

**Guglielmo, Letizia, and Lynée Lewis Gaillet, eds. *Contingent Contingent Faculty Publishing in Community: Case Studies for Successful Collaborations*. Palgrave, 2015. 138 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-137-49161-9.**

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Working in academia is undoubtedly a challenge in terms of balancing teaching, scholarship, and service. Contingent faculty—adjunct instructors, non-tenure track (NTT) lecturers, and graduate students—are arguably at an even greater disadvantage in terms of time, compensation, and resources. With increasing teaching loads taken on in an effort to make a living wage, the thought of doing research, scholarship, and academic publishing can be quite daunting.

Yet the situation might not be so dire, as argued throughout the edited collection *Contingent Faculty Publishing in Community: Case Studies for Successful Collaborations* by Letizia Guglielmo and Lynée Lewis Gaillet. This collection consists of eight full essays and four vignettes from professors, adjunct faculty, graduate students, and scholars from around the country. Offering creative yet practical methods for getting published as a contingent faculty member, the editors also respond to a call by the Boyer Commission to create scholarship relevant both inside and outside the classroom. All of the essay contributions, as the editors note, discuss “ways in which faculty members can work together and in the process redefine faculty work and better serve their students and local communities” (ix). This collection is specifically written for contingent faculty.

The concept of community is key here to understanding the collection. Yet the authors of the essays do not pretend that the publishing environment is easy. In the first essay, “The New Faculty Majority: Changing Conditions and a Changing Scholarly Publication Environment,” Eileen E. Schell at first relays a seemingly bleak, yet realistic insight into current trends in higher education: the growth of contingent faculty and administrators. She explains that “as higher education expanded its reach and opened its doors to many students

in late 1960s and 1970s, many institutions experienced precipitous growth and hired contingent faculty as a stop-gap measure to cover the demand for teachers of lower-division courses” (7). This in turn laid the groundwork for a surge in contingent faculty whose primary purpose—from an institutional viewpoint—was to teach, and not to engage in scholarly research. Schell notes:

As the layers of administration have increased, the layers of faculty with stable working conditions and decent pay have decreased, and we have seen over the years raising tuition and fee rates for students as state legislatures continue to shift responsibility for higher education from the taxpayers and the state to individual students and their families. (8)

For readers, this first chapter could either discourage or reaffirm their feelings about contingency in higher education. However, Schell goes on to say that “just as we need to shore up and rebuild our nation’s crumbling infrastructure—bridges, railways, and roads—we need to shore up our crumbling faculty infrastructure to maintain and advance our system of higher education” (9). This would, of course, involve opportunities for all faculty to engage in scholarship. She asks whether “publication be pursued for intrinsic motivations and the knowledge creation that might gain no immediate tangible professional reward” (11), noting that “academic publication is material, intellectual, and emotional labor” (12). Indeed, the perspective of many overworked faculty might be one of complacency about academic publication.

Moving beyond the state of academic publication and contingency, the following chapters discuss ways instructors can get published without sacrificing time devoted to teaching. Kimberly Harrison and Ben Lauren’s “Casting NTT Faculty as Practitioner-Researchers: Using Research Opportunities to Enhance Teaching, Service, and Administrative Assignments” describes just this scenario. Here Harrison and Lauren discuss the intrinsic ties with scholarly research and teaching. They write that the key differences between practitioners and scholars/researchers are that the former apply

knowledge, while the latter create it (22). Without the creation of new knowledge in the classroom, our composition pedagogy could certainly fall flat. This explains the crucial ties between scholarship and teaching: While scholarship influences teaching, teaching can create new scholarship.

Though scholarly research and publication is needed for continuing pedagogical innovations, Harrison and Lauren offer some cautionary points. First, they claim that “the danger of developing your scholarly ethos is that you might get more work than you can responsibly handle” (30). While gaining multiple scholarly opportunities is exciting both personally and professionally, the time commitment involved can derail the whole process. This is especially a concern for contingent faculty who might work longer hours.

Specifically, Lauren identifies what he calls a “planning fallacy,” which means “that many academics plan (and want) to do more than can be realistically accomplished” (32). For instructors, this can perhaps raise further questions of how faculty can realistically plan scholarship opportunities—are these really planned after all, or do they come up spontaneously in the classroom? Depending on the project at hand, IRB could pose additional challenges.

