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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Thresholds

Julie J. Nichols

“**T**hreshold concepts” are the first principles of any discipline. They’re concepts that, through practice and tradition, have become “critical...for continued learning and participation in an area within a community of practice” (see Lucas et al’s review below). For AEPL members, for example, threshold concepts are that intuition, insight, and inspiration are as intrinsic to effective education as empirical data; that emotion and values inform the best teaching; and that spirituality and body wisdom are cornerstones of the learning process. Furthermore, we assume that imagery and archetypes belong in science and math classrooms, as well as that students need meditation and silence as much as they need physical education and good nutrition. These concepts are fundamental to the practices of most members of AEPL, foundations on which our research and pedagogy are based. They’re outlined on the Assembly’s web page. I didn’t make them up. They’ve never actually been called “threshold concepts,” and your list might include more or different ones, but this is surely what they are.

It’s therefore fitting that we review in this issue three stimulating volumes, exploring first, the very notion of “threshold concepts.” Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle define and exemplify the notion in *Naming What We Know*, both on its own terms and in regard to the rapidly evolving, multi-faceted discipline of Rhetoric and Composition.¹ One of the most exciting elements of this review is that it was written collaboratively by students in a capstone undergraduate writing course along with their professor, Brad Lucas of Texas Christian University. They have found the volume valuable as a key text for students and educators in the field, both as it explains 35 concepts critical to the discipline, and then as it unpacks their significance for teaching and learning. Lucas and his students point out that the notion of “threshold concepts” is itself a threshold concept, an idea that can reveal to learners on both sides of the desk a sense of what concepts have come to be seen as essential in any area of study, and what directions are now open for further exploration.

Another threshold concept for AEPL members is that reading and writing create the self. But that concept alone isn’t enough. *What* we read matters profoundly to the reader’s creation of identity, and *how* we respond to what we read matters profoundly to the reader’s psycho-spiritual development. In Maureen T. Hall’s review of Robert P. Waxler’s *The Risk of Reading*, we are reminded that narrative is a dialogical process. In other words, in narrative lies the potential for overcoming the serious disconnection from each other that threatens our distracted world. “Deep reading”—blessedly different from the “close reading” that may provide necessary surface comprehension but not always

1. Editors’ Note: The term itself is in flux. While the Modern Language Association uses “Rhetoric and Composition” for job categories and statistical tracking in the field of English, the terms “Composition Studies,” “Writing and Rhetoric,” and “Writing Studies” commonly identify similar scholarly and pedagogical categories as well as programs, departments, majors, and degrees.

psychological or emotional processing—yields soul connection via character identification and understanding, according to Waxler. Hall's volume explains the way he unpacks these concepts by analyzing nine novels and the Creation story. Not only the text's meaning, but the reader's life meaning, comes clearer through such deep reading.

But, interestingly, Gae Lyn Henderson's review of Goodson and Gill's *Critical Narrative as Pedagogy* interrogates the claim that narrative's greatest benefit is primarily the construction of a *coherent* self. A Rhetoric and Composition professor herself, Henderson believes contemporary narrative theories that *deconstruct* the self offer readers beneficial methods for interacting productively in contemporary society. Goodson and Gill explore critical narrative pedagogy as a vehicle to empower students to reimagine their worlds. Their audience includes agents of rehabilitation as well as educators in public or private institutions. They present theory and case studies; and Henderson takes them one step further. She suggests that acknowledging gaps, inconsistencies, and fragmentation may actually facilitate such reimagining (or rehabilitation). Incoherence in narrative need not be an obstacle.

This is a merciful observation, it seems to me. One of the gifts of a good review is its invitation to examine critically the implications of the theories and practices being considered. In these three reviews, scholars remind us that a conversation which includes such "threshold concepts" as narrative, reading, and writing requires our deeply engaged participation. We cannot sit on the sidelines and let others define these concepts for us.



Adler-Kassner, Linda, and Elizabeth Wardle, eds. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2015. 280 pp.

