

JoLLE@UGA®

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Editors' Introduction

Exploring the Space Outside the Box and Inside the Margins

Jennifer Jackson Whitley & Nick Thompson

Space is a perplexing concept. When thinking of outer space, it is difficult to understand its infinite complexity—the paradox of there being an end to it, but also that it could never, truly, end. There is space between us and others, between this word and that one. We ask for space, we create it, we maximize and minimize it. Sometimes it can be seen—or felt. Other times, it is silent and creeping. Space is unavoidable and, when considering the classroom space, it is and needs to be understood, grappled with, and troubled.

Space in a classroom is like the white space in this letter. There are obvious identifiers of a page—words, indentations, punctuation, and spacing. We notice the words. We notice when something is “out of place.” But, do we notice that the majority of this space is white, boxy, and unused? Or, maybe this white space is used, but not intentionally? Or, maybe it is intentional—intentionally silent and powerful. We do not usually look up and engage with the air; we do not usually feel the power it holds, nor do we generally acknowledge its presence and importance. It's just there, no excuses made for it. It is our hope that this issue of *JoLLE* engages with the air.

When developing the theme of this year's conference and correlating spring issue, we asked ourselves, “What are scholars doing differently?” In other words, how are teachers pushing back against normative discourses; how are academics breaking the mold of academia, shaping new ways to conduct and produce scholarship? How are students and teachers empowering themselves to move out of the box and into the margins, engaging in the complex spaces that encompass their classrooms? These questions led to an incredible *JoLLE* Winter Conference this past February and we believe an issue that will encourage our readers to step into places--or margins--that often are unnoticed, under-researched, and in need of space.

Spring 2017 Academic Articles

We begin this issue of *JoLLE* by inviting readers into the literal margins of society, as Stephanie Anne Shelton writes about her experiences in a rural classroom. Her piece, titled *A Narrative Reflection on Examining Text and World for Social Justice: Combatting Bullying and Harassment with Shakespeare*, addresses her use of *The Merchant of Venice* to engage in critical discussions with her high school students regarding sexism, religion, homophobia, and other social justice issues. According to Shelton, “What is most critical is that teachers realize that