

**Call for Proposals**  
***Race and Racism in Writing Assessment***  
(an edited collection)

**Call for the Collection**

The editors of this collection ask for chapter proposals that consider issues of race and racism in college writing assessments. For instance, can our current theories and practices of writing assessment serve the changing face of higher education? Are the methods that we currently use really the best ones to assess the literacies of our diverse students? What about new technologies of assessment such as machine scoring and directed self-placement (DSP)? And what about the expectations that students bring to tests, the uses (and abuses) of test scores, and the machinery of testing systems that “inevitably” track students along certain educational paths?

The editors invite you to consider proposing an essay, scholarly piece, classroom study, or research article. Chapters may consider all aspects of writing assessment, including histories of assessment practices, test design, administrative policies, program applications of test outcomes, machine scoring, validation studies, discursive or genre functions of assessment, or other closely related work. Our goal is to begin new dialogues about writing assessment, ones that go beyond simplistic explanations about racial achievement gaps, ethnic literacies, or cultures of deficit.

All submissions should discuss or inquire specifically about racial formations (race/ethnicity), racism in writing assessments, or commiserate issues such as the intersections of socio-economic status, gender, and race. We are most interested in newer empirical studies that inquire into race/ethnicity and racism in writing programs, or scholarly essays that discuss writing assessment theory alongside frameworks that highlight racial formations, such as critical race theory, whiteness studies, multiculturalism, racial identity development, anti-racist pedagogy, post-colonial theory, or comparative rhetorics. We also want to encourage international or cross-national studies that complicate our discussions of racial/ethnic identity and literacy testing.

The primary audience for this collection will be U.S. Writing Studies scholars, educational assessment researchers, writing teachers and writing program administrators. Additionally we are encouraging international submissions.

Currently, contributors for this collection who have already agreed to offer either chapters or responses to sections of chapters are: Chris Anson, Wayne Au, Valerie Balester, Elisabeth Bautier, Adam Banks, Bill Condon, Tom Fox, Keith Gilyard, Anne Herrington, Malea Powell, Victor Villanueva, and Morris Young.

**Background and Context**

According to statistics from the 2005 U.S. Census Bureau,<sup>1</sup> 45% of children under the age of 5 are of color. In fact, the National Center for Educational Statistics’ 35th edition of *Projections of Educational Statistics to 2016* (2007) reports that by 2016 enrollment in degree-granting institutions will increase in the following ways:

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. Available at <http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/dynamic/RACEHO.pdf>

- 8% for Whites
- 29% for Blacks
- 45% for Hispanics
- 32% for Asian or Pacific Islanders
- 34% for American Indians or Alaska Natives
- 15% for nonresident aliens

Not only will U.S. college students increasingly be of color, but internationally, many other countries are experiencing major changes in cultural diversity with influxes of immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Such demographic changes have and will continue to have a major impact on educational systems. The changing demographics of educational systems also raise important questions about current educational practices, in particular the assessment of writing. For example, given the U.S. history of racial inequality and our understanding of the way that assessment has historically reasserted those inequalities, how do the new demographics of U.S. universities affect, or should affect, the ways that we assess students' literacies? How does diversity, as a global set of racial formations, in schools complicate and require new ways to see socio-economic status, language proficiency and attainment, and education policy? How can the scholarship and research on racialized rhetorics, racial histories, and language diversity in the classroom offer productive, new ways to theorize, practice, understand, and validate writing assessments in higher education? This collection, we hope, will address these important writing assessment needs and composition studies issues.

### **Collection's Organization and Guiding Themes**

The collection will be organized around the following sections, which we offer as a guide for submissions:

#### *Rac(ism) in Assessment Histories*

- How is the racialized history of literacy testing affected writing assessment, its purposes, its instruments, and the use of test results?
- How might the history of literacy testing be understood as a series of racial projects that shape the racism we see today?
- How might whiteness, as a discourse or set of linguistic dispositions, construct writing assessments, its instruments or codes, or its purposes?
- What groups have been historically "lost" in discussions about race and writing assessment? What about Appalachian whites, Cajuns, or Asian Pacific Americans, for example? What purpose does it serve to erase these groups from national debates about literacy standards?

#### *Rac(ism) in Assessment Theory*

- How has the assessment literature attempted to address the issue of race or racism? What about in discussions of task design, topic selection, inter-rater reliability, or consequential validity?
- How are writing assessments constructed, or been constructed, by racial formations in local and national sites?
- What does the theory, history, or practices of writing assessment look like through the lens of critical race theory or other theories of racial identity?

### *Rac(ism) in Classroom Assessment Practices*

- What racial formations occur as a result of particular writing assessment practices in the classroom?
- In what ways does racial bias operate in students or teachers in classroom writing assessment?
- How do teachers' expectations affect the way writing is assessed in the classroom?
- What might be done to counter racism in classroom assessment practices?

### *Rac(ism) in Writing Program Administrations*

- How are race and ethnic categories accounted for in local writing assessments, their validation studies, test results, or consequences?
- How do racial categories inform the construction of writing assessments, the instruments used, and/or decisions made?
- Where is race in writing across the curriculum assessments? What might writing assessment and racial identity have to do, for example, with the "pipeline problem" in STEM?
- How does race or racism affect or factor in writing centers and tutoring programs?

### *Rac(ism) in Community, Literacy, and Immigration*

- How does race or racism operate in community-based literacy projects and writing projects?
- How is racial identity constructed in news accounts of test scores, education, literacy (crises?), and classrooms?
- How is racism encoded in other debates such as English-only laws, bilingual education, and related immigration issues?

## **Editors and Timeline**

The editors of this collection are Asao B. Inoue (California State University, Fresno) and Mya Poe (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). All inquiries may be emailed to either editor at [ainoue@csufresno.edu](mailto:ainoue@csufresno.edu) or [myapoe@MIT.EDU](mailto:myapoe@MIT.EDU).

## **Proposal Details and Contact Info**

All proposals are due by August 1, 2008 to Asao B. Inoue ([ainoue@csufresno.edu](mailto:ainoue@csufresno.edu)) by email attachment. All accepted proposed chapters will be determined by Aug 30, 2008, and writers will be notified shortly thereafter. All review drafts for chapters will be due by Jan 01, 2009 emailed to Asao B. Inoue ([ainoue@csufresno.edu](mailto:ainoue@csufresno.edu)). All submissions will undergo a double-blind review before acceptance.

All proposals should be 2-4 pages (around 600-1,200 words) and provide the following information: a proposed title for your chapter, an abstract, and the author's contact information, title, and institutional affiliation. Authors of accepted proposals will be notified and sent chapter style guidelines. Full chapters will be in APA style.