

Publishing with the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal*

GWRJ Editors

The *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* is published by the Illinois State University Writing Program, Joyce R Walker, Editor and Kristi McDuffie, Associate Editor.

Our Mission Statement

The *GWRJ* is dedicated to publishing work by writers and scholars whose work investigates the practices of people writing (and acting) in different writing situations and in a variety of different genres. We encourage both individuals and groups to submit work that studies and explores the different ways that writers learn how to write for different genres and in different settings, not just within the boundaries of academia, but in all kinds of settings where writing happens. Because we identify as “writing research” any type of composition that endeavors to uncover new information about how people work with writing or how writing works, a wide range of techniques and styles of writing might be applicable. For example, a first person narrative, an informal conversation about writing, a formal study of writing, or even an artistic production could all be useful techniques for developing a *GWRJ* article. However, accepted articles will be informed by either primary research into writing behaviors and activities and/or by scholarship in the field of writing studies that addresses theories of how people learn to compose in different situations.

Submissions

Articles can be submitted to the *GWRJ* at any time, although we do have deadlines for responding to work and selecting articles for upcoming issues (see below). Contact the Associate Editor at grassrootswriting@gmail.com with queries about possible submissions and to submit your work.

Queries and Drafts

The *GWRJ* has a strong commitment to working with interested authors to help them to prepare for publication. So if you think you have what might be a good idea, but are not sure how to proceed, please contact us. One of our editorial staff will be happy to work with you one-on-one to develop your idea and/or article.

Deadlines

Although articles, queries, and drafts can be submitted at any time, these are suggested deadlines for the production of the 4.2 (Spring 2014) and 5.1 (Fall 2014) issues:

January 15, 2013	Submit articles by this date for priority consideration for Issue 4.2.
October 1, 2013	Submit articles by this date for priority consideration for Issue 5.1.

Citation

GWRJ articles should always provide citations for published works that are mentioned. However, in keeping with our flexible and open consideration of the term “scholarship,” we do not stipulate the use of a specific style of citation for articles. While some *GWRJ* articles will lend themselves to one of the common academic citation styles, like MLA or APA, other articles may use a more journalistic style of citation or endnotes for important citation information. However, all published texts (scholarship, works of art, etc.) referenced in any *GWRJ* article must be cited in some way that allows readers to refer to the cited work. Additionally, any primary research into the composing practices of individuals and groups must have appropriate permissions in order to be published. (Usually, this means having participants sign a consent form that we provide.)

Style and Tone

Because we encourage so many different kinds of textual production and research in the *GWRJ*, issues of appropriate style and tone can be complicated. However, we can offer some basic style criteria for authors to consider:

1. The readership of the *GWRJ* is **writers**. It is not “students,” or “ENG 101 students,” despite the fact that it is used as the “textbook” for English 101. *GWRJ* articles should attempt to provide valuable content to writers who are engaged in the activity of “learning how to learn about” genres. Our readers may be ISU students, staff, or faculty, but they might also be members of the wider Bloomington-Normal community or beyond.
2. “Teacher Narratives” are not acceptable as *GWRJ* articles. We are interested in material that looks at literate activities from the position of a “writer” or a “researcher,” but articles that discuss ways to “teach” people about writing are not appropriate for this journal.
3. However, many of our readers are both writers and students at ISU (in either ENG 145 or ENG 101). This means that articles that focus on learning that happens in school are considered appropriate (see the section on “School and Society” for more information).
4. Language and style that is overly formal or “academic” may be difficult or unappealing to our readers.
5. A tone that situates the author as a “master” writer is often problematic. (We call these “success” narratives, which are often how-to type articles, where the focus is on the author’s learned expertise.) Authors need to be careful to remember that no one “learns” a genre completely or in completely simple way. So while writers (especially of first-person narratives) may write about successes, they need to complicate the genres with which they are working.
6. Tone or content that situates the reader as a certain kind of writer (whether as a master or novice), with certain kinds of shared experiences, can be problematic, because the readership of the journal constitutes a wide variety of writers with different writing abilities and experiences.
7. Whenever possible, articles should make use of published research about writing practices, but the research should be incorporated into the text in a relevant and accessible way so that readers who are not used to reading scholarly research can still benefit from the references.
8. Articles are usually not strictly theoretical; while theoretical perspectives are useful, it’s important for authors to think about how to make the theories applicable (in practical ways) to our readers.