**Brad E. Lucas, Nia Brookins, Russell Hodges, Abby Long,
Ashley Madonna, Ian McKelvy, Andria Miller,
Taylor Santore, and Josh Whitehead,
Texas Christian University**

Naming What We Know is not a typical edited collection. Unique in its development, it is a long-overdue weaving together of two long-term strands in writing studies: our collective practical wisdom and the long-term results of knowledge-making in the field. Editors Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle have brought together an impressive array of experts to identify and articulate "threshold concepts" in the field of writing studies, concepts which are "critical for epistemological participation . . . for continued learning and participation in an area or within a community of practice" (2). What emerges from this collaborative creation is truly one of the best books we have for articulating "what we know" about writing. As Kathleen Blake Yancey notes in her com-

prehensive introduction, “The assumption underlying *Naming*, of course, is that the field is now established, and it thus would be a useful enterprise to consider together what it is that we do know” (xxix).

Threshold concepts emerged from the work of Jan H. F. Meyer and Ray Land, who identified effective elements in undergraduate teaching and learning in the U.K.; they realized how economists shared a set of concepts central to understanding their discipline and, by extension, how those concepts could be identified in other fields. Threshold concepts share a number of common characteristics: they are transformative (influencing who we are and how we perceive in the world); integrative (explaining phenomena and how they relate to one another); and irreversible (once understood—once someone has, in effect, crossed over the threshold—such concepts are not likely forgotten). They also involve forms of counterintuitive or “troublesome” knowledge, ideas that contribute to the common myths and misperceptions of writing (e.g., it’s widely *believed* that a singular model can be used to teach writing, but we *know* that our pedagogy must account for individual writers who have different histories, processes, and identities). Put simply, threshold concepts point to a number of central truths in writing studies, definitions crafted from a variety of perspectives—and fully cognizant of the pitfalls of working toward such definitions.

Realizing the impossibility of naming all threshold concepts in writing, the editors note that they are “comfortable identifying these final-for-now definitions of *some* of what our field knows” (4), ideas that are currently our best placeholders and guiding principles for understanding what we do and how we think. Moreover, readers are cautioned against reducing threshold concepts to some sort of answer-key to the mysteries of writing or a numbered checklist for determining or evaluating curricula, pedagogy, and practice. After all, these concepts cannot be mastered in a single class because learning them happens over time and at differing levels of understanding: “this type of learning is messy, time consuming, and unpredictable” (9).

This collection emerged out of several stages of collaboration, from summer seminars at Elon University (2011-2013) and moved to online wiki-writing sessions, as Adler-Kassner and Wardle recruited a group of 45 knowledgeable teacher-scholars in writing to work toward identifying threshold concepts central to the discipline. Consequently, this collective then identified and refined 35 concepts in the field that comprise Part I of the book—what the editors call “a sort of crowdsourced encyclopedia of threshold concepts of writing studies” (3). The pithy threshold-concepts essays, each cross-referenced to one another and limited to 1000 words, are unencumbered with the apparatus of research citations and scholarly lineage, providing readers with quick and thorough introduction to the wisdom of the field, represented by some of its most well-informed voices.

Five categories of threshold concepts comprise the first five chapters of Part I, each stemming from a singular meta-concept, “Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity.” This is a dynamic meta-concept familiar to the field but not to outsiders. The editors remind us that this meta-concept “often comes as a surprise, partially because not only people tend to experience writing as a finished product that represents ideas in seemingly rigid forms—but also because writing is often seen as a ‘basic skill’ that a person can learn once and for all and not think about again” (15). As the book progresses, the five categories (clustered into sub-concepts) walk readers through many ways to view

writing and how writing functions, from “Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity” and “Writing Speaks to Situations through Recognizable Forms” to “Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies,” all the while underscoring that “All Writers Have More to Learn” and reminding readers that “Writing is (Also Always) a Cognitive Activity.”

Altogether, Part I describes the 35 threshold concepts and why they matter to those inside and outside the field. Each contribution builds upon the others, offering a unified framework that confirms the importance of both writing studies and the roles of writing beyond the academy. For example, contributors account for the complex and unique background of writing in general, reminding readers of basic aspects of writing, such as the concept of writing as a knowledge-making activity and the ways that writing not only addresses audiences but also creates them. The book then delves deeper into the acts of agency within writing, with ideas about how “writing is not natural” and “writing involves making ethical choices.” *Naming What We Know* also addresses the complicated relationship between the writer and the reader and attempts to describe the roles of each.

