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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“We Were the Teachers, Not the Observers”: Transforming Teacher Preparation
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Re-Seeing Story through Portal Writing
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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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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:

- Aesthetic, emotional & moral intelligences
- Learning archetypes
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## Contents

vii **Editors’ Message**

### Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cristina Bruns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Immersion, Transformation, and the Literature Class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Transitional space” helps teachers understand how a reader’s transformation happens, and why it is valuable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne DiPardo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>My Kanawha</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A longtime English educator revisits James Moffet’s notion of “agnosus” as she discovers her West Virginia ancestry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly A. Concannon</td>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Who Cares? Exploring Student Perspectives on Care Ethics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Care ethics are influenced by conflicts between crafted theories and how students read those theories in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kym Buchanan &amp; Perry Cook</td>
<td>31</td>
<td><strong>Playing the Believing Game with Dr. Seuss and Reluctant Learners in Science</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Seuss’ Green Eggs and Ham offers insights for teachers trying to overcome learners’ reluctance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Woodworth</td>
<td>42</td>
<td><strong>Being the Unbook, Being the Change: The Transformative Power of Open Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A director of composition tests and advocates “open education sources” for the development of curricula and programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Keith Duffy</td>
<td>50</td>
<td><strong>Suffering and Teaching Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How can spiritual texts help us respond to the burn-out we sometimes experience in our roles as literacy teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Collins Sitler</td>
<td>63</td>
<td><strong>Perfect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perfectionism can be a form of trauma that composition instructors should be aware of in some high-achieving students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki Holland, Iris Shepard,</td>
<td>73</td>
<td><strong>“We Were the Teachers, Not the Observers: Transforming Teacher Preparation through Placements in a Creative, After-School Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Z. Goering, &amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher preparation at one university shifts pre-service observation to hands-on integration of the arts in an after-school program called Razorback Writers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David A. Jolliffe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S. Rebecca Leigh 83  
Re-Seeing Story through Portal Writing
Findings suggest that portal writing can be used as an effective tool for helping young students focus and revise their narrative work.

Nicole Warwick 95  
“Poetry Is Not a Luxury”: Why We Should Include Poetry In the Writing Classroom
How can poetry transform academic writing’s “masculine” ways of knowing and communicating into transnational exploration?

Out of the Box

Colette Morrow 107  
Notes from Teaching at the Ends of the Earth
Third-world teaching enables one feminist instructor to revitalize her instruction in American universities.

Book Reviews

Judy Halden-Sullivan 109  
Evolution and Criticism

Julie J. Nichols 110  

Mary Pettice 115  

Connecting

Helen Walker 118  
Teaching/ Seeing Jesus
Jan Buley 120  
The Realization
S. Rebecca Leigh 121  
Celebrating Ways of Learning
Christopher M. Bache 122  
The Opening Question
Bette B. Bauer 123  
Teaching as a Spiritual Practice
Rachel Forrester 125  
Appalachia Finally in the Spring
Laurence Musgrove 127  
Syllabus

128  
Contributors to JAEPL, Vol. 17

131  
Guidelines for Writers of JAEPL

Laurence Musgrove 134  
Two Models of Education (and a 3rd)
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 JAEP 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 JAEP.