

Spring 2021

Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

Paul Feigenbaum and Veronica House, with Cayce Wicks

Occasionally, a scholar comes along and says precisely what is necessary for the political and cultural moment. As editors, we often feel that we miss the urgency of that moment because of the necessary peer-review and revision processes involved in academic publishing. As we try to find new ways to break down expectations of that academic timeframe while maintaining the quality of intellectual argument that *Community Literacy Journal* publishes, we are honored to open our Spring 2021 issue with a transcript of a talk by Natasha N. Jones, “**The Complicity/Complexity Problem of Anti-Racism Work in The Academy**,” given on April 16, 2021 for the panel “Undoing BIPOC Erasure in the Academy: A Conversation about Race and Anti-Racism,” which was hosted by the University of California Merced. We publish this talk because we believe it says what is precisely necessary for community literacy scholars, teachers, participants, and leaders “right now.” In this talk, Jones demands of us a “radical honesty” and an interrogation of our complicity in racist systems. In her radically honest voice, she exposes her grief and rage at the broad historical moment and how the injustices writ large are also the injustices of the academy. This includes the extraordinary labor placed on people of color, particularly Black women. Jones urges us to move beyond a complicit focus on individual injustices toward dismantling complex, systemic, structural injustice. Ultimately, Jones argues that we must “do better.”

As we write this introduction, COVID-19 has killed more than 581,000 people in the United States—and millions more worldwide—disproportionately ravaging Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. Derek Chauvin has been found guilty of murdering George Floyd, and yet the process leading to that conviction has further illustrated the profound racism of the nation’s legal system, in which unimaginably disturbing video footage is required to confirm that, legally speaking, Black lives do matter—and even then, right up until the verdict was read, we had good reason to think Chauvin would be acquitted. During and since the trial, many more Black and Brown people have been shot by police, including Daunte Wright, 20; Adam Toledo, 13; and Ma’Khia Bryant, 16. President Biden has supported and signed more progressive legislation than many of us would have believed, given his history, and yet we are no closer to establishing legal safety and security for the millions of undocumented people living in the U.S., let alone the tens of thousands more trying to escape the legacies of American imperialism. And despite the failure of the insurrection attempt on January 6, dozens of states are now curtailing access to the Constitutional right to vote and protest while also seeking to erase the existence of transgender communities. Meanwhile, as spring transitions to summer, the annual wait to see just how destructive climate change-accelerated forest fires and hurricanes will be this year is well under way.

There are countless reasons for skepticism and rage, though we reject despair. And a major reason we reject despair is that the *work* of community literacy, which was so vividly embodied in Carmen Kynard's Spring 2020 Conference on Community Writing keynote/*CLJ* essay, continues, and continues to inspire us.

Our first peer-reviewed article suggests one of the many important elements for us to consider as we work to do better. In **“Public Memory as Community-Engaged Writing: Composing Difficult Histories on Campus,”** authors Amy J. Lueck, Matthew V. Kroot, and Lee M. Panich dig into how universities can ethically and substantively reckon with settler colonialist and white supremacist legacies. Using their own institution of Santa Clara University as a case study, the authors leverage their positions and resources at the university to center and amplify the perspectives, experiences, and histories of local Native communities to ensure the history of colonization and Indigenous persistence are accurately reflected in various community-engaged writing projects on campus. Through their partnership with local Ohlone tribal members, Lueck, Root, and Panich demonstrate how community literacy scholars can use digital technologies to compose alternative public representations of their campus space and its history.

In our second article, **“Cultivating Legitimacy as a Farmer,”** Abby M. Dubisar introduces us to Lauren, a midwestern woman farmer navigating agricultural literacy work in a heavily gendered terrain. Running the largest woman-owned CSA in her state, Lauren's story is one of the fearless and exhausting literacy work women must do to break down stereotypes and assert not only their legitimacy but their leadership in shaping a narrative in an overwhelmingly male profession. Through investigation and interviews, Dubisar adds to a growing body of scholarship on the gendered struggles of women in agriculture.

Our third article studies the informal literacies practiced by home cooks in the pages of their cookbooks. In **“(Re) Mixing Up Literacy: Cookbooks as Rhetorical Remix,”** Elizabeth J. Fleitz pulls us into the pages of a 1950s cookbook as we look at the marginalia, notes, pasted-in clippings as remix – a scrapbook of sorts that Fleitz argues represents a food literacy practice. She looks at this authorial remix as a way to gain a voice in the domestic sphere. By studying this literacy practice as multimodal remix and applying de Certeau's theory of “making do,” Fleitz opens a study of the ways female home cooks have asserted influence and authority as active makers rather than passive users.

For our Issues in Community Literacy section, we offer space for contributors to analyze, reflect, and/or complicate ongoing challenges associated with the work of community literacy. For this issue, concerns related to community health and the COVID-19 pandemic appeared across submissions, which focus on the authors' lived experiences with community literacy projects. In our first piece, **“Writing Group in an Emergency: Temporary Shelter,”** Alison Turner reflects on her experience working to build a writing group in a temporary “emergency shelter for women and trans folk experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.” Using student creative writing from the group as a metaphorical frame, Turner crafts a poetic reflection on the constraints and affordances of implementing community literacy best practices

in an emergency shelter, a fluid and dynamic context. Turner ultimately “suggests that while best practices can guide creation of a writing group during an emergency, an emergency, in turn, can generate innovation with these best practices.”

In **“Rhetorical Curation of Patient Art: How Community Literacy Scholars Can Contribute to Healthcare Professions,”** Maria Novotny claims that “community literacy scholars are well poised to support challenges currently facing healthcare providers.” Reflecting on her experiences with The ART of Infertility to curate an exhibit of patient art and stories to increase emotional literacy and empathy for healthcare providers, Novotny argues that through the act of “rhetorical curation,” community literacy scholars can use their expertise to “design innovative public projects that contribute to improvements in healthcare.”

Our final piece for the Issues section, **“I knew this was gonna be chaos’: Voices Collide While Decolonizing Intersectional Injustice,”** co-authored by Danielle Kubasko Sullivan and Mary L. Fahrenbruck, uses the paradigm of “indigenous-sustaining literacy” to analyze the events surrounding the One Book/One Community’s “display of archival photographs depicting a Navajo Civil Rights march” at San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico. Sullivan and Fahrenbruck argue that the paradigm “indigenous-sustaining literacy,” a lens that foregrounds “racial literacy and orality,” may be a useful tool to counter hegemony and enhance efforts to “decolonize community literacy practices.” Each piece outlines a unique and interesting real-life experience with community literacy that asks the authors—and their readers—to reflect on what it means to apply best practices of community literacy in the real world.

We are especially proud to introduce a new section of the *Community Literacy Journal*, “Coda: Community Writing and Creative Work,” and the founding editorial collective: Kefaya Diab, Leah Falk, Chad Seader, Alison Turner, Kate Vieira, and Stephanie Wade. Coda offers an inclusive space for the creative work ensuing from and about community writing projects, public engagement, and activism. We hope that you will enjoy the pieces selected for this section.

As always, we are grateful to Jessica Shumake for her work editing the Book and New Media Review section. We are likewise thankful to the scholars who contributed reviews for this issue.