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Cover Page Footnote

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

Kym Buchanan and Perry Cook

You do not like them.

So you say.

Try them! Try them!

And you may.

(Seuss, *Green Eggs and Ham* 53)

Introduction

We believe that Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham* can be an inspirational guidebook for teachers trying to reach reluctant learners. *Green Eggs* offers lessons to teachers and learners at every level—early childhood, K-12, and higher education. For the past decade, Perry has started his science education methods courses with a read aloud of *Green Eggs*. Perry's students are pre-service teachers majoring in Early Childhood, Elementary, or Secondary Education. Each year about one hundred and fifty novice teachers experience the dialog and tension of *Green Eggs*. Perry urges them to look and listen as Sam persuades a reluctant stranger to try something new. After experiencing *Green Eggs* with a fresh perspective, these pre-service teachers report a new or renewed enthusiasm for trying to engage reluctant learners. They gain a deeper appreciation of the kind of teacher and teaching that can make a difference. Here's how one student described it:

The concept of Dr. Cook's lesson is so simple, yet so powerful—use encouragement and persistence to get tenacious students to try new things—because you never know . . . you may like it, you will see! This concept can be applied to all subjects, but especially ones that can be “hard sells” for students and teachers alike—like science. (Danielle, pre-service teacher)¹

We believe Sam models an admirable attitude and a variety of compelling choices for teachers. We invite others to share our beliefs. Belief and doubt form a continuum, and learner reluctance can be an expression of doubt. In this article we'll draw on Elbow's believing game as a lens for exploring Sam's approach to reluctance. Elbow and others recently revisited the believing game and expanded on its utility in teaching (*JAEPL* Vol. 15, cf. Harkness, et al.; Moneyhun; Elbow “Reflections”). In particular, the believing game can serve as a promising response to the cognitive, emotional, and social entanglements of reluctance. In *Green Eggs*, Sam faces the stranger's reluctance and urges him to play the believing game in Seussian style: Try them!

First, we'll map out reluctance and the believing game. Second, we'll recap *Green Eggs and Ham*. Then we'll explore belief and doubt in pre-service education and science education. Next we'll highlight Sam's playfulness and his other effective teaching strate-

¹ The names of pre-service teachers are pseudonyms.

gies. Finally, we'll arrive at several broader interpretations related to *Green Eggs* and the believing game.

Reluctance and Belief

The possible entanglements of learners' motivation and reluctance are numerous and varied (cf. Brophy *Motivating Students to Learn 2nd Ed.* 119; Stipek 85). Low expectancy or low value may occasion reluctance: learners may have low self-efficacy beliefs relative to the challenge of a task or they may not see a good reason to learn the content (Lee and Anderson 587). Learners may already have a negative emotional relationship with the content, because their previous interactions have been marked by anxiety, frustration, or boredom. The social context of a class may occasion reluctance: in the presence of the teacher or the students, it may not be admirable or safe to demonstrate engagement. The possibility of failure may threaten learners' self-worth (Martin et al. 617). Once reluctance is occasioned by one or more of these entanglements, it manifests as undesirable behaviors like procrastinating or applying token effort.

In place of undesirable behaviors, teachers should encourage and reinforce desirable behaviors. Three desirable behaviors form what we call the "Trying Trio": admitting ignorance, taking risks, and making mistakes. These behaviors are desirable because they catalyze learning. Learners who confront their ignorance and actively experiment with answers and strategies will learn faster than learners who conceal their ignorance and only passively observe.

Many possible strategies exist for fostering Trying Trio behaviors in reluctant learners. Elbow's believing game is one of the most promising strategies, since it explicitly urges taking a risk. The game is meant to be played when encountering a new or unfamiliar idea—a time when reluctance often occurs. Playing the believing game means adopting dispositions of engagement and believing. We start by appreciating an idea with the deliberate passion of belief—an intellectual and affective risk. Then may we move back from the idea, perhaps to deprecate it (Elbow, "Methodological" 258). Elbow contrasts the believing game with the doubting game. Many teachers and learners have already learned the doubting game, especially in content areas like science and literature. Playing the doubting game means adopting dispositions of reluctance and doubting. We start by deprecating an idea with the deliberate passion of skepticism. If the idea survives then we may move towards it.