As the editors assert, “If we want to actively and positively impact the lives of writers and writing teachers, we must do a better job of clearly stating what our field knows and helping others understand how to use that knowledge as they set policy, create programs, design and fund assessments, and so on” (7). To that end, Part II of the book follows the more typical genre expectations for an edited collection, approaching the *use* of threshold concepts via eight sites of writing instruction and development. The first four chapters (6-9) consider how thresholds can be used in program and curriculum design (via student learning outcomes, first-year instruction, the undergraduate major, and graduate curriculum,). The second group of chapters (10-13) focuses on ways that thresholds can be enacted across larger institutional domains (via assessment, writing centers, professional development, and writing across the curriculum).

Chapter 6 reconsiders outcomes-based learning, acknowledging that it can productively foster expectations for student learning, institutional accountability, curricular cohesiveness, and productive assessment. However, outcomes can be troubling in two ways: (1) demonstrating evidence of learning only at the end of key experiences (when the “actual learning happens between these signposts and outcomes”), and (2) over-representing writing solely as comprised of discrete skills (103). Chapter 7 considers how to introduce threshold concepts in first-year composition, not only for students to evaluate previously instilled misconceptions (and open new possibilities) in writing, but also for students to transfer their knowledge to new writing contexts beyond the first-year course. Chapter 8 reflects on threshold concepts as guidelines for writing majors and minors, contemplating them as a foundation to structure an undergraduate program and the core classes therein. Chapter 9 explains the relationship between threshold concepts and doctoral programs, using the example of the doctoral curriculum at Florida State University to illustrate how the concepts can reveal the underlying principles that have already guided these programs.

The remaining chapters in Part II extend threshold concepts beyond classroom instruction and program design. Taking up the crucial role of validity and reliability, Chapter 10 elucidates how threshold concepts can redefine the ways writing studies intersects with educational assessment. Chapter 11 explores the need for understanding

threshold concepts specific to writing centers, considering the complex negotiation of expertise practiced by tutors. Chapter 12 revolves around three teaching concepts associated with faculty professional development: (1) that threshold concepts are themselves a threshold concept; (2) that one's discipline serves both defining and restraining functions; and (3) that student learning involves demonstrating particular ways of thinking, but that familiar goal ultimately may be unreasonable to expect in any *single* course. Last, Chapter 13 stresses the importance of cross-curricular faculty understanding that writing across the curriculum is essential to improving the writing and rhetorical skills of students in various fields of study: "it is only in the careful, considered exploration of such concepts that meaningful change can begin" (216).

Because *Naming What We Know* aims to be a core source of knowledge about writing, this book is a perfect choice for a capstone course for undergraduate writing majors. Indeed, this book review was drafted in Fall 2015 by the instructor (Lucas) and the students at Texas Christian University, as we took a similar collaborative approach. In addition to its impressive breadth and collective authorial ethos, the book's detailed articulations of threshold concepts—often couched in everyday examples—make it accessible for many advanced undergraduate students. However, a few students may struggle with some of the material, pointing to complex vocabulary, redundancies, and academic tone (reinforcing, for us, the basic premise that threshold concepts cannot be simply digested in one sitting, nor in one course). The discussions range from what the authors call "the obvious but overlooked" to new and complicated ideas that are likely to make more sense as readers spend more time developing their understanding of writing studies. As this group of reviewers concludes, "It will ultimately verify what the reader believes and strengthen even more what they have learned through practice." When the instructor assigned the book in a graduate-level research-methodologies seminar the following semester, it was even more well-received, prompting several doctoral students to lament that they hadn't had access to *Naming* earlier in their careers.

The editors assert their hopes that "this collection can provide a basis for writing studies professionals to describe what we know in ways that are accessible to educated readers (and listeners) who are not necessarily specialists in our discipline" (6). For an audience unfamiliar with writings about writing, the concepts can be difficult, but working through them is part of what defines threshold concepts. Ultimately, the editors and contributors have effectively consolidated our thinking to make the ideas comprehensive, flexible, accessible, and useful for furthering our discussion regarding what we know about writing. Given the remarkable contribution of this book, it's not surprising that Utah State University Press issued a "Classroom Edition" of this book in June 2016, focused only on the content from Part I. Ultimately, *Naming What We Know* does a superb job of congregating our collective thinking, distilling what we've learned in our journey together, and preparing us to traverse the pathways before us.



Waxler, Robert P. *The Risk of Reading: How Literature Helps Us to Understand Ourselves and the World*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 200 pp.

