

**Editor's Introduction:
Lived Words and Worlds: Community Engaged Literacies**

Meghan E. Barnes

In the fall of 2014 a group of graduate students in the Language and Literacy Education Department at The University of Georgia shared dinner with the women and children living in the Athens Area Homeless Shelter. During their visit, one resident asked if the group could help her place a [Little Free Library](#) at the shelter so that the children and families living in the shelter and surrounding neighborhood could have access to books without having to navigate the city bus system in order to visit the public library. Following their visit, the group of graduate students worked together with other members of the department to purchase and build a Little Free Library and to gather books to place in the library. The group then delivered the library and books to the shelter, where the residents decorated the library before mounting it by the sidewalk, as you can see in the photo serving as our cover art for this issue of *JoLLE*.

I share this story as an introduction to our spring issue because I believe it speaks to the ways that literacy is a social and collaborative practice, extending beyond the confines of a classroom or the university setting. The *JoLLE@UGA* 2016 winter conference, *Lived Words and Worlds: Community Engaged Literacies*, provided a space to share work like the collaboration between the graduate students and the community members of Athens around the Little Free Library. During the conference, presenters told stories about the challenges associated with community-engaged work, they brought children to help them present the findings of their community work, and they reimagined “community” to include both digital and physical spaces that extend across time and modes. Our keynote speakers, sj Miller, Michael Wenk, and David Kirkland challenged conference attendees to question who is served by their teaching and research, how students and community members are positioned in schools and in research, and the ways that texts and curriculum can silence diverse populations of students and families. The articles, book reviews, and poetry included in this issue of *JoLLE* extend the work that was presented at the winter 2016 conference. Specifically, the seven research articles included in this issue of *JoLLE* address the role of outside-of-school spaces in developing students’ literacy practices, the social contexts of learning and literacy practices, and the role of experience in learning and providing opportunities for community development.

The first section of research articles begins with Nicole Mirra, Benjamin Honoroff, Suzanne Elgendy, and Gabriel Pietrzak’s *Reading and Writing with a Public Purpose: Fostering Middle School Students’ Academic and Critical Community Literacies through Debate*. In their article, Mirra, Honoroff, Elgendy, and Pietrzak consider the potential for community-based debate to provide a space for middle school students to use their voices, to develop civic identities, and ultimately to advocate for social justice. Ultimately, the authors suggest that participation in community literacy initiatives (like debate) can encourage students to approach literacy and text from more critical perspectives. Like Mirra, Honoroff, Elgendy, and Pietrzak, the authors of *Collaborating*

in the Community: Fostering Identity and Creative Expression in an Afterschool Program recognize outside-of-school spaces as providing an opportunity to extend students' literacy practices. In their article, Leslie Cavendish, Sarah Vess, and Kirsten Li-Barber analyze the experiences of a group of elementary school students as they participate in an afterschool writing program. The authors were specifically interested in the potential of the program to encourage students to develop writing identities as they interacted with one another and incorporated multimodal tools, like photography, into their writing.

The second section of articles share a focus on the social contexts of learning and literacy practices. In his article, *Teaching Multiple Literacies and Critical Literacy to Pre-Service Teachers through Children's-Literature-Based Engagements*, Cheu-jei Lee uses children's literature to introduce pre-service teachers to multiple and critical literacies. For Lee and his students, literacy becomes part of social practice when it is conceived as both multiple and critical. Dainess Maganda draws from her work conducting a Participatory Action Research study in a primary school community in Tanzania in *Conflicted Worlds of Multilingual Communities in Africa: Literacy Tangled in Words*. Maganda's work with teachers, parents, and students within this context contributed to her understanding that in multilingual nations, in particular, language practices and instruction cannot be separated from the social milieu. In their article, *Generational, Cultural, and Linguistic Integration for Literacy Learning and Teaching in Uganda: Pedagogical Possibilities, Challenges, and Lessons from one NGO*, Willy Ngaka, Ross Graham, Fred Masagazi Masaazi, and Elly Moses Anyandru are particularly concerned with preparing rural community members in Uganda to compete in the global economy. The authors recognize literacy as a social practice and suggest that the unique and diverse literacy experiences of rural community members should be supported and sustained through combinations of formal, informal, and non-formal approaches to literacy education.

In the third, and final, section of articles, authors consider how teachers and students specifically within the context of English Language Learning (ELL) draw from their own experiences to reflect on and reimagine school literacy spaces and practices. In their article *Enhancing Academic Investment through Home-School Connections and Building on ELL Students' Scholastic Funds of Knowledge* Eric J. Johnson and Angela B. Johnson draw from a sociocultural perspective and funds of knowledge framework to create a space for ELLs to develop and teach classroom lessons based on their own interests. Through their work, Johnson and Johnson found that students demonstrated increased engagement with classroom activities and drew stronger connections between home and school-based literacy practices. In *A Case Study of Teacher Reflection: Examining Teacher Participation in a Video-based Professional Learning Community* Susanna M. Steeg analyzes the experiences of a group of dual-language and ELL teachers as they work within a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Specifically, the teachers worked within this professional community space to share and view videos of their own teaching, and to reflect and revise teaching practices. Across all of the articles in this spring issue, there is a close attendance to the ways that teachers and researchers can learn about, with, and from communities as they develop their practice.

