

2008

Front Matter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#), [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Educational Psychology Commons](#), [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Instructional Media Design Commons](#), [Liberal Studies Commons](#), [Other Education Commons](#), [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

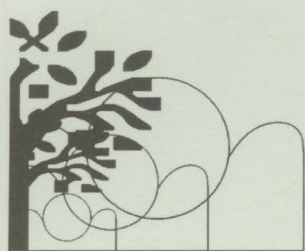
Recommended Citation

(2008) "Front Matter," *The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*: Vol. 14 , Article 2.

<https://doi.org/10.7290/jaepl148mju>

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl/vol14/iss1/2>

This article is brought to you freely and openly by Volunteer, Open-access, Library-hosted Journals (VOL Journals), published in partnership with The University of Tennessee (UT) University Libraries. This article has been accepted for inclusion in The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning by an authorized editor. For more information, please visit <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl>.



J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

**Feeling Our Way:
Teaching, Writing, and Reading
with Belief**

Volume 14 • Winter 2008-2009

The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

Executive Board

OFFICERS

<i>Co-Chair</i>	Stan Scott, University of Maine-Presque Isle
<i>Co-Chair</i>	Irene Papoulis, Trinity College
<i>Associate Chair</i>	Joonna Smitherman Trapp, Northwestern College
<i>Secretary</i>	Alison Brimmer, Nova Southeastern University
<i>Treasurer</i>	Laurence Musgrove, St. Xavier University

<i>Advisory Board</i>	Alice G. Brand, SUNY College at Brockport
	Peter Elbow, University of Massachusetts at Amherst
	Richard L. Graves, Auburn University, Emeritus
	Ron Miller, Goddard College, VT
	Nel Noddings, Columbia University - Teachers College
	Sondra Perl, Lehman College, CUNY
	Gabrielle Rico, San Jose State University
	Peter Stillman, Charlottesville, NY
	Charles Suhor, Montgomery, AL
	Jim Super, Olathe East High School, Kansas
	Jane Tompkins, University of Illinois at Chicago

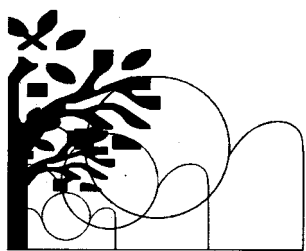
<i>Ex-Officio Voting Members</i>	Betty Latosi-Sawin, Missouri Western State College
	Shobhana Rishi, California Department of Education

<i>Founding Members</i>	Alice G. Brand, SUNY College at Brockport
	Richard L. Graves, Auburn University, Emeritus
	Charles Suhor, NCTE

<i>JAEPL Editors</i>	Kristie S. Fleckenstein, Florida State University
	Linda T. Calendrillo, Valdosta State University

JAEPL is a nonprofit journal published yearly by the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning with support from Valdosta State University and Florida State University. *JAEPL* gratefully acknowledges this support as well as that of its manuscript readers.

Logo Design: Ann and Kip Strasma



J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

Editors

Kristie S. Fleckenstein
Florida State University

Linda T. Calendrillo
Valdosta State University

Book Review Editor

Judith Halden-Sullivan
Millersville University of Pennsylvania

“Connecting” Editor

Helen Walker
Messiah College

Editorial Intern

Lauren Brownell, Florida State University

Copyright ©2008
by the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning
All rights reserved
(ISSN 1085-4630)

An Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English
Member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement
Member of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals
Indexed with *MLA Bibliography*

J A E P L

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 traditional disciplines and methodologies.

The purposes of AEPL, therefore, are to provide a common ground for theorists, researchers, and practitioners to explore ideas on the subject; to participate in programs and projects on it; 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*, meets this need. It 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: aesthetic, emotional, and moral intelligence; archetypes; body wisdom; care in education; creativity; felt sense theory; healing; holistic learning; humanistic and transpersonal psychology; imaging; intuition; kinesthetic knowledge; meditation; narration as knowledge; reflective teaching; silence; spirituality; and visualization.

Membership in AEPL is \$20. Contact Laurence Musgrove, AEPL Membership Chair, Department of English and Foreign Language, St. Xavier University, 3700 W. 103 St., Chicago, IL 60655. email: musgrove@sxu.edu. Membership includes that year's issue of *JAEPL*.

Send submissions, address changes, and single copy requests to Linda T. Calendrillo, Co-Editor, *JAEPL*. email: ltcalend@valdosta.edu

Address letters to the editor and all other editorial correspondence to Kristie S. Fleckenstein, Co-Editor, *JAEPL*, Department of English, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306. email: kfleckenstein@fsu.edu

Visit our JAEPL website at <<http://sworps.utk.edu/aepl/jaepl>>.

Contents

- v Editors' Message

Essays

- Peter Elbow* 1 **The Believing Game or Methodological Believing**
Three arguments why we need the believing game: to help us find flaws in our thinking, to help us choose among competing claims, and to achieve goals that the doubting game neglects.
- Nathaniel Teich* 12 **The Rhetoric of Empathy:
Ethical Foundations of Dialogical Communication**
Peter Elbow's "Believing Game" can function as an ethical strategy and can be understood in terms of humanistic rhetorical traditions from Martin Buber to Carl Rogers and Michael Polanyi.
- Mary Rose O'Reilly* 22 **Splitting the Cartesian Hair**
The "Believing Game," at its deepest level, protects a space where students and teacher can contemplatively ponder what they will choose to love.
- Patricia Bizzell* 29 **Faith-Based World Views as a Challenge
to the Believing Game**
Elbow's "Believing Game" may help to make room in the academy for religious frames of mind, which encompass particularly dense networks of ideas and emotions.
- Gina Briefs-Elgin* 36 **Lessons With the Mystics:
Refreshing Our Vision in Mid/Late Career**
This paper explores surprising and restorative responses to mid/late career burnout from the perspective of four of the world's great Eastern mystical traditions: Hinduism, Sufism, Zen, and Kabbalah.
- Gesa E. Kirsch* 56 **Creating Spaces for Listening, Learning, and Sustaining
the Inner Lives of Students**
This essay explores what it takes to "create a space in the classroom that allows students the freedom to nourish their inner lives," an issue raised by Mary Rose O'Reilly in Radical Presence. The author draws on work in composition studies, education, and her own teaching practices to illustrate the importance of creating such spaces.

- Sue Hum* 68 **The Persuasiveness of Pleasure: Play, Reciprocity, and Persuasion in Online Discussions**
This essay explores the role of pleasure in facilitating diverse modes of rhetorical participation in online discussion.

Reviews

- Brad E. Lucas* 83 **Teaching Multiwriting: Researching and Composing with Multiple Genres, Media, Disciplines, and Cultures**
 (Robert L. Davis and Mark F. Shadle, 2007)
- Heidi Estrem* 85 **College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction**
 (Anne Beaufort, 2007)
- Yufeng Zhang* 88 **Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric**
 (LuMing Mao, 2006)
- William FitzGerald* 91 **Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference**
 (Nedra Reynolds, 2004)

Connecting

- Helen Walker* 94 **Section Editor's Message**
- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Louise Morgan</i> | Email about the Ego |
| <i>Danielle Sahn</i> | The Poet Rewritten |
| <i>Laurence Musgrove</i> | People Get Ready |
| <i>Rae Ann DeRosse</i> | Authority Issues |
| <i>Joanna Smitherman Trapp</i> | The Importance of Being Ernie |
| <i>Beverly Faxon</i> | Why I Read Them Poetry |

Editors' Message

The ability to shudder with awe is the best feature of human beings.

Richard Rorty (10)

In the "Inspirational Value of Great Works of Literature," Richard Rorty makes an ardent plea for rebalancing what he calls "knowingness" and "romantic enthusiasm." Knowingness he defines as a state of the soul that is "dryly scientific" (11); it privileges critique, logic, and debunking, an orientation that has dominated Anglophone philosophy since the rise of logical positivism (10). In the wake of cultural studies, he explains, this state of the soul is coming to dominate literature, and it continues to serve as the organizing principle of composition studies. Without a doubt, knowingness is important, but so, Rorty insists, is "romantic enthusiasm": immersion in the passions of teaching, writing, and reading, a celebration of the heady infatuation we feel for what we do in the classroom, how our students engage with our subject matter, and what we say about both.