Maureen T. Hall, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Robert Waxler was one of the keynote speakers at the summer conference of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning, June 23-26, 2016, at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. The title of the conference was “Deep Reading: Re-inventing Identity through Imagination.” Waxler’s *The Risk of Reading: How Literature Helps Us to Understand Ourselves and the World* lays out the fundamental concepts behind the conference’s themes as it examines the power of language to serve as a conduit for traveling both inward to our most private selves and outward to our communities, reminding us of the centrality of linguistic narrative to our personal and communal journeys towards understanding human identity.

Reading literature has a two-fold power; that is, it allows us to “*immerse ourselves in* and [gives us] the perspective to *distance ourselves from* experience so that we can make sense of the experience and begin to create our own story” (12, emphasis added). Waxler’s vision holds great importance in the twenty-first century in terms of connectedness, health, and well-being for self and society. His ideas resonate and align with the Socratic argument that the unexamined life is not worth living. Without reflecting on one’s life, the journey becomes one of just going through the motions and remains superficial. Conversely, Waxler highlights that reading, discussing, and writing about good literature allows an embodied opportunity for reflecting on literature, on self, and on society.

Waxler identifies a growing problem in our society: “We no longer seem to engage deeply with others or ourselves” (1). Ironically, though we perceive ourselves to be well-connected through Facebook, email, and other screen-lives, we do not connect in the most important ways, ones that helps us to keep “dialogical relationships fresh and in motion” (5). Waxler underlines how “spectacle” and “surface sensation” have become the order of the day, leaving deeper and embodied engagement in the dust. The argument is not to turn away from electronic devices, but to establish a counterculture. Reading good literature resides at the nexus of this counterculture.

In each piece of literature that Waxler unpacks for meaning, he clearly acknowledges a dialogical stance. In other words, he makes clear how each piece of literature can connect to readers’ life experiences as well as empower them to connect to new, textually-derived experiences, stretching and strengthening their capacity to explore beyond their primary personal history.

In *The Risk of Reading*, Waxler also posits the power of narrative as a potent elixir for addressing issues of disconnection from self and society. He uses well-developed

examples from the Creation story and novels by Shelley, Carroll, Conrad, Hemingway, Salinger, Kesey, Palahniuk, and Barnes. In Waxler's chapter on *Alice in Wonderland*, for example, he focuses on the "human quest for knowledge, always a passage from innocence to experience" (53). In *Wonderland*, Alice is immersed in a nonsensical world filled with strange characters, language, and ideas. In her journey to understand, Alice needs to stay open to the information she gathers from her fantastic experiences. Waxler asserts that she must "embody meaning by shaping contingency into necessity through the ongoing dialogue between 'real life' experience and language, doing and knowing, sensuous bodily movement and the telling of that movement in linguistic narrative" (61). Alice's capacity for empathy expands by "mapping her past story onto the present" (61). Although Alice does not achieve full maturity in this story, her testimony of her experiences in the King's Court shows that she is *en route* to a deeper understanding of self and others.

Likewise, Waxler's chapter on Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* analyzes the quest for human knowledge by considering how the character Santiago, is defined both as an individual and by his relationship with the boy Manolin. Santiago embodies resilience and heroic endurance—and because he does, Manolin believes in Santiago and loves him. Santiago and Manolin share a vision of fishing and of life, one that embraces the unpredictability of a journey. As Waxler puts it, they also share the belief that "You will inevitably encounter what you cannot prepare for, the unexpected and contingent experience that shapes you; and because you cannot shape it, it will destroy you. But it will not defeat you unless you allow it to" (89). Faith not fear keeps one from being defeated. Waxler points out that Santiago also models to Manolin the significance of going alone out to sea and being responsible for one's self in order "to know who you are as an individual, what you are capable of in your singularity, your uniqueness in the world" because one must know oneself in order to deeply know another (90).

At the center of Waxler's vision is how reading provides "one of the best opportunities we have today to maintain a coherent human identity and remain self-reflective individuals in a world that seems particularly chaotic and confusing" (13). In the educational sphere, "close reading" may hold sway, but instead, Waxler advocates for deep—not just close reading. Unlike close reading, which, as a part of the Common Core Standards, may help students to fully understand the information in a text, deep reading helps us to understand ourselves and our own stories.

