

2011

Front Matter

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Recommended Citation

(2011) "Front Matter," *The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*: Vol. 17 , Article 2.

<https://doi.org/10.7290/jaepl17qs1y>

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl/vol17/iss1/2>

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JAEPL



The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

AEPL Keynote: Immersion, Transformation, and the Literature Class

Cristina V. Bruns

My Kanawha

Anne DiPardo

Who Cares? Exploring Student Perspectives on Care Ethics

Kelly A. Concannon Mannise

Playing the Believing Game with Dr. Seuss and Reluctant Learners in Science

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Being the Unbook, Being the Change: The Transformative Power of Open Sources

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Suffering and Teaching Writing

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Perfect

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“We Were the Teachers, Not the Observers”: Transforming Teacher Preparation

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“Poetry is Not a Luxury”: Why We Should Include Poetry in the Writing Classroom

Nicole Warwick

Out of the Box: Notes from Teaching at the Ends of the Earth

Colette Morrow

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JAEPL is a non-profit journal published yearly by the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning with support from Waynesburg and Northern Illinois Universities. *JAEPL* gratefully acknowledges this support as well as that of its manuscript readers, including, for this issue:

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(ISSN 1085-4630)

An affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English
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Member of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals
Indexed with *MLA Bibliography*

Volume 17 • Winter 2011 - 2012

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, therefore, 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 cutting-edge 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:

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- Learning archetypes
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- Ethic of care in education
- Creativity & innovation
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- Meditation & pedagogical uses of silence
- Narration as knowledge
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- Spirituality
- New applications of writing & rhetoric
- Memory & transference



Membership in AEPL is \$30. Contact Theodore Timpson, AEPL, Membership Chair, P.O. Box 60505, Palo Alto, CA 94306 email: now@youngspirit.org. Membership includes that year's issue of JAEPL.

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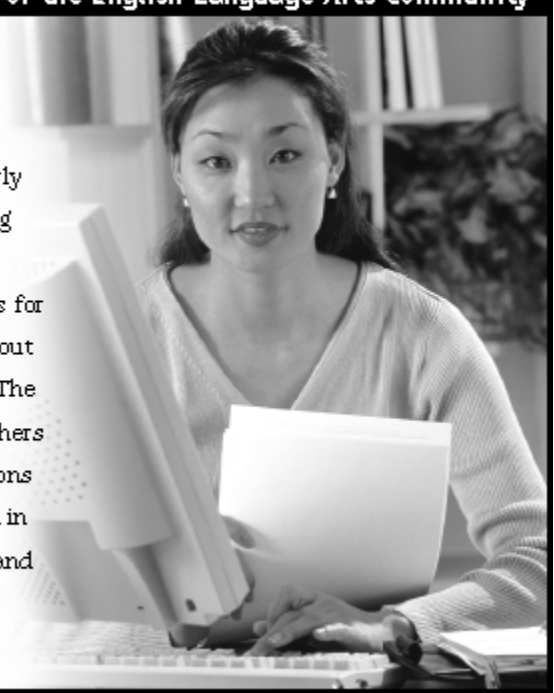
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Production and printing of JAEPL is managed by Parlor Press, www.parlorpress.com.

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With resources on early literacy, writing, reading instruction, ESL, and preparing your students for standardized tests without "teaching to the test," The National Council of Teachers of English has the solutions you need to support you in your classroom, career, and community.

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored sweater, sitting at a desk. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. In front of her is a large computer monitor and a keyboard. She is holding a stack of papers in her left hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a bookshelf.

Resources, Strategies, Lesson Plans, and Membership information
available online at www.ncte.org or call (877) 369-6283.

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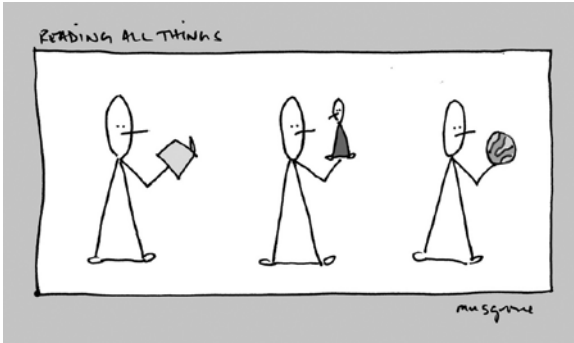
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EDITORS' MESSAGE

Reading is a quintessentially human activity. We read meaning into all things, as the caption to Laurence Musgrove's wonderful cartoon tells us, below. As we put together this 17th volume of *JAEPL*—we find ourselves reading all things indeed: our students' papers, our spring semester schedules, changing seasons, the political follies on TV, the holidays' advent.



