

Tate, Gary, Amy Rupiper Taggart, Kurt Schick, and H. Brooke Hessler, eds. *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2014. 343 pages. \$49.95. 978-0-19-992216-1. Print.

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In 2001, Gary Tate and two of his graduate students, Amy Rupiper and Kurt Schick, compiled the first edition of *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* as a way “to help graduate students and new writing teachers orient themselves within our ongoing discussions” (vi). The field of composition studies has changed much since the first edition of that text, especially regarding the role of pedagogy and its research as well as the widespread impact of digital technology. Some scholars in the field now question whether pedagogical discussions can coexist with the rise of post-pedagogy and post-process scholarship, challenges that are adequately addressed in the second edition of *A Guide*. In the second edition, Amy Rupiper Taggart, H. Brooke Hessler, and Kurt Schick have revised and added to the ongoing discussion around composition pedagogy and its shifts over the past decade.

All twelve pedagogies from the original edition are included in the updated version, along with several approaches not originally included. Each revision and addition reflects the current technological landscape, including digital and multimodal pedagogy, and maintains an awareness of post-process and post-pedagogy schools of thought, resulting in sound, contemporary arguments worthy of seasoned and aspiring teacher-scholars’ attention and assuring the field that works on pedagogy and praxis still have an important place in composition studies.

The first edition of the text had no formal introduction other than a two-page preface discussing the intent and organization of the book, suggesting that further introduction to or explanation of the significance of pedagogy in composition studies was not needed. In this edition, however, editors spend almost twenty pages in “What is Composition Pedagogy? An Introduction”

discussing shifts in pedagogical perspectives as reflected in this work. In this piece, the authors defend well the role of pedagogy past and present as well as acknowledge the plurality of pedagogies and the role of pedagogy as a heuristic to create new practice and new theory (8-9). They even acknowledge the “dark side of pedagogy,” “ways in which pedagogy is defined and even co-opted by institutions, or at the very least ways in which there are unintended consequences of pedagogy put into practice” (10). By recognizing not only the problems of ingrained pedagogies but also the potential of pedagogy and praxis, the editors introduce the balanced yet polemical tone that is present throughout this guide to writing instruction.

In the table of contents, readers may note the use of alphabetical organization of pedagogies in this newest edition of *A Guide*, which did not exist for the structure of the first edition. In fact, readers can observe much of the state of composition studies in the year 2001 from the organization of the first edition: “Process Pedagogy” was the first entry and “Technology and the Teaching of Writing” was the last of the twelve essays. The penultimate essay was “On the Academic Margins: Basic Writing Pedagogy.” Although the preface to the first edition acknowledges that the organization was considerably arbitrary, it did mention that the influence of certain pedagogies in the field and pieces that paired well were elements of the organizing principle. The updated table of contents reflects a more pluralistic pedagogical mindset in which no specific pedagogy is prioritized and organizing by level of influence is avoided.

As mentioned above, the influential “Process Pedagogy” by Lad Tobin was the opening piece in the first edition of *A Guide*. The editors stated in that first edition, “We chose to begin with process pedagogy because the turn to process represented for many teachers a defining moment in the discipline—and in their lives as teachers” (vii). In “Process Pedagogy,” Tobin introduces the approach as fairly new when he began teaching but around long enough to have a history and set of assumptions that he was able to cover in the article. Tobin even references the post-

process movement but suggests the critiques he heard were a “too-easy dismissal of process’ contributions” (14).

Given the prominence of the process pedagogy essay in the first edition and that post-process has not gone away during the past decade, the new essay on process pedagogy, “Process Pedagogy and Its Legacy” by Chris Anson is a particularly important piece to examine. Further, most essays in this second edition have process writing as their foundation and its guidelines are fairly familiar to all writing instructors now, so the purpose for “Process Pedagogy and Its Legacy” is different from Tobin’s piece on process pedagogy that appeared in the first edition. Anson balances the tension of the legacy and defining shift wrought by process writing pedagogy with the research from the post-process movement.

While Anson makes a strong case for the benefits of process writing pedagogy, he also acknowledges its limitations. In one section of the essay, “Push-Back: Post-Process,” he suggests that a writing about writing approach could reconcile process and post-process theories (223-5). While Anson’s piece may not placate all post-pedagogical and post-process scholars, his historical review of process pedagogy, its future, and his concessions present an evenhanded review that will be informative and useful for most writing instructors and scholars in the field.

The new edition of *A Guide*, almost one hundred pages longer altogether, includes five new essays, among them Amy J. Devitt’s “Genre Pedagogies” and Christine Farris’ “Literature and Composition Pedagogy,” which raise important issues that have been around in the field for quite some time, especially the debate concerning use of literature in the composition classroom that has spurred numerous graduate classroom and listserv conversations. First, Devitt’s “Genre Pedagogies” acknowledges the wide array of genres in the composition classroom, “whether literary or academic, digital or hybrid, personal or public” (146). Genre studies have become important to many researchers in composition studies, and this essay introduces ways of using three approaches—particular genres, genre awareness, and genre

critique—to “avoid formulaic writing and enable transfer” in composition courses (159).