The next three essays discuss other ways that current work obligations can also be utilized as opportunities for scholarship. In “Knotworking with the National Writing Project: A Method for Professionalizing Contingent Faculty,” Stephanie West-Puckett, Kerri Bright Flinchbaugh, and Matthew S. Herrmann discuss the ways in which the National Writing Project brought about opportunities for collaboration and a way of untying the “knot” in which contingent faculty members often feel they are trapped. The authors share reflections about their collaborative efforts and how they feel writing should be an opportunity to work together.

In their essay “Legal Tender or Counterfeit Currency: Organizing a Conference off the Tenure Track,” Gwendolynne Reid, Bridget R. Kozlow, Susan Miller-Cochran, and Chris Tomelli offer a behind-the-scenes analysis of a recently organized conference led by NTT faculty. They also explore the question of whether such

efforts are worthwhile in the increasingly competitive academic marketplace. While the authors do not advocate for conference organization and chairing with no end goals in sight, they do highlight some of the benefits. Among these include, “interaction with writing scholars from around the country, intense reading on a particular topic, and collaboration with colleagues in one’s home department and with academic publishers” (67).

Next, Chris Blankenship’s essay “Opportunities in Assessment: Making Your Service Your Scholarship” suggests how instructors can make service, teaching, and research go hand-in-hand. As Blankenship points out, “assessment has come to signify an onerous process that often seems disconnected from our daily work with students” (79). While assessment is often an arduous process, Blankenship argues that it can potentially lead to research opportunities, which can then in turn question our traditional assessment tools and make room for improvements.

Of course, time is of the essence for tenured or tenure-track faculty in terms of finding research and publication opportunities within teaching, but Blankenship points out how this can be even more challenging for non-tenure track teachers. The classes taught by NTT instructors “are often lower-level, general education offerings that represent some of the most heavily-scrutinized and assessed courses, yet they simultaneously comprise the courses and faculty receiving the least institutional support” (79). Like other authors in this collection, Blankenship encourages a focus on research opportunities that already exist in the classroom, a key takeaway for instructors at all levels of their careers.

Overall, a large argument made by the collection is that getting published does not have to become an undertaking of one’s own. Essays such as Julia A. Watson and Leslie Worrell Christianson’s “Born-Digital Work: Opportunities for Collaboration and Career Growth” and Melissa Keith, Jennifer Black, Stephanie Cox, and Jill Marie Heney’s “Into Active Voice: Seeking Agency through Collaborative Scholarship” argue that collaboration can bring about realistic publication opportunities while also building a sense of community among contingent faculty. As a bonus, these two essays

were written collaboratively, thus serving as potential models for others who wish to embark on a collaborative project.

Digital and multimodal work is indeed part of the future of writing studies. According to Watson and Christianson, “contingent faculty may risk missing an opportunity to move their careers and scholarship forward if they do not participate in born-digital work” (103). While acknowledging that not all instructors may consider themselves “techy,” Watson and Christianson also note the great deal of research and scholarship opportunities within digital spaces. Indeed, Watson and Christianson acknowledge the trendiness of digital education, writing how “enrollment in online programs has grown at a greater rate than in education overall” (95). Rather than being intimidated by the idea of born-digital work, they call for us to embrace these opportunities for teaching *and* publication opportunities.

Of course, online teaching brings with it challenges, especially for contingent faculty. It is important to determine whether the teaching materials are copyrighted in an online course (especially if an instructor’s contract is work-for-hire). As the authors note: “Unfortunately, the teacher exception does not hold water when it comes to content created in the context of online teaching” (97). This can create difficulties—if the institution owns an instructor’s assignments created for an online course, copyright issues may result. As Watson and Christianson note: “The control and ownership issues surrounding online learning signify a potential barrier to innovation” (99). Indeed, if an instructor is not able to do anything with their work outside of an online classroom space, then they are unlikely to put as much effort into creating new assignments designated for the particular course—why would they, if the assignments could become copyright of the institution?

