***Expanding Literate Landscapes: Persons,
Practices, and Sociohistoric Perspectives of
Disciplinary Development***

Kevin Roozen and Joe Erickson (2017)

Computers and Composition Digital P/Utah State UP,
2017. Web.

Reviewed by Mary Lourdes Silva

Expanding Literate Landscapes: Person, Practices, and Sociohistoric Perspectives of Disciplinary Development focuses on the literate histories, practices, and engagements of five learners in their disciplinary development across various literate landscapes. As suggested by the title, Roozen and Erickson aim to *expand* researchers' and scholars' conception of a disciplinary territory by examining the interplay of disciplinary socialization, writing, and learning with prior and transversal literate engagements. The authors contend that the disciplinary maps of learners and professionals are incomplete without careful attention to the heterogeneous landscapes that people traverse and the literate histories of individuals and the engagements that shaped their identities.

In Chapter 1, Roozen and Erickson challenge the dominant narrative and methodology of mapping disciplinary writing development. In the literature, disciplinary writing development has been constructed as a socially situated practice in which new members move along a linear trajectory toward the center of disciplinary knowledge and activity,

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adopting the shared values of the community by engaging with disciplinary genres, practices, and material and symbolic text. Roozen and Erickson contend that researchers who map such disciplinary development omit non-disciplinary literate histories and would identify a literate activity such as creative writing, for instance, as a separate territory in a nurse's uptake of her role as a writer of medical genres and discourse.

Chapter 2 explains the theoretical and methodological approaches used in the qualitative case study of five participants, explaining in detail five central tenets of mediated discourse analysis:

- Action is mediated by a dynamic, continually in-the-making heterogeneous nexus of practice;
- Practice is situated along historical trajectories stretching across multiple nexus;
- Historical trajectories of practice involve resemiotization;
- Re-use across nexus is central to the development of practice; and
- Re-use across nexus is central to the development of persons and social worlds. (p. 2.03)

The case study design included a mixed method approach, such as interviews, follow-up interviews, collection of sample texts, and observations (samples of interviews and text are included in the book). In capturing the literate histories of five participants, referred to as co-researchers in the book (a rising journalist, rhetorician, creative writer, nurse, and engineer), the authors paid close attention to participant narratives about difficulties learning something new. The historical trajectories of the five learners focus on social practices and representational media that are transformed and remediated across different sites of engagement, but the authors stress that the mapping of literate histories only provides us with a partial perspective of the expanding literate landscape.

The next five chapters of the book, Chapters 3 to 7, provide a detailed portrait of each of the five co-researchers from different disciplines and literate social worlds. Each case study begins with a description of a co-researcher engaged with text within some social rhetorical situation, whether it be academic or nonacademic. Each of the chapters include samples of representational media from the co-researchers' literate histories, such as an award-winning essay written by Charles, a journalism major; a drawing of Kate's favorite characters from the play titled *Everyman*; an excerpt of a creative nonfiction piece by Lindsey, which was written for a graduate course and included an arrangement of prose and handwritten images; an extract of a flowchart that nurse Terry used to chart a patient's health history; and samples of Excel tables and formulas created by Alexandra, a civil engineering major. Although the starting

point may vary for each co-researcher, the authors do a fine job narrating the historical trajectory of each writer's disciplinary development and mapping the complex nexus of literate activities and social engagements that traversed various landscapes. At the end of each chapter, Roozen and Erickson synthesize and analyze each case study drawing from the theories presented in Chapters 1 and 2 and in comparison with the other case studies.

In Chapter 8, Roozen and Erickson examine six conclusions from the case studies:

- Pathways of disciplinary development are heterogeneously situated and complexly mediated
- Pathways of disciplinary development are shaped by synergies and tensions among heterogeneous practices
- Pathways of disciplinary practice are also pathways of disciplinary identity
- Relationships among literate engagements are dialogic
- The linkings of practice reflect and contribute to the linkings of social worlds
- Representing the richness of disciplinary writing, learning, and socialization requires attention to a full range of representational media. (p. 8.02)

The chapter closes with a discussion about the implications for researchers and teachers, sharing sample activities.

I found the curricular descriptions intriguing and would have liked to have seen links to sample syllabi and student work. Although this ebook is available on the web for free and includes images and videos of primary data, allowing researchers to view writing samples and snippets of interviews, a visually impaired student identified to me several accessibility problems for visually impaired readers, including a play button that was not labeled and some confusions with drop-down menus.

Despite these limitations, I would highly recommend this book for Writing Studies and Literacy Studies scholars, researchers, and students alike. The five case studies are readable and relevant to their own complex literate histories. For example, reading how nurse Terri's rejection of the dehumanizing effect of medical language has shaped her religious writings and creative works reminded me of my role as a martial arts instructor during my undergraduate years. I maintained a daily journal to prepare for each class, which often began with a brief sermon about living a virtuous life. At the time, I would not have perceived these daily narratives, which I learned to construct by listening to my own sense; as relevant to the academic essays or poems that I was assigned to write as an English major,

nor would I have realized the connection between that teaching journal and the one I currently maintain, nearly 20 years later, as a Writing professor. Roozen and Erickson call for a new curriculum that explores writing in and outside the classroom and asks students to acknowledge the tacit links between literate activities and landscapes. The five cases studies can be shared with writing students as a text that underscores the complexly rich lives of writers.

About the author

Mary Lourdes Silva is an associate professor and former Director of First-Year Composition at Ithaca College. She received a doctoral degree in Language, Literacy, and Composition Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her current research examines the citation practices of first-year college writing students; pedagogical use of multimodal and multimedia technologies and practices in the classroom; and the implementation of institutional ePortfolio assessment. She has published in the *International Journal of ePortfolio*, *Writing Research Across Borders Conference Volume III*, *The New Digital Scholar: Exploring and Enriching the Research and Writing Practices of NextGen Students*, and *Computers and Composition*.