Academic Book Review Editor, [Xiaodi Zhou](#), has included a number of diverse book reviews in this issue of *JOLLE*. The academic texts reviewed in this issue include *Brooklyn Dreams: My Life in Public Education* (Nieto, 2015) reviewed by Jacqueline J. Saindon, *Cognitive Linguistics and Second Language Learning: Theoretical Basis and Experimental Evidence* (Tyler, 2012) reviewed by Heesun Chang, *Digital Reading: What's Essential in Grades 3-8* (Bass & Sibberson, 2015) reviewed by Marianne Snow Campbell, *Literacy and History in Action: Immersive Approaches to Disciplinary Thinking, Grades 5-12* (McCann, D'Angelo, Galas, & Greska, 2015) reviewed by Justin Dooly, *Pose, Wobble, Flow: A Culturally Proactive Approach to Literacy Instruction* (Garcia & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015) reviewed by Meghan E. Barnes, and *Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom* (Ayers & Ayers, 2014) reviewed by Rachele Savitz.

[Rachel Kaminsky Sanders](#), the 2015-2016 Children's and Young Adult Literature (CYAL) Book Review Editor, continues to innovate the CYAL Book Review section of the journal by including a feature book review and also a podcast discussion with an author. The section begins with a feature review of *The Magician's Hat* (Mitchell, 2015) by Joel Taxel. Other books reviewed in this issue of *JoLLE* include *El Deafo* (Bell, 2014) reviewed by Ivy Hadley and Soojin Ahn, *Cotton Patch Rebel: The Story of Clarence Jordan* (Trousdale, 2015) reviewed by Harper Ladd and Sharon Sanders, *Rain, Reign* (Martin, 2014) reviewed by Riley McLaughlin and Laura Beck, *Promise* (Young, 2015) reviewed by Bailey Brockelbank and William J. Fassbender, *The Way Back from Broken* (Keyser, 2015) reviewed by Eveliyn Martinez and Helene Halstead, and *A 52-Hertz Whale* (Sommer & Tilghman, 2015) reviewed by Kelsey Messinger and Heidi Lyn Hadley.

Finally, Poetry and Art Editor, [Margaret A. Robbins](#) is excited to feature a video of Dr. Dainess Maganda performing her poem "Why Don't You Understand." In addition to Dr. Maganda's poem, the Poetry and Art section also includes a combination of 6 poems—all highlighting the potential for language and literacy to build communities within classroom spaces and beyond. The poems published in this issue of *JoLLE* include "you ask me how" by Khédija Gadhoum, "Brother Book Bouncing—An O—Bit" by Dale Allender, "But I'm Not a Reading Teacher" and "The Taxi Driver's Daughter" by Leah Panther, "Thoughts to Words" and "Les Mots Justes" by Jeff Kilpatrick, and "Why Don't You Understand?" by Dr. Dainess Maganda.

On behalf of the *JoLLE* editorial and review boards, I want to extend my gratitude to you, our readers and supporters. We also want to encourage you to support *JoLLE* by submitting your own work for consideration in future issues! We currently accept research articles, theoretical pieces, practitioner-based Voices from the Field articles, academic book reviews, reviews of children's and young adult literature, and submissions of poetry and art. For all details regarding the submission process or if you are interested in serving as a reviewer, please refer to the *JoLLE* [submissions page](#) and/or contact our incoming Managing Editor, [Heidi Lyn Hadley](#). In addition to the biannually published journal, *JoLLE* also invites you to submit shorter op-ed essays to our Scholars Speak Out (SSO) feature. To learn more about the SSO purposes and publication process, please contact our Scholars Speak Out Editor, [Lou Cardozo-Gaibiso](#). And, as always, please continue to follow *JoLLE* on both [Facebook](#) and Twitter (@jolle_uga).

As a graduate student-run journal, the editorial and review boards that comprise *JoLLE* change with each academic year. Before bringing this year to a close and transitioning to our 2016-2017 Editorial Board, I want to take a moment to recognize the accomplishments of this year's *JoLLE* editorial and review boards. In addition to maintaining the same quality of manuscript reviews that *JoLLE* readers and authors are accustomed to, during the 2015-2016 year, *JoLLE* also adopted an inclusive pronoun statement to guide all future *JoLLE* publications, developed procedures for collecting IRB (or other relevant permissions) from authors conducting human subjects research, successfully planned and led the fourth-annual winter conference, and had the distinct honor of nominating and then watching Dr. Peter Smagorinsky receive The University of Georgia SOAR Award for Advisor of the Year. Specifically, I want to recognize the dedicated graduate students who have worked with *JoLLE* in the spring 2016 semester: Stephanie Anne Shelton (Managing Editor), Helene Halstead (Conference Chair), Megan P. Brock (Production Editor), Nick Thompson (Communications Editor), Margaret A. Robbins (Poetry and Arts Editor), Xiaodi Zhou (Academic Book Review Editor), Rachel Kaminski Sanders (CYAL Book Review Editor), Lourdes Cardozo-Gaibisso (Scholars Speak Out Editor), Rhia Moreno Kilpatrick, Heidi Lyn Hadley, Viviane Klen Alves, and Soojin Ahn. Finally, the quality of our reviews, our understanding of the publishing world, and our connection to editors, writers, and reviewers worldwide would not be possible without the constant support and guidance of our faculty advisor, Dr. Peter Smagorinsky.

For those of you who know me, the opportunity to work with *JoLLE* was one of the primary reasons I chose to attend UGA for my doctoral work. It has been such an honor to work with the journal over the past three years as the SSO Editor, Managing Editor, and now Principal Editor. This year, in particular, has been an incredibly

humbling experience as I have had the chance to learn from and work with a group of graduate students who are truly invested in the challenging and critical work of rethinking how we educate an increasingly diverse population of PreK-16 students. I am very grateful to have had the chance to serve as *JoLLE*'s 2015-2016 Principal Editor, and excited to see the ways the incoming Editorial Board (listed below) continue to grow and expand the journal next year.

I hope that as you read the articles, book reviews, and poetry pieces published in this spring 2016 issue of *JoLLE*, you feel compelled to consider the ways that your work addresses multiple audiences, engages with communities, and challenges divisions between schools and homes.

Sincerely,

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