Finally, the authors discuss the future role of the peer review process when it comes to digital scholarship. They write:

Contingent faculty should be aware that born-digital publication may sometimes be deemed nonscholarly (at best) or unscholarly (at worst). Critics balk at the absence of peer

review, but some scholars argue that the open review model provides ample review from the community of practice. (101)

The perception of digital publishing is indeed changing. *Kairos* and *Digital Rhetoric Collaborative* are just two examples of digital scholarly journals that are as valuable as their traditional (print) counterparts. This raises the question of other digital opportunities, such as online popular sources, and whether they can garner some merit for instructors looking to get published.

Keith, Black, Cox, and Heney suggest that collaboration ought to be a mainstream means to publish in academia. Regarding their own experiences, the authors write: “Essentially, we stopped waiting for people within the power structure to help us and claimed the right to help ourselves” (109). Instead of waiting for tenure and the subsequent opportunities for scholarship, they found their own opportunities by working together. Collaboration, the authors argue, is perhaps even more of an opportunity for contingent faculty, who write “[b]ecause we are free from tenure-bound expectations of publishing, we are free to ignore hierarchy and outside expectations” (115). Through a discussion of their own collaborative efforts, the authors also discuss how they “were willing to take those risks precisely because of our contingent status” (112). Aside from a lower perceived risk with collaboration, the authors also point out how the process can foreground scholarly partnerships. They state that “the marginal status of contingent faculty does not have to be a source of dissatisfaction and disengagement: if we come together with like-minded colleagues, it can instead be a source of opportunity” (107).

Despite their innovation and strong arguments via collaboration, one might question whether this is a sound plan if a contingent faculty member ever wants to transition into a tenure-track position. In addition to collaborative work, many institutions encourage individual publications, especially if an instructor wants to be hired on as a tenure-track faculty member. However, the authors seem to dismiss this point, writing:

Although contingent faculty do not have the opportunity to work toward tenure, we can work toward a scholarly reputation, and, like our tenure-track (TT) colleagues, can use research and publication as a means of confirming our scholarly identity, which can lead to greater satisfaction with our work. (108)

Indeed, this could be a great solution for contingent faculty who do not plan on moving into tenured positions.

The last essay in the collection offers contingent faculty strategies to stay focused on writing so they can make their way to publication. In “Applications: A Practical Guide for Employing Habits of Mind to Foster Effective Writing Activities,” Nicholas Behm and Duane Roen offer some tips to help scholars get into the writing mindset. They argue that “this process of writing to inquire invokes the rhetorical canon of invention in that it inherently encourages writers to seek diligently for ways in which they can contribute to the scholarly conversation on a topic” (120) and that “effective and productive writers cultivate and exercise persistence when writing about difficult, research-intensive academic topics” (124). In a nutshell, Behm and Roen argue here that one must push through and make some sacrifices to get published—circling us back to the first essay by Schell.

One of the questions raised by the Watson and Christianson piece is answered here in terms of writing outside of traditional academic publications. Behm and Roen call on faculty to “write for the general public. If every faculty member wrote even occasionally for the general public, citizens and policy makers would possess a better understanding of what academics do and why that work benefits the community” (129). This is certainly kairotic as program budgets are potentially at greater risk when the public lacks an understanding about what academics really *do* and *why* they are valuable outside of the academy.

*Contingent Faculty Publishing in Community* also includes four vignettes published throughout the book. Among these include Victoria Armour-Hileman’s “Gender, Contingency, and the

Productivity Puzzle,” Meghan Griffin’s “Symbiotic Collaboration and a \$0.00 Budget,” Tiffany Bouelle’s “Working Smarter: Mentoring and Scholarly Teaching,” and Marcia Bost’s “Discourse Groups and Scholarly Voice.” Collectively, these shorter pieces offer personal insights and advice on overcoming the many challenges contingent faculty face when trying to get their research published.

Overall, *Contingent Faculty Publishing in Community* offers practical tips for writing teachers who want to get published—from graduate students to adjunct faculty working at various institutions and non-tenure track instructors with large classes and workloads. It can at first be discouraging to read the current state of contingency, yet the majority of the essays offer faculty the methods to break through the system without letting their own scholarly voices get lost in the shuffle. In a nutshell, the whole idea here is to “work smarter, not harder.”