Reflections

This section presents contemporary commentary on articles previously published in *English Teaching Forum*. 
Having been out of the field of English as a foreign language for several years, I was surprised and pleased when the editor of *English Teaching Forum* asked me to write some reflections about an article I coauthored with Dee Parker in 1997. My first task was to go through as many recent issues of *Forum* as I could to see if the original article was still relevant to *Forum* readers and potential authors. I pored through the pages of recent issues to see what was topical, which authors were being cited, and how *Forum* had changed since my last exposure more than five years ago. In reading Diane Millar’s 2011 article on genre awareness, I was pleased to see that genre was still topical and that some of the references she cited were old friends of mine. In the same issue I saw that the subjects of textual authority and referencing—which we also addressed our 1997 article—were also current. I then started looking at the structure of *Forum* articles to see if our recommendations were still relevant to the current readership.

*Forum* allows a flexible format—ranging from generalizations followed by research references, as recommended in our article, to introductions emphasizing the author’s experience—which seems to be a growing trend. I even found an introduction moving straight to the purpose of the article without beating around the bush. But in general, the problem/solution structure dominates in most *Forum* articles, whether the introduction starts with personal experience or with research in the field.

I found though that as I was reading the *Forum* articles to reenter the *Forum* world, I was subconsciously asking myself the questions included in Figure 2 of our original article. (See page 24.) I first tried to define the audience to learn again who my potential readers were and how much they knew and needed to learn. I then tried to define the author to gauge why I might write an article and what special expertise and experience I could contribute. I then found myself evaluating the structure of articles to better understand *Forum* reader expectations about how the format serves the purpose of the text. And finally I tried to put myself in the position of the reader to see what, if anything, I would need to change from our original article to ensure that the readers had the necessary back-
The format conventions and placement of ideas in a text help the reader identify what is important and what is new, and help relate parts of the text to the whole.”

— Tom Miller and Dee Parker