9. Articles should be as specific as possible about the genre or set of writing activities they are studying. Generalized studies or discussions of “writing” are not encouraged. Additionally, examples of “writing-in-progress” are always encouraged, and are often necessary for articles to be useful to our readers.

Subject Matter

Almost any type of situation where texts are being conceived, produced, and used could potentially be an appropriate topic for a *GWRJ* article. Examples of genres that could be studied can be found almost anywhere, and when authors consider the situations and activities in which genres are produced/distributed/used, the possible range of subjects and situations become almost infinitely variable. Focusing topics as narrowly as possible can be useful, and direct experience with (or observation of) certain kinds of writing situations tends to be a good way to narrow an article’s focus. Thus, Amy Hick’s article on playlists, “Scroll-Point-and-Click Composition?” (Volume 2.1, pages 25-30), is an excellent example of a fairly narrow genre that is nevertheless interesting and complex. Authors might also investigate a rhetorical effect or strategy or a particular textual practice that extends across genres. These can be fascinating articles, but keeping them *narrowly* defined can be more difficult.

Media, Mode, and Copyright Issues

The *GWRJ* can publish both visual and digital texts. We encourage multimodal texts, including still images, audio, video, and hypertexts. However, authors working in these technologies need to be careful about copyright issues as we cannot publish any kinds of materials that may result in copyright infringement. We can sometimes seek copyright permissions, but in the case of materials such as works of art or graphics/images owned by large companies, this is often not possible. This is true for print-based articles that use images as well. We can, however, include materials that are covered by Fair Use; see <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html> for Fair Use guidelines. Also, video/audio of research subjects can require special kinds of permission processes. So you should contact the *GWRJ* editors before beginning this kind of work. Research using subjects who are considered “protected” populations (people under 18 and people with mental disabilities, among others) are not acceptable for *GWRJ* articles unless the author has received approval from Illinois State University (or another institution) for Human Subjects research.

Honoraria

The *GWRJ* offers an honorarium of \$50.00 for each article published in a print issue of the *GWRJ*. [Note: The *GWRJ* may publish multimodal pieces that will be “introduced” in the print edition with a link to where the sites are housed on our server. These multimodal pieces would also be eligible for an honorarium.] In addition to the print edition, we are also beginning to publish an archive of “*GWRJ* writing research” articles, which may include articles in addition to those featured in our print issues. Authors may be invited to submit their work to this archive, which would still be considered a publication in the journal, but would not include an honorarium payment.

Research in School and Society

Many of the genres that are assigned in our classrooms at ISU might be interesting as the subject of study, keeping in mind that even among classrooms in the same department there might be wide variations among genre expectations and requirements. Other kinds of social communications that happen throughout university settings (like emails between instructors and students, or documents created by social groups on campus) might be interesting as well. The *GWRJ* is particularly interested studies of “research genres” (genres that use primary or secondary research as a core component), partly because we want to challenge the notion that “research papers” are a coherent genre, and partly because we know that “researched writing” is a type of literate activity that is very important to the mission and goals of universities, including ISU. However, we are also interested in research studies related to many other kinds of genres that can be found at ISU. The same is true for genres outside of the university; almost any genre could potentially be interesting as the subject of study.

Personal Narrative (or Not?)

A review of our current and archived articles reveals that many of our existing articles are written in a personal tone, that is, they use first person (“I”) and include personal stories and experiences. Some of our articles are actually “personal narratives” (with a clear relationship to genres such as memoir or creative non-fiction). For example, Hilary Selznik’s article “Researching one in Six Million” (Volume 2.1, pages 83-88), is very similar to a creative non-fiction story in many ways. Although we do encourage a relatively informal register for all articles, and while we are happy to publish

personal narratives about writing experiences, we do want to stress that articles need not be written as first-person accounts, nor do they need to be written only about the author's experiences. Studies of the writing of others are equally as important work that relates a single, personal perspective, and, in addition, the *GWRJ* would like to encourage writing research that looks beyond the personal.