A year has already gone by since all of you so graciously received our first co-edited issue. We hope the time has passed as richly for you as it has for us. Joonna was delighted to join many of you in Colorado for another invigorating meeting of AEPL, while Brad went to Italy to visit friends he hadn't seen for 30 years. And now we come together again—in this

other AEPL meeting place—to continue our lively exchange of ideas.

So let's return to the subject of reading, which reiterates throughout this new issue. A keynote speaker from AEPL 2011, Cristy Bruns takes the lead, with her thought-provoking discussion of reading as a means of immersing and transforming our students. Being true to the conference theme, "Literacy for Love and Wisdom," she calls upon us to teach reading as "a reworking of the usually fixed boundary between self and world, producing a more responsive way of relating across that boundary."

Anne DiPardo follows up on what Bruns advocates, showing that such immersion can move us beyond the easy assumptions and biases that we all harbor. Her discovery of family ties to the mountain folk of West Virginia, steeped in what James Moffett termed *agnosis*, or "the will not to know," causes her to re-examine her own *agnosis*. In so doing, she reminds us that Moffett's ideas and beliefs still reside at the core of AEPL, and that reading enlightens us in ways that are not always easy to accept—unless we let texts teach us humility.

Developing that thread of thought, Kelly Concannon Mannise introduces us to a course at a private university, where students encounter reading experiences that cause them to question what privilege means in a world that has always sought to deny that privilege to many. Her students see that literacy for love and wisdom puts demands on readers to cross boundaries we don't necessarily want to cross—boundaries that will always confine us to apathy and stunted growth if, in denying our common humanity, we misread a division between ourselves and "others."

Buchanan and Cook playfully imply that we, in tandem with pre-service science teachers, should also allow texts to guide us back to that childlike sense of wonder and fun with which the beloved Dr. Seuss taught children to try green eggs and ham. Seeing *Green Eggs and Ham* as a metaphor for the trepidation that elementary students feel when first learning about science, these authors use the text to help teachers recognize that *agnosis*

is learned early. We can head it off with humor and awaken the faculties of curiosity and imagination instead, if only we “Try them! Try them!” In the same spirit of play, Elizabeth Woodworth urges us to investigate the exciting possibilities of giving students free electronic texts that are the results of “commons-based peer production.” As electronic communication becomes cheaper and more accessible, the texts shared through CCPP promise to make higher education more available. So “Try them! Try them!”

On the other hand, Keith Duffy recognizes that the current model of higher education often demands higher productivity, not better teaching. It affects working conditions and morale for a great many of us. He addresses teacher burn-out with an unflinching honesty and advocates turning to texts that examine human suffering, to put this occupational hazard into perspective. Helen Collins Sitler invites us to look at a similar malaise among many of our students. When, in an obsessive pursuit of perfection, they misread our instruction as somehow demeaning to themselves, she spells out a loving and wise response informed by cognitive therapy.

Nikki Holland, Iris Shepard, Christian Goering, and David A. Jolliffe also do a critical reading of the educational system in which we work. Their development of *Razorback Writers*, “a literacy enrichment program built on the concepts of arts integration and project-based learning” provides a counter-model, excitingly reminiscent of Chicago’s Little Red Schoolhouse, but going further.

S. Rebecca Leigh and Nicole Warwick concern themselves with arts integration, too, focusing on poetry as the means of encouraging students to develop a profounder engagement with literacy. Leigh claims that elementary students can learn to reread their own written work more insightfully through “portal writing”—a technique of identifying key words that transform drafts into poems. In conference with the teacher, portal writing becomes a means through which students expand upon, and even substantively revise, their work. Warwick uses poetry in another way, to help her students read “transnationally.” Like so many authors in this issue, she finds this process of reading enables students to cross the boundaries that would confine them within their own worlds of experience. As they explore poetry’s other worlds, they develop the connections that transform them into better writers. In this process as well, Warwick learns to read her students with greater love and wisdom.

Colette Morrow brings her own form of transnational reading to *JAEPL* with a compelling account of how her experience of teaching abroad in third-world nations has enabled her to reread her pedagogical practice in American universities. A director of women’s studies for many years, she invites us to seek the same kind of experience, which can altogether revitalize how we perceive teaching and learning.

Finally, you will find two substantive book reviews on texts that deal with the evolution of thought and criticism. You will also enjoy our perennially satisfying “Connecting” section, which brings us the classroom tales and poetry that remind us why we teach in the first place. So please, take a moment right now. Sit back and “read all things” that our contributors have set before you in this latest *JAEPL*.