The legitimization of genre pedagogies over the last several years allows the editors to also include Christine Farris’ “Literature and Composition Pedagogy,” which they admit was “deliberately omitted [as a topic] from the first edition” because of its overuse in composition classrooms in previous decades (13). For new graduate students and writing teachers, this essay provides an important argument about viewing literature as one genre of composition in a framework such as the one in “Genre Pedagogies.” For seasoned composition scholars and teachers, inclusion of this piece will seem like an afterthought in the conversation surrounding literature in the composition classroom. However, the argument in the essay is important because it takes composition studies out of the composition vs. literature paradigm. As Farris states, “If we cannot narrow the gap between humanists and utilitarians—literacy for life vs. literacy for other disciplines and professions—we can at least offer new terms and foci as we reconsider the purpose of English, writing, and college education” (171). In this short essay, Farris makes an important call to look beyond the false binary so that composition can integrate literature just as it could another area study rather than as a defining (or “defining against”) characteristic of the field.

Expressive pedagogy is also given updated treatment in the second edition of *A Guide* in “Expressive Pedagogy: Practice/Theory, Theory/Practice” by Chris Burnham and Rebecca Powell. The revised essay takes on the critiques and critical issues in expressive pedagogy and offers a way to consider it as a heuristic, which is an overarching goal of the new edition—to view pedagogies as heuristic rather than algorithmic. While Burnham and Powell acknowledge, “[e]xpressivists share some theoretical grounding with process pedagogy,” the emphasis on abolishing theory vs. practice is aligned with much of post-process and post-pedagogy (115). As well, the piece makes a connection to “digital and multimodal pedagogy” by suggesting “practices of expressivism have experienced a revival and revision in digital

spaces” (122). Thus, this revised essay does not simply rehash expressive pedagogy but instead offers important perspective on big ideas in the field today, from process pedagogy, its pushback, and digital and multimodal pedagogy.

The essay that concluded the collection in the first edition of *A Guide*, “Technology and the Teaching of Writing,” is of course, no longer sufficient for the technological changes that have occurred during the last decade. This topic is expanded into separate essays: “New Media Pedagogy” and “Fully Online and Hybrid Writing Instruction.” Collin Brooke’s “New Media Pedagogy” essay may seem innocuous enough for traditional pedagogues at first, but Brooke’s citations of University of Florida new media scholar Gregory Ulmer and electracy [and thus implication of post(e)-pedagogy] hints at the radically new possibilities in composition studies through digital media. Although it is only referenced briefly, Gregory Ulmer’s electracy is a concept that suggests a noetic shift is occurring as we move from literacy to electracy, just as we moved from orality to literacy. By including electracy and post(e)-pedagogy in *A Guide*, the editors maintain the aim of the new collection to balance the latest research within a recognizable pedagogical framework.

The second essay related specifically to technology and writing instruction, “Fully Online and Hybrid Writing Instruction” by Beth Hewett, offers a comprehensive perspective on the subject through the lens of distance education and instructional technology history. The piece also offers numerous practical considerations for online and hybrid writing teachers by discussing time requirements, “literacy load,” modality and synchronicity, and technology availability. At the close of the essay, Hewett includes a section on valuable resources related to online writing instruction, and then in her section on the future of online writing instruction importantly emphasizes accessibility, specifically “maximum access,” as a critical consideration in the field and in higher education writ large as she suggests (207). This pragmatic piece balances well with the theoretical elements in Brooke’s “New Media Pedagogy.”

One glaring omission that even the editors acknowledge is a piece solely on multimodal composition, which should have been included considering current available research and works such as Jason Palmeri's *Remixing Composition: The History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*, among others. Still, the issues of new media and multimodal composition are frequently integrated into essays not directly concerning technology and pedagogy: "Collaborative Writing, Print to Digital" by Krista Kennedy and Rebecca Moore Howard spends much time discussing digital collaboration; "Cultural Studies and Composition" by Diana George, Tim Lockridge, and John Trimbur includes a section on new media, suggesting that "the study of new media and multimodality has pushed [cultural studies] investigations into new directions" (99); and as mentioned, even the essays on genre pedagogy and expressivist pedagogy include sections on digital and multimodal pedagogy. The overall work of the guide could certainly use more emphasis on digital media and multimodal pedagogy to make the edition stay current for more than a few years, but the collection signals a clear sense of its impact on the field of composition nonetheless.

Finally, a new article on "Second Language Writing Pedagogy" by Paul Kei Matsuda and Matthew J. Hammill is also an important addition as it contributes to the conversation concerning students at the academic margins and their instructors. "Second Language Writing Pedagogy" and the updated essay "Basic Writing Pedagogy: Shifting Academic Margins in Hard Times" by Deborah Mutnick and Steve Lamos include the latest pedagogical research and critical approaches to the study of second language and basic writing that are becoming increasingly important in discussions of writing education across the nation. The nuanced discussion of these topics is important for all composition instructors and scholars even if they do not teach ESL, developmental, or remedial courses.

The new edition of *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* builds on the success of its antecedent, and it lends credibility to the cause of using our own teaching experiences to weave the latest research

into our classrooms—from new media, post-process, and post-pedagogy, all of which find their way into these essays. Just as the editors do, teacher-scholars can weave many pedagogical approaches into their classrooms, for as fulfilled promise from its own introduction, the guide should be used as a heuristic and not an algorithm to ensure all students benefit from the instructor’s own experiences and the latest pedagogical strategies. This collection enters a completely different kairotic moment than the previous version, and the editors and authors are cognizant of discussions concerning post-pedagogy, post-process, and the importance of new media and methods of composition outside of alphabetic writing. The second edition of *A Guide* offers a breadth of coverage, range of perspectives, and conciseness not found in many texts that help new and seasoned composition teachers and scholars remain current on the climate of composition studies.

Work Cited

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