Both the believing game and the doubting game are useful because belief and doubt each play an important role in learning and truth-finding. The doubting game is only a problem "when it tries to hog the whole bed" (Elbow, "Methodological" 258). Teachers should consider the classroom climate that could arise when the doubting game hogs the bed. Learners may mistakenly believe that reflexive skepticism is the same as critical thinking. But in many domains, especially complex domains, learners should explore thoroughly from multiple perspectives before discarding or adopting a model or conclusion (Spiro and Jehng 186). So we should teach the believing game and support learners as they play it, including fostering a classroom climate that protects admitting ignorance and making mistakes.

Belief, doubt, and reluctance are complex phenomena. However, teachers and learners don't need to be serious in all their choices and attitudes. For example, Kym requires his young daughters to play a light-hearted version of the believing game during meals. When offered a new food, the girls may doubt that they'll like it. But they must take one "no-thank-you bite" before declining. Sometimes the girls are delighted to discover they actually like the new food. This is the heart of the believing game: the value of being pleasantly surprised. When asking reluctant learners to take similar bites of new ideas, teachers may want to use a similar playful attitude. In *Green Eggs*, one no-thank-you bite has fulfilling results.

Recap

Green Eggs and Ham focuses on the conflict between two characters. Sam appears first, riding unusual beasts and introducing himself with bold signs (e.g., "Sam I am"). Sam approaches the character in the top hat, who we'll call the Skeptic.

Sam wants the Skeptic to try eating green eggs and ham, but the Skeptic refuses. Sam offers a variety of contexts for eating the eggs and ham: "here or there, in a house with a mouse, in a box with a fox, in a car, in a tree, on a train, in the dark, in the rain, with a goat, and on a boat." Sam doesn't just describe these contexts: he joyfully confronts the Skeptic with each context or even accompanies the Skeptic into the context. With each new context the Skeptic repeats his refusal. The Skeptic recites the growing list of unsuccessful contexts to emphasize his exasperation with Sam and his dislike of green eggs and ham.

While pursuing the Skeptic, Sam demonstrates an unflinching optimism that the Skeptic will accept the offer if he can find the right context. Sam and the Skeptic are joined by all the people and animals they meet along the way. Sam's strategies become progressively bigger and bolder, including driving a speeding car down a hill and riding a train into the ocean. Finally, the exhausted Skeptic bargains with Sam. He will take a bite if Sam will let him be. Lo and behold! The Skeptic likes green eggs and ham. This outcome delights Sam and the crowd of people and animals. The Skeptic recites the list of contexts a final time, only this time he emphasizes his great fondness for the eggs and ham:

And I will eat them in the rain.
And in the dark. And on a train.
And in a car. And in a tree.
They are so good, so good, you see! (60)

The Skeptic eats all the green eggs and ham. The story ends with the Skeptic emphatically thanking Sam.

Belief in Pre-service Education

Green Eggs is a story about Sam's belief and the Skeptic's doubt. Belief and doubt play central roles in pre-service education. In addition to learning skills and knowledge, pre-service teachers learn values. They learn "to believe in what teachers believe in,"

including beliefs such as all children can learn (Lampert 29). Teachers' beliefs can influence their students' self-efficacy beliefs. For example, students are more likely to have higher self-efficacy beliefs when their teachers have higher self-efficacy beliefs (Midgley, Feldlaufer, and Eccles 254). But pre-service teachers bring doubts based on their prior journeys as students. They may doubt their abilities as teachers. They may doubt the relevance and utility of education courses (Bransford et al. 202). They may doubt their ability to use progressive teaching strategies once they're in schools that seem to value traditional strategies (Smagorinsky et al. 17; Agee 758). Many pre-service teachers were eager, successful students. They may have limited experience with the entanglements of reluctance, so they may doubt their ability to connect with reluctant learners. In short, they may have strong doubts and weak beliefs. *Green Eggs* provides a context for surfacing and exploring beliefs and doubts with pre-service teachers.

Sam persistently believes he can overcome the Skeptic's reluctance. When writers want to overcome skepticism or reluctance, the believing game prescribes putting "themselves in their readers' shoes [to] address the ways in which a reader might not understand or accept the message" (Moneyhun 57). Teachers can do the same thing with reluctant learners. For writers or teachers, the believing game unfolds in at least two frames—personal and interpersonal. In the personal frame, we can use the game to better understand a different perspective in a contentious space. In the interpersonal frame, we can use the game to better connect with others, by at least temporarily sharing their perspectives. Both frames have benefits in teaching. As teachers, we want to better understand our students' thinking. We also want to build relationships of mutual caring and respect, and the game can help us demonstrate a sincere interest in our students and in their thoughts and feelings.

