processes that take place within them. Additionally, there is a growing body of research on professional development-including research on preservice and inservice programs-that is critical to an understanding of the ways in which disciplinary knowledge is constructed and classroom practices are ultimately carried out. Our conception of *RTE* encompasses any research that helps to account for literacy development. This conception includes investigations of the cultural practices students engage in at home, investigations of literacy practices that take place in disciplines other than English, and investigations of communities of practice that include out-of-school adults.

the Teaching: These terms evoke the image of the certified teacher at work in the classroom. And we anticipate that studies set in classrooms will remain central to *RTE's* contributions to literacy research. Yet many people serve as teachers. Vygotsky, in his conception of the zone of prox-

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imal development, puts teachers and more capable peers in the same category in providing assistance to learners. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Early Adolescent English/Language Arts document requires that their certification candidates specify the ways in which they learn from their students, thus blurring the distinction between a teacher and a learner. Wertsch and others have discussed the importance of "distant teachers," those who write books and otherwise provide learning tools for those with whom they are not in immediate contact. Furthermore, a focus on Teaching suggests a top-down instructional process, an imbalance in the relationship between the actions of teachers and learners. Our conception of the idea of teaching would include attention to the diverse people and resources that can serve instructional roles, whether in schools or out, whether adult or child. Such a conception would emphasize the experiences of learners in a teaching relationship.

of English: The terms "of English" are problematic to many for the ways in which they imply an emphasis on second_{ary} and college English classes—that is, distinct classes that focus exclusively on the three traditional strands of literature, composition, and language. One problem with this designation is the apparent exclusion of Language Arts instruction in element_{ary} school, which attends to the same areas yet is not segregated in a discrete class or identified by a specific language. Although *RTE* has traditionally published articles that focus on elementary school language arts, the journal's title does not invite them. A related problem is the apparent exclusion of the development of literacy skills in community life, the work force, and other settings outside schools. Additionally, the designation of "English" appears to exclude research in language development more broadly construed, particularly ESL/EFL instruction—and, from an international perspective, language arts studies in tongues other than English. In our editing of the journal we will welcome articles that inquire into literacy issues regardless of the language spoken, the nation of investigation, the site of teaching and learning, or the discipline that grounds the problem.

We welcome any manuscript that meets the vision we have outlined here. If you are uncertain about the fit of your work, please contact either one of us (Peter Smagorinsky—email: psmagorinsky@ou.edu; phone: 405-325-3533; Michael Smith—email: micsmit@rci.rutgers.edu; phone: 908-932-7496, ext. 120). Please check the Directions to Contributors in this issue or at the *RTE* World Wide Web site (see announcement in this issue) before submitting manuscripts.

We are delighted to open our interim appointment as editors of *Research in the Teaching of English* with studies that so clearly help us work toward our goals for the journal. The articles that appear in this issue

speak not only to the diversity of researchers' interests and methodologies but also to the diversity of disciplines from which literacy research draws. Cynthia Lewis's research is set in an elementary school and focuses on a single class. She draws on performance studies to analyze the ways in which students' social roles in the classroom affect their participation in classroom activities and how that performance is valued in school. Melanie Sperling and Laura Woodlief study two high school English classes, using an anthropological framework to compare and contrast the different types of learning communities developed in urban and suburban school districts and the consequences of community literacy practices for the ways in which students construct meaning. Laura B. Smolkin studies an elementary school classroom, using speech act theory to frame her analysis of students' schematic expectations for dialogue turns in drama. Sperling and Woodlief's and Lewis's studies involve participant observation for the collection of data while Smolkin uses an intervention to elicit her data. While the studies use different theoretical frameworks and study different educational problems, all focus on the ways in which learners actively construct knowledge.

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Announcing the *RTE* World Wide Web Site

To provide better service to the research community, we have established a World Wide Web site for *Research in the Teaching of English* at <http://members.aol.com/RTEngl/rtehome.htm>. The web site provides a variety of features:

1. *Information for Authors*, including (a) information on how to prepare a manuscript in terms of form and content, (b) a heuristic that describes how reviewers review manuscripts, (c) details of NCTE's policies on permissions, and (d) information on the progress of the review of each manuscript that has been submitted.
2. *Archives* of back issues of *RTE* (currently under construction).
3. *Reader's Forum* where you can respond to articles published in *RTE*.
4. *Hot Links* to dozens of internet resources of interest to literacy researchers.
5. *Annotated Bibliographies of Research in the Teaching of English*, including an e-mail connection to the bibliography editors that allows you to recommend publications for the next listing.

The *RTE* www site is under continual construction. We welcome your visit and suggestions on how to improve it.

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