There's nothing small about Waxler's vision as it puts trust in the power of the individual to shape a democratic society. This democratic society is a humane place, one that privileges and holds up all voices and perspectives. One cannot separate the interaction of efforts of and for oneself from the greater good of the society.

As such, Waxler reminds us that "to read deeply is always a risk" (178). And, if we call forth the courage to do this deep reading, we reap many important intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. More specifically, Waxler explains that language always holds power to make a difference; narrative provides so much more than mere information. *The Risk of Reading* invites us to take the reading journey, a trip that evokes memory and desire within us. If we accept the invitation and stay the course, Waxler makes clear just how this journey can provide passage to our interior selves and back out to our human com-

munity. He calls to us, "Take the reading risk," and we should heed this wise and hospitable advice.



Goodson, Ivor, and Scherto Gill. *Critical Narrative as Pedagogy*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 288 pp.

Gae Lyn Henderson, Utah Valley University

A secondary school art teacher, Katrina, participated in an M.A. Educational Studies seminar at a UK university, sharing with her fellow students her "river of life" learning biography. She created a giant mural depicting in art and words not only her lifetime educational experiences, but also her divorce, single-motherhood, and cancer diagnosis (221). As Katrina reflected on the pain and promise of her creation, she wrote, "I felt as if I was meeting myself for the first time. I laughed and cried, I was emotional and philosophical . . . I emptied myself and I refilled myself with images and stories" (238). Katrina had engaged in a "whole person" approach to learning through narrative, as articulated in Ivor Goodson and Scherto Gill's *Critical Narrative as Pedagogy*. As I read reflections from Katrina and other students, my reaction was, "Sign me up!" I expect many readers of *JAEPL* might want to join me in what is reported as a transformative dialogic writing seminar that allows teachers to investigate how their professional, personal, psychological, and political lives intertwine. Most important, this investigation allows students to remap or chart an imagined future course.

But would I be comfortable teaching such curriculum? Gill details in the book's final chapter how participants read, engage in dialogue, write reflectively, share oral narratives, exchange biographical vignettes, conduct research, theorize, and present final results. My courses teaching undergraduate English majors and first-year writers include many of the same activities. But one apparent difference between my courses and Gill's is in the level of critical interrogation, following Paulo Freire, with whom peer interlocutors ask questions, suggest further reading, challenge thinking, and provoke holistic, historical, social, and political associations. The deeply personal revelations that emerge, Gill reports, can help teachers reconceptualize learning goals within a dialogical group experience. But surely students, even at the graduate level, would feel intensely vulnerable in a situation that Gill admits "does resemble" group therapy (222). While she acknowledges possible "tension between the need to work with 'rigorous' scholarly practices and standards, and the perceived risk of merely being self-indulgent with emotions through 'touchy-feely' programmes" (226), she cites Freire, Parker Palmer, John Dewey, and bell hooks to assert that emotional frames provoke deeper, more integrated learning (228-29). Freire would approve. In one of his last letters, he remonstrated educators to

“make an effort . . . to narrow the distance between what we say and what we do. . . . being consistent is the final stage of our being whole” (21).

How, then, do we (always or consistently) elicit positive and supportive outcomes with such a pedagogy? The book offers additional case studies and abundant theory to help readers figure out the answer to that question. Goodson, Professor of Learning Theory at the Education Research Centre, University of Brighton, UK, and his coauthor, Gill, Research Fellow at the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace, UK, build upon a number of their previous publications dealing with narrative theory, narrative pedagogy, and dialogic pedagogy. They aim at a broad audience of educators at all levels, as well as advocates for peace and justice projects, such as prisoner rehabilitation and restorative justice. This book is part of a *Critical Pedagogy Today* series that focuses on the legacy of Freire, including books by Henry A. Giroux and other prominent educational theorists. Thus Goodson and Gill propose a narrative pedagogy for citizens in diverse contexts. They urge students, teachers, trauma victims, or prisoners not only to critically examine past experience, but also to intervene in the status quo and to construct new avenues for personal and community growth. Goodson argues, “Narratives are not just stories that search for meaning and coherences but compasses as we plot out our action in the world” (120).

