

JAEPL



The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

SPECIAL SECTION: DEEP READING STRATEGIES

Deep Reading, Jane Thompson

Life as Primary Text: English Classrooms as Sites for Soulful Learning, Vajra Watson

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Getting Centered: A Meditation on Creating Pottery and Teaching Writing, Rosanne Carlo

The Transformative Practice of Writing and Teaching Writing, Robbie Pinter

Out of the Box: Rattling Cages, Pamela B. Childers

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JAEPL

The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPL), an official assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English, is open to all those interested in extending the frontiers of teaching and learning beyond the traditional disciplines and methodologies.

The purposes of AEPL are to provide a common ground for theorists, researchers, and practitioners to explore ideas; to participate in relevant programs and projects; to integrate these efforts with others in related disciplines; to keep abreast of activities along these lines of inquiry; and to promote scholarship on and publication of these activities.

The *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*, JAEPL, also provides a forum to encourage research, theory, and classroom practices involving expanded concepts of language. It contributes to a sense of community in which scholars and educators from pre-school through the university exchange points of view and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. JAEPL is especially interested in helping those teachers who experiment with new strategies for learning to share their practices and confirm their validity through publication in professional journals.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Aesthetic, emotional & moral intelligences
- Learning archetypes
- Kinesthetic knowledge & body wisdom
- Ethic of care in education
- Creativity & innovation
- Pedagogies of healing
- Holistic learning
- Humanistic & transpersonal psychology
- Imaging & visual thinking
- Intuition & felt sense theory
- Meditation & pedagogical uses of silence
- Narration as knowledge
- Reflective teaching
- Spirituality
- New applications of writing & rhetoric
- Memory & transference



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very early on that the best
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—Jeff Gould

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EDITORS' MESSAGE

Laurence Musgrove's intrepid Tex offers us useful advice. But following a national election that has jolted us from a President who focused on the audacity of hope to a real-estate magnate-cum-politico who threatens to obliterate it, we may wonder *how* to “make hope.” One way is to ask why an estimated 4 to 5 million American protesters emerged nationwide during the post-Inauguration Women's March—accompanied by as many as 350,000 supporters around the globe.¹ Even if you didn't participate, you know this action declared and demanded to protect the values that sustain a more humane society.



JAEPL asserts those values in every volume, showing our readers how to infuse hope through the teaching and learning that we do every day. This volume continues that work, and here, we reassert them.

We begin *JAEPL*, Vol. 22 with a special section on deep reading, which was the theme of our summer 2016 conference.

We value the power of literacy. Jane Thomkins, one of our keynote speakers from AEPL 2016, describes how literacy invokes and nourishes that best part of ourselves, our soul. Her personal, spiritually compelling experience of this value enriches what we must know about deep reading.

We value pedagogies that help students from all backgrounds and cultures to learn, despite the inequities our imperfect society imposes upon them. Vajra Watson—another 2016 keynoter—accounts how the Sacramento Area Youth Speaks Project has enabled at-risk kids to connect their lives to a curriculum that has traditionally excluded them. This approach to deep reading liberates.

We value teaching history from a perspective that does not perpetuate injustice. Tisha Ulmer describes how to engage students in a personal transaction with the past so they can understand the words and deeds of those who struggled to deal with slavery's perversities. This kind of deep reading fosters compassion.

We value practices that prompt students to reflect on their own words and deeds. Grace Wetzel helps students revise, using contemplation as a means of readying them to reconsider the implications of their written work so they can craft it with a heightened understanding of its impact on others. This kind of deep reading leads to responsible citizenship.

As you move from this issue's special section on deep reading strategies to other, closely related scholarship on teaching and learning, we hope you will agree that our contributors are all participating in an important conversation for these troublesome times.

1. Statistics taken from Jeremy Pressman's and Erica Chenoweth's spreadsheet analyzing the breadth of the Women's March at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xa0iLqYKz8x9Yc_rfhtmSOJQ2EGgeUVjvV4A8LslaxY/htmlview?sl=true#gid=0

We value research that explores and validates non-traditional approaches to learning. Kate Chaterdon's literature review of contemplative neuroscience focuses on the ways that contemplation and mindfulness stimulate the brain's plasticity and change it. Such activities may ultimately mitigate the intellectual entrenchment to which our polarized public rhetoric exposes our students. This research indicates how and why alternative teaching methods can open minds.

We value thoughtful classroom resistance to oppressive policies. Ondine Gage's linguistic study breaks ground with its evaluation of one teacher's non-coercive and well-conceived efforts to work around the disadvantages that state and federal policies compound for English language learners in her school. This case study reveals how conscientious teachers can always find ways to put students' needs above political agenda.

We value seeking common ground in public discourse. J. Michael Rifenburg's examination of how one comedian consistently revises his routines provides us with fresh insights about the classical notions of audience analysis. He emphasizes the impact of performance on written material. This ethnography alerts us to the importance of teaching our students to seek common ground—a better method than attacking people who are indifferent or even hostile to what our students say, experience, and believe.

We value experiences that help us understand our students. Rosanne Carlos's comparison between making pottery and teaching writing demonstrates that fundamental, well-rehearsed techniques inform both—and that we all need to fail before we become more proficient. This meditation suggests that we must sometimes let go of what we know, so we can rediscover what we have forgotten.

We value the transformations that our work can accomplish. Robbie Pinter's deep reading of Wendell Berry's "Timbered Choir" becomes the touchstone of her career as she tallies the transformations that her student-centered philosophy has brought to light for her as well as her students. This personal reflection articulates a credo that can help us weather the doubts that whisper to us at the end of a difficult day—or semester.

We value our opportunities to partner with each other and change the status quo. Pam Childers's contribution to *JAEPL*'s "Outbox" celebrates how she and her colleagues have rattled the cages that damaging attitudes and policies have built to contain students who can't conform. Her persistent spirit of reform has shaped writing centers and writing across the curriculum programs throughout the nation. These recollections sum up why a scholarship of pragmatic reform must make our work known, so those who follow us can carry it forward.

We conclude our introduction to this volume of *JAEPL* by encouraging you to read the scholarly recommendations and the professional tales that Julie Nichols and Christy Wenger have collected in our "Book Reviews" and "Connecting" sections.

We also urge you to check the information about our upcoming summer conference, which Nate Michelson of Guttman Community College has been coordinating. The conference theme, "Writing as a Way of Being Human," promises excellent addresses by our keynote speakers Robert Yagelski, Doug Hesse, and Kurt Spellmeyer. You'll also have the opportunity to meet with friends and attend (or present at) the highly interactive sessions

Editors' Message

and workshops you've come to value so much. Please join us as we gather once again at the beautiful YMCA of the Rockies, outside Estes Park, CO. It's a place where we can share what's important—and reconfirm what we value.