In pre-service education, we work at two degrees of separation. The first degree is between professors and our university students—we want to be good teachers. The second degree is between pre-service teachers and their future students—we want *them* to be good teachers. Perry uses *Green Eggs* as an unconventional approach to reluctance across both degrees. He wants his pre-service teachers to see reluctance in new ways, and he wants them to approach their own students' reluctance with caring and creativity. Perry helps pre-service teachers better appreciate the entanglements of reluctance so that they can be sensitive, responsive teachers. This matches the sensitive spirit of the believing game. The game prompts a teacher "to consider believing students' thinking before making pronouncements about right and wrong. . . . the teacher must be able to think from the student's point of view" (Harkness et al. 43). One of Perry's students explains the value of this consideration: "If kids are afraid of being wrong and don't have enough drive to dig in and experiment and try everything once, they will never know what they are missing out on" (Cammy, pre-service teacher). Erickson and MacKinnon explored this sensitivity in their research on teaching science using a constructivist perspective. An experienced teacher named Colin was training a student teacher named Rosie. Colin describes something like the believing game:

Colin: Now I could say, 'No, that's not what I'm looking for. You're wrong.' . . . [Instead, I try] validating the students' ideas. That is, try to give some sense to the students' responses. Because, well, one of the things, if you don't do that. . .

Rosie: They'll stop responding.

Colin: Yeah.

Rosie: Because they think that, 'Well, if I don't have the right answer, then I'll shut up because I'll just get put down,' or whatever.

Colin: And instead of saying, 'Is that the right answer?' in my mind, I just kind of think consciously, or almost unconsciously now, 'What is right about that answer?' Or 'What can I make of that answer?' (Erickson and MacKinnon 21)

In *Green Eggs*, Sam never criticizes or upbraids the Skeptic. Reluctance is not shameful. Pre-service teachers can apply Trying Trio behaviors to their own education, admitting their own ignorance and recognizing their own doubts about reaching reluctant learners without self-recrimination. Then they can find the courage to take risks and make mistakes, like Sam. By trying to relate to and reach all students, including reluctant learners, pre-service teachers can play the believing game with their teaching abilities. Believing and trying will be doubly effective: the strategies may work and the teachers are modeling Trying behaviors.

Whatever doubts Sam may have, he doesn't reveal or dwell on them. Instead, Sam courageously presses on, taking risks and making many mistakes. Each new context is a risk (e.g., "with a fox in a box"). Each time the Skeptic rejects a context, Sam has made a mistake. Elbow describes the believing game "as an exercise in developing courage" (Elbow "Reflections" 5). Sam's vulnerability via Trying behaviors may help Sam build a connection with the Skeptic. The Skeptic is clearly aware of Sam's persistence, and perhaps the courage and sincerity of Sam's persistence are what finally persuade the Skeptic to take a bite. When trying to reach reluctant learners, acting courageously is good for our students and for ourselves. Teachers can overcome learners' reluctance and simultaneously recommit to the open-hearted nature of good teaching. "When I feel brave, I find myself a better more generous person" (Elbow, "Reflections" 5).

Belief in Science Education

Belief and doubt also play central roles in science education and in science. When Perry prepares pre-service teachers to teach science, he's working on individuals' relationships with science across two degrees of separation. The pre-service teachers already have relationships with science and science teachers. These relationships could range from confidence to trepidation, and from enthusiasm to dislike. Soon these pre-service teachers will have students of their own—the second degree of separation. Those students will have their own pre-existing relationships with science and science teachers. If Perry's pre-service teachers have little confidence or enthusiasm for science, they're less likely to positively impact their own students' relationship with science. In science education, pre-service teachers may discover they can relate to reluctant learners by examining their own reluctance. In Perry's class, *Green Eggs* is often a catalyst for this self-examination. For example, "As someone who personally experienced the disinterest and unwillingness to participate in science-related activities, [*Green Eggs*] gave me a sense of wonder as to what science really has to offer, as I realized I never actually gave it a fair chance" (Amy, pre-service teacher).

A science teacher should consider the roots of learners' disinterest and unwillingness. Students with high expectancy beliefs and high value beliefs will have high motivation to learn (Brophy, "Value Aspects" 75). Conversely, students with low motivation to learn may be doubting their ability to succeed or the utility of the content, or both. A teacher can explicitly address the challenge level and possible applications of the content, to change learners' beliefs about expectancy and value.

Another possible explanation for disinterest and unwillingness suggests itself: a seductive escapism in reluctance. Learning takes work. If students can preemptively dismiss science then they can escape work. In the language of identity construction, they can foreclose on an identity that includes engagement with challenging content and thus avoid putting their self-worth at risk (Lee and Anderson 605). This kind of seductive escapism is possible in any content area. Learners can avoid engaging in Trying Trio behaviors by prematurely deciding they aren't scientists, mathematicians, historians, writers, artists, or what-have-you. They play a kind of doubting game with a selfish bias, prematurely deprecating an idea to avoid challenge.

When approaching reluctance and identity foreclosure in science, it may help to teach students to notice how belief and doubt function in science. To a novice, the practice of science may seem solely driven by methodological doubt. We may think that we begin with a blank slate to which we carefully add only proven hypotheses. Novices may get implicit or explicit messages that their amateur perceptions of the world are naïve and misleading and that their existing beliefs are false. These messages may deepen their doubts about their self-efficacy in science.

True, amateur perceptions can be wrong, and novices can start with incorrect prior knowledge or erroneous theories (cf. McCloskey, Caramazza and Green 1139). But how a science teacher responds to these issues can change students' intellectual and emotional relationship with the content area (Posner, et al. 225-6). One of the benefits of playing the believing game is developing a responsive understanding of how a novice may have used amateur perceptions to adopt an erroneous theory. For example, suppose a teacher wants her students to understand the phases of the Moon. Novices may believe that the phases are caused by the shadow of the Earth as the Earth blocks the light of the Sun. A novice can observe that the phases of the Moon have a curved quality, which suggests the shadow of a disc or sphere. The novice may think, "Ah ha! The Earth is a sphere!" Via the believing game, the teacher can better appreciate this basis for an "Earth's shadow" theory, and thus find inspiration for a lesson that unravels the erroneous theory in a responsive way. For example, the teacher can use a sphere, darkness, and light to demonstrate how a curved shadow can appear on a partly-lit sphere.

Science teachers can also challenge the larger misconception that science is solely driven by methodological doubt. Assuredly, science privileges beliefs supported by data collected through rigorous and repeated measures. However, teachers should help novices appreciate that hypotheses emerge from divergent thinking and nonlinear thinking. Scientists play the believing game when generating hypotheses and designing experiments. Scientists routinely think in terms such as, "I believe this new procedure will reveal a meaningful property," or "I believe isolating this variable will explain causality." First scientists believe, then they test, and finally they accept or discard. Systematic belief and doubt each play a role in science.

The complementary roles of belief and doubt can be vividly illustrated by teaching how scientific knowledge is socially constructed (Driver et al. 5). The history of science is a series of eras and episodes in which a majority of people strongly held erroneous beliefs. An individual or a minority doubted the popular explanation and championed a new belief. In other words, our history is full of Skeptics who passionately doubt the appeal of a new “food,” only to discover they like it. A scientist can play the believing game to blaze a trail into unfamiliar territory and then change scientific consensus (with experimental and explanatory ingenuity). Teachers can overcome reluctance in science for reasons similar to those that Harkness et al. assert with math: “When we view [it] as a human endeavor, a discipline that is socially constructed and fallible, the believing game becomes more possible” (39).

Playfulness and Other Teaching Strategies

Green Eggs is useful for fostering conversations about belief and reluctance. It also illustrates several effective teaching strategies, especially playfulness. “It reminds all of us to dare to be different, to use our imagination, and to be persistent” (Elaine, pre-service teacher). A teacher’s attitude matters. As a phrase, “the believing game” implies a paradoxical attitude. Belief is often a weighty business, but games can often be light-hearted. So the believing game is a playful-serious activity. In a similar way, Sam’s attitude is playful-serious. Sam is serious because he cares deeply about persuading the Skeptic to take a bite, and playful because his attempts are always cheerful and unusual. Sam models how playfulness can be a powerful catalyst for learning. Games promote Trying Trio behaviors by changing the stakes. Inside the “magic circle” of a game, the stakes are lower or different (Rodriguez para. 33; Salen and Zimmerman 95). Players are more willing to admit ignorance, take risks, and make mistakes. They’re more willing to take no-thank-you bites.

The believing game changes the stakes. We might play the believing game in many contexts, and in some of these contexts the stakes are high. When we play the game as readers, we want to better understand another point of view to better master a topic. When we play the game as teachers, we want to better understand our students’ points of view to better help them learn and to learn from them. Mastering a topic or reaching a student can involve high stakes. Yet the believing game asks us to temporarily suspend the stakes, to put them aside. Instead, we invest ourselves in new stakes, wagering that the other point of view is compelling. This is a playful-serious action. It’s playful, because we know that the wager is somewhat artificial and that we may abandon those stakes soon and return to our own beliefs. But it’s also serious. We don’t pretend that the other point of view is compelling in a facetious way, as merely a setup to ridicule it. We try to be sincerely invested in the other point of view. At the same time we hold on to the larger stakes of understanding and relating. We step back in order to move forward.

When Perry teaches using *Green Eggs*, he encourages his pre-service teachers to emulate Sam’s playful attitude. He also urges them to note the teaching moves Sam makes. Sam uses a variety of tools to introduce himself and the eggs and ham (e.g., a telescoping hand holding the plate). Sam has a plan, and he is resourceful, much like a teacher with a variety of tools and strategies. Sam isn’t bound to one approach. He keeps trying

new ones. As teachers, we should focus on our goals and continually re-evaluate whether we're using the best tools and strategies. When the Skeptic lists the unacceptable contexts Sam recognizes that the Skeptic is attending to Sam. Sam sees that a strategy has failed and tries a new one. It's important to get feedback from our students to evaluate strategies and inspire new ones. "Sometimes we just have to find that right way to connect the material with the student in a way that engages them and interests them" (Ryan, pre-service teacher).

Sam is extraordinarily well-prepared. For example, a goat is apparently in Sam's car for at least 16 pages before Sam presents him. As teachers, we should have a similar, inexhaustible supply of strategies. We need to keep up with best practices in our focus areas. We should exercise our creativity to stay flexible and inventive. We should collaborate with our goats—or better yet, with our colleagues.

Sam doesn't merely describe the possible contexts. He accompanies the Skeptic into each context, urging the Skeptic to taste the eggs and ham under extraordinary and visceral circumstances (e.g., with the wind streaming through his ears as the car careens down a hill). Sam doesn't settle for the strategy of "I've been there and I'll tell you about it," but instead uses the strategy of "we're going there, so you'll know." The Skeptic has a visceral, immersive experience through a variety of contexts. We thrive on exploration and adventure. It arouses us, and it recruits our attention, energy, and persistence. Sam creates a journey for the Skeptic that has the palpable immediacy of "being there" and "doing it." Thus, at journey's end, the Skeptic's passion is transmuted from a fierce repugnance of green eggs and ham into an equally emphatic enthusiasm for the stuff: "Say! I will eat them ANYWHERE!" (61)

A change in dispositions can follow conceptual change, or vice versa. At first, the Skeptic is comfortable doubting the eggs and ham. Yet a better future awaits the Skeptic, filled with a new favorite food, if only he can change. Many theorists, especially Piaget, describe major conceptual change as a process of equilibration in response to discordant experience (see Miller 78). Learners must first experience unpleasant confusion and the dissolution of prior, brittle beliefs. Then they can form more sophisticated, truth-tracking beliefs. A change in dispositions or understanding may be unpleasant but necessary for learning and growth. Figuratively speaking, it tastes bad, but it's good for you.

In the relationship between teacher and learner, change is often reciprocal. The experience can change the teacher, too. As teachers, we can model a spirit of inquiry and openness, especially via Trying Trio behaviors. Admitting ignorance, taking risks, and making mistakes can be scary for both learner and teachers. Being vulnerable and taking risks "is not how teachers often see their role" (Bransford et al. 195). Yet Sam is willing to publically fail many times because he's focused on reaching the Skeptic. Sam is emboldened by his passion for the eggs and ham, just as we should be emboldened by our passion for our content. We may be as surprised as our students when we're also open to change and willing to play with belief. "What emerging understandings, students' and mine, might be quashed if we do not look at the thinking rather than just the answer?" (Harkness et al. 44) Above all, boldness and creativity are Sam's pedagogy and methods. No single strategy persuades the Skeptic. Ultimately, it seems like the Skeptic is persuaded by Sam's inexhaustible enthusiasm and creativity.

There are caveats. The lessons of *Green Eggs* apply to all reluctant learners, but reluctance can be more complicated. Sometimes a learner's reluctance isn't rooted in a motivation problem. Reluctance can be based on real obstacles, including a curriculum that's too easy or too hard, or learning disabilities or other special needs (e.g., an Emotional Behavioral Disorder). As teachers, we should tailor our curriculum to our students' abilities and prior knowledge. We also need to be wary of substituting flash for substance. The eggs and ham deserve Sam's energy and creativity because they are worth tasting. What we teach should be "worth learning for reasons that can be understood by the learners" (Brophy, "Value Aspects" 80). Exciting, visceral experiences can boost motivation where the value of the content isn't obvious, but no madcap journey should be used to gloss over content with no real value.

Broader Interpretations

We'll conclude by contrasting Sam's sincerity and the poison of cynicism. As teachers, all of us have at least tasted the cynicism of giving up on reluctant learners. We may catch ourselves thinking, "If they have bad attitudes, then why should I even try?"

The Skeptic is what we'll call a "Serious Person," without the time or patience for Sam's unusual food or outlandish contexts. In a comedy, a Serious Person can represent our collective skepticism, pessimism, or even cynicism. As a nation, we can seem very cynical. For example, we seem to delight in the faults of public figures, in their missteps and misadventures. We doubt that anyone can be completely honorable or resolute. We scrutinize our leaders and achievers closely, and since they're only human, we inevitably discover some faults. Then we bitterly congratulate ourselves on being miserly with our belief in greatness. In the same way, we may disparage entertainments and products. The new movie is probably over-hyped. The new restaurant is probably over-priced. Nothing is ever free. There's always a catch.

If we are cynics, then we distrust the appearance of virtue and seek out hidden flaws. Discovering flaws validates a dim worldview. In contrast, if we are optimists then we distrust our first impressions that something is worthless or unredeemable. We seek out hidden virtues in people and situations. If the narrative arc of *Green Eggs* validated a cynical worldview, it would end differently. The Skeptic would try the eggs and ham and hate them: "See? I told you so." Instead, the arc validates Sam's optimism. Furthermore, Sam doesn't gloat or upbraid the Skeptic: "Why did you waste my time? Do you know how much all this cost me?" Sam gracefully accepts the Skeptic's gratitude.

As teachers, when we struggle to reach reluctant learners we may be struggling against dispositions society has ingrained in them. When we present something as interesting and useful, our students may suspect another deceptive sales pitch. We can resent their skepticism and thus be poisoned with it. Instead, we should follow Sam's example. We should recommit to finding or infusing value in our content and to reflectively applying different strategies until our students take a bite. "If we give up on our students simply because they don't respond immediately, we are just as guilty as they are for not giving everything a fair chance" (Amy, pre-service teacher).

Beyond our classrooms, our students face problems of enormous importance and complexity. Cynicism robs of us of the most useful tools for tackling hard problems:

effort, collaboration, and creativity. Cynicism tells us that the problems probably won't be solved, so why try? People and institutions are corrupt and fractious, so why organize? Cynicism squanders our imagination on dire predictions.

We need to dream as big as Sam and find the pedagogical equivalent of crashing a train into the ocean. The Skeptic responds to Sam's inexhaustible enthusiasm, and our students will respond to our unapologetic dreams and passions. We should also be open to their dreams and passions. The believing game provides guidance. As teachers, we can create a relationship of mutual sharing by demonstrating openness to our students' beliefs—"Give me the vision in your head. You are having an experience I don't have: help me to have it" (Elbow, "Methodological" 261).

Did Dr. Seuss write *Green Eggs and Ham* for teachers struggling to reach reluctant learners? No. And yet . . . Sam believes the eggs and ham are delicious, and he wants to share this experience with the Skeptic. We are teachers because we believe in the value of the content we teach. We're often brutally reminded that our students are Skeptics. Seuss writes Sam as undaunted. Sam doesn't give the Skeptic a comeuppance, nor does he skip over the Skeptic to focus on someone less reluctant. Sam tries to improve the Skeptic's life by coaxing him to be open to change. Sam cannot make the Skeptic like the eggs and ham. Sam can only do this: believe in the virtues and flavors of the good things he has experienced; model being open to further adventure and change; and try a variety of strategies. That is the spirit of good teaching.



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