



## Introduction

### Teaching Peace: On The Frontlines of Non-Violence

How do you teach peace during a war on terror?  
The short answer is constantly.

Over the past year, I have been struck by the ways in which a commitment to peace seems to permeate almost every aspect of work in our field. This issue of *Reflections* has given me access to a constant stream of anecdotes, stories, poems, essays, and photographs by scholars, activists and students working for peace across the country. Reading this work has shown me that while each of their experiences reflected a commitment by an individual, it also represented a commitment by a community to create a process by which conflicts could be resolved without violence. In doing so, each experience also captured the individuals' and communities' sense that such work was always incomplete—each success being a stark reminder that there is always more to be done. Working for peace is decidedly a humbling experience.

In this issue of *Reflections*, we offer, then, no superhuman stories. Rather, this collection of essays demonstrates the ways in which a commitment to peace requires individuals to build communities that link our careers, our students, and our neighbors around projects which make small interventions into the local and global conflicts which define our time. Through stories on how to combat domestic violence, planting peace poles on campus, and founding international peace institutes, we feature pedagogies and partnership models that can support your own work. In doing so, we also present the personal toll that such work takes on its participants. The authors in this collection have faced community protests, administrative antipathy, and personal harassment. Their ability to persevere speaks to the courage many in our field exhibit on a daily basis. So while we offer no superhuman stories, we hope that, collectively, these stories demonstrate the many



ways an academic career allows us to interweave a commitment to peace into our classrooms, our communities, and country.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the high school, undergraduate, and graduate interns of *Reflections*: Brian Bailie, Erin Buksbaum, Collette Caton, Andrew Dragoni, and Lucille Murphy. Their commitment to ensuring that this issue of *Reflections* offered a complex snapshot of the current political moment in which our field exists is evident on every page. And during a period of economic downturn and budget cuts, I am also grateful to those who provided funding for this issue: The Woodrow Wilson Foundation, The University of Arkansas Brown Chair in English Literacy, and Syracuse University's Program for the Analysis and Resolution of Conflict, as well as its Writing Program.

Steve Parks  
Editor, *Reflections*



## Absent Voices: Rethinking Writing Women Safe

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- My experiences teaching a service-learning composition
- class entitled Writing Women Safe that dealt with sexual
- violence against women point to a missing link between
- course content and community-based activism. Students in
- my all-female class wrote about and discussed the reality of
- rape, sometimes in the context of their own lives. However,
- for all the real talk about a real crime, our well-intentioned
- service component, the design of informational pamphlets
- for a rape crisis center, did not draw on students' personal
- resources, nor evoke a believable sense of "change agency."
- Greater engagement with avenues for action through writing,
- perhaps via the community partner's work in the local justice
- system, as well as deeper reflection on students' strengths and
- positioning, are central concerns as I revise my approach to
- the course. Faced with the prospect of one day implementing
- Writing Women Safe at my new institution, I argue that,
- as educators and scholars committed to community-based
- learning, we must develop partnerships that push all involved
- more deeply into honest assessment of needs, resources,
- and perspective.

### Background

**W**riting Women Safe was a pilot service-learning course I designed and taught in the First-Year Writing Program at Temple University in 2000. The course was a required composition component paired with an introductory women's studies course, part of Temple's Learning Community initiative.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly,