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Special Issue

L2 Writing and Personal History: Meaningful Literacy in the Language Classroom

Guest Editor: David Hanauer, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

It is my pleasure to introduce to you the guest editor of this third Special Issue of *L2 Journal* on *L2 Writing and Personal History: Meaningful Literacy in the Language Classroom*. I have known David Hanauer for a number of years since he migrated with his family to the United States. I first became familiar with his work when I was co-editor of *Applied Linguistics* and Martin Bygate and I were happy to publish his trailblazing article "The task of poetry reading and second language learning" in *Applied Linguistics* 22:3 (2001), which has inspired many of the contributors to this issue. David then organized a colloquium at the AAAL 2002 meeting in Salt Lake City on "Interpreting applied linguistics through the prism of literature" that provided the impetus for a special issue of the *Canadian Modern Language Review* 60:1 (2003) on "Literature and Applied Linguistics: New perspectives" of which he was the guest editor. The paper he contributed to that issue, "Multicultural moments in poetry: The importance of the unique" was a pre-run to his lovely monograph *Poetry and the Meaning of Life* that was published in 2004. Since then David has continued to explore the benefits of including poetry, literary narrative and creative writing in the teaching of English as a second or a foreign language.

When David approached me two years ago and offered to guest edit a special issue of *L2 Journal* on the use of personal narratives as both a research and a learning practice in the language classroom, I was delighted. We had had two successful special issues since the launching of the *L2 Journal* in 2009 - one on "New approaches to exploiting film in the foreign language classroom" (Guest editor: Mark Kaiser, 2011) and the other that we were preparing on "History and memory in foreign language study" (Editor: Claire Kramsch, 2012). I thought an issue on the role of personal narratives of individual and collective memory, social and cultural experience would nicely continue in the line of research featured by the *L2 Journal*. David drafted a call for papers and the response was enthusiastic. The papers we ended up selecting are rich, moving and enlightening testimonies to the transformative power of learning another language and making it your own.

I wish to thank David for enriching our *L2 Journal* with this important topic. I hope this special issue is as much an inspiration to our readers as David's work has been an inspiration to many of the papers presented here.

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