In the first section of *Critical Narrative*, Gill provides a multidisciplinary review of literature in three chapters—mapping research in critical narrative, delving into why criticality has transformative potential, and arguing that critical narrative provides a creative opportunity for learners to locate their voices in larger contexts. If some readers find this theoretical section less than compelling, they may want to move directly to the remaining six chapters that tell stories of how critical narrative has been applied.

One theoretical issue that troubles the authors repeatedly is an apparent conflict between their thesis that individuals may build personal coherence by narrating life stories and contemporary theories that deconstruct notions of an essential self. Gill acknowledges that postmodernism and social construction complicate claims to universal ethics and also that individuals exist within infinitely complex contexts. Yet she asserts that such complexity does not negate the construction of “a prevailing moral vision” to ground personal meaning, as well as societal values of justice, goodness, and dignity (28). She challenges the fragmented postmodern vision of the self on a pragmatic basis: “It is impossible to imagine how he or she can act coherently” (28). Gill and Goodson insist that the potential for action is crucial, and they assert that their pedagogy motivates people to act, change, and thrive, not only personally, but also socially.

In the second section of the book, Goodson illustrates ways to critically examine personal narrative. In Chapter 4, he cites cultural critics who decry the global reach of a mainstream American culture that is narcissistic, materialist, arrogant, and ahistorical. In contrast, he discusses how certain tribal cultures (Chinese, Native American, Australian aboriginal) enact rituals of sustainability, historical identity, and ancestral connection (103–05). He proposes pedagogy that similarly fosters such rituals, describing a workshop that prompts students to answer a series of questions regarding ancestors and then imaginatively create and perform a reenactment of a great, great grandparent. Such dramatization, Goodson explains, allows participants to critically examine economic, social, and political effects faced by prior generations: “I am deeply aware from my

ancestral voices that certain groups face dispossession and displacement when new economic orders emerge" (112). Revisiting Freire's notion of "generative themes," students narratively imagine future social action through the lens of the past (120).

In Chapter 5, we find the heart of the book: Goodson and Gill converse, dialogically teasing out details of Goodson's autobiography. He explains that his father didn't read and that his Mum taught him orally, with stories (133). His entire village had "a deep distrust of schools," so he grew up "a pretty rough street kid" (134-35). When he was eight, a teacher visited his home, urging his parents to help him learn to read by buying him books (135), resulting later in his surprising success on "the 11+" exam, a feat accomplished by only one other student in his village (135-36). But his growing literacy also created emotional conflict for him. He worried about challenging his father's "sense of competence," so (perhaps unconsciously) he refused to learn skills at which his father excelled: "I still don't drive, and I'm useless with my hands . . . I hold onto these strange moments of rupture" (137-38). Because this narrative is presented conversationally, we see Gill asking clarifying questions and pushing Goodson at times to be more analytical: "How would you consider the impact of such [educational] transgression on you and your family?" (137). For Goodson, this reflective conversation provokes a process of "dis-embedding" memories and then "relocating" them—a narrative journey that continues to be "strangely ambivalent" (145-47). Out of these narrative tensions, the opportunity emerges, detailed in Chapter 6, to construct a "life theme" of meaning and motivation for action. Goodson's life theme emerges in his continuing efforts to empower working class students. The construction and reconstruction of a creative and yet critical narrative recasts "our individual perceptions . . . in a web of relationships, and indeed in social imagination" (4).

In the final chapters, educators, students, and advocates for change will find compelling case studies. Chapter 7 presents a powerful dialogue between Lebanese former combatants, one Christian, one Muslim, who listen and learn from each other to move beyond demonizing to understanding how both were heavily socialized into similar patterns of hate and distrust. In Chapter 8, prisoners in a restorative justice project narrate their progress in relating to victims' pain and in reimagining their own rehabilitation. Interested readers may also want to examine Goodson and Gill's 2011 *Narrative Pedagogy* containing additional critical dialogues between the authors, as well as further case studies and class activities.

The strength of *Critical Narrative as Pedagogy* lies in its stories, but my response to the authors is that these stories are not only powerful when their conflicts are resolved. Textual revelations of conflict, between various self-representations (past/present/future) and between self and numerous others also provoke learning. The coherent self, narratively primed to change the world, may indeed be the result of this pedagogy, but the incoherent self who can nonetheless narrate and acknowledge inconsistency may also be a valuable outcome. As Katrina points out, "I may never realise my dreams, but it is the journey that matters" (238).



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