Quoting Dorothy Ellison, Rorty warns that "there is a place where we are always alone with our own mortality, where we must simply have something greater than ourselves to hold onto. . . . A reason to believe, a way to take the world by the throat and insist that there is more to this life than we have ever imagined" (Ellison qtd. in Rorty 13). Approaching literature or writing or teaching with a soul focused solely on knowingness unleavened by emotional-material experiences of deep engagement, teacher-learners produce "understanding but not hope, knowledge but not self-transformation" (13). To inspire, to offer "something greater than ourselves to hold onto," reading, writing, and teaching must sweep us off our feet (13). We must feel our way into teaching, learning, and writing before exercising our skeptical, debunking muscles. The essays in this volume celebrate the necessity of feeling our way, because, through such feelings—emotional, physical, and spiritual—we find our reasons to believe in the transformative possibilities of teaching, writing, and reading.

We open our celebration of romantic fervor with a polylogue of four intertwined essays, revised versions of papers presented at a featured session of the April 2008 Conference on College Composition and Communication. Led by Peter Elbow, each paper explores an aspect or an implication of Elbow's believing game, a means of engagement with texts, people, and realities that possesses at its heart a reliance on feelings as a foundation for critique. Elbow sets the stage for these four essays by revisiting the definition and the importance of the believing game in conjunction with the doubting game. As he explains in "The Believing Game or Methodological Believing," our culture has not yet, but needs to, develop methodological believing as a tool that separates believing from accepting. By decoupling believing from temperament or commitment, we use methodological believing to discover "which ideas look best after the scrutiny of believing." Unlike the doubting game, which is a rhetoric of propositions, the believing game is a rhetoric of experience, a tool that relies on narrative, poetry, images, sounds, and body movements. He points out the value of methodological believing as a tool for thinking: it assists us in locating the flaws in our own thinking, it helps us choose among competing positions, and it enables us to

achieve goals neglected by the doubting game, particularly because it privileges our immersion in the experience of believing. As a result, Elbow concludes with a plea to promote the health of methodological believing in our classrooms, our reading, and our writing.

Through a genealogical analysis, Nathaniel Teich elaborates the connections between the believing game and emotions by focusing on the complex experience of empathy. He argues that the believing game, genuinely engaged, can “function as a profoundly ethical strategy within a larger conceptual framework of what I have called for years ‘the rhetoric of empathy.’” Throughout his essay, he traces the family resemblances between Elbow’s believing game and the work of Carl Rogers, Michael Polanyi, Wayne Booth, and Martin Buber. Important to those linkages is the joint emphasis on the necessity of empathic listening and empathic understanding as the vehicle by which one enters into the viewpoints, orientations, and perspectives of an-Other. By creating and relying on the intersubjective relationships, teachers, writers, and readers feel their way into new ways of thinking. As Teich points out, the believing game “involves the interconnection of thought and feeling, cognition and affect, mind and body, that could lead to new understandings and new values and behaviors in personal and public spheres.”

In “Splitting the Cartesian Hair,” Mary Rose O’Reilley pleads for greater circulation of the believing game throughout our English classrooms, for, she claims, it opens up teaching spaces where students can feel their way to learning. Given the dominance of Descartes’s systematic doubt, the believing game can function as a trickster figure, a crow “mimicking the gestures of the devout one” and thereby challenging an orientation that makes it impossible to experience the mystery of one’s own being. Playing with the etymology of belief, O’Reilley connects the word believe to trust and love. She concludes that we must “return them [our students] confidently to scholarship as a believing game,” using the believing game to create and protect the classroom as “a space of imaginative transformation.”

Finally, concluding the polylogue, Patricia Bizzell in “Faith-based Worldviews as a Challenge to the Believing Game” claims that the believing game is Elbow’s most important contribution to the composition studies because it enables us to acknowledge the powerful and deep impact of emotions in teaching, especially in classrooms complicated by an array of religious beliefs. The academic, Bizzell argues, can usually play an intellectual version of the believing game, but stumbles when attempting to inhabit a position—to believe in a concept—that arouses emotions, especially those kindled by religious faith. Thus, using the believing game in a class rich with different religious faiths may be the method’s greatest challenge. Central to that challenge is emotion, for “to enter fully into a religious worldview one must do much more than perform a skeptical thought experiment in which consequences are deduced from premises. One must employ the full emotional and imaginative resources that Elbow calls into play for the believing game.” Delineating the difficulties posed by the emotional issues, such as religious faith, Bizzell concludes that Elbow’s “imaginatively, emotionally engaged believing game may assist us” in feeling our way as teachers, writers, and readers to academic discourse and interactions that provide a space for the play of complex emotions.

The four-part polylogue establishes the centrality of feeling as a reason to

believe in teaching, writing, and learning. Each author highlights the different ways that methodological believing can serve as a necessary balance to skeptical debunking. Our last three essays explore from diverse angles the impact of feeling our way in teaching. Turning to career burnout, Gina Briefs-Elgin in "Lessons with the Mystics: Refreshing Our Vision in Mid/Late Career" pushes beyond the initial flush of our infatuation with our careers to confront the realities of mid/late career disillusionment. What happens when, in the face of unending quotidian trivialities and a nagging sense of failure, enthusiasm for teaching gutters? When we lose our reason to believe in teaching, we also lose our inspiration and joy in the classroom, Briefs-Elgin argues, leaving only "an environment of gray" in which we teach our classes, pursue our scholarship, and mentor our students from duty or habit rather than passion. Briefs-Elgin finds succor and inspiration in Eastern mysticism. She urges us to feel our way back into passionate commitment through the portals provided by Hinduism, Sufism, Zen Buddhism, and Kabbalah. These mystical traditions offer a means to rekindle belief in the importance of teaching and writing.

In "Creating Spaces for Listening, Learning, and Sustaining the Inner Lives of Students," Gesa E. Kirsch transforms her classroom into a risky site where students can nourish and sustain an inner life. Kirsch's essay reflects on her efforts, in the face of personal and professional vulnerability, to bring her "whole self into the classroom, to invite students to do the same, to connect 'mind, heart, body and soul.'" The rewards of such vulnerability include creating a space in the classroom that fosters "the rich dimensions of reflection, introspection, and contemplation which lead us to know and understand things beyond the analytical mind." She emphasizes the "deep pleasure and great discoveries that writing can foster" through a variety of methods. For instance, Kirsch shares her experiences with oranges and seashells as invitations to pay attention, to be present, to the world. In addition, she highlights the role of story-telling—both writing the stories and reading them aloud—that arises out of students' own experiences. To balance talk, Kirsch emphasizes the importance of generative silence in and out of the classroom. By feeling our way into such experimental and risky endeavors, teachers and students can jointly create "spaces to listen and wait, to invite wonder, silence, and wisdom into our lives."

While each of the preceding essays emphasizes the role of feeling our way in face-to-face classrooms, Sue Hum tackles the importance of feeling our way as we teach in digital mediated classrooms. In "The Persuasiveness of Pleasure: Play, Reciprocity, and Persuasion in Online Discourse" Hum explores the reciprocity in an online discussion board that yields pleasure for authors and readers. Playfulness and pleasure are underexplored phenomena, Hum argues, that require our attention because through pleasurable play students and teachers "open themselves up to multiple modes of thinking and ways of living, both of which invite new insights into persuasion." Play, she contends, is the lubricant that greases the wheels of persuasion by undermining closure and encouraging experimentation. To demonstrate the dynamic of play, pleasure, and persuasion, Hum analyzes students' discussion board interactions, highlighting three different interactions: moments when author-readers fail to share pleasure, when play and pleasure fuse in persuasion, and when pleasure fails to yield persuasion. Hum concludes by suggesting four attitudes that foster the important interaction between play and pleasure in persuasion for both face-to-face and digital classrooms.

Students will be shortchanged, Rorty warns, if the “knowing, debunking, nil admirari kind” of teachers are the sole components of their learning experiences, their sole intellectual models. Students need as well the “connoisseurs of charisma” where feelings, passions, and inspirations provide not only a reason to believe in learning but also a reason to believe in each other. The essays in this volume provide a starting point for teaching, writing, and reading that celebrate the inspiration and transformation of shudders of awe. These essays insist on the necessity of feeling, or well as critiquing, our way. ☺

Work Cited

Rorty, Richard. “The Inspirational Value of Great Works of Literature.” *Raritan* 16.2 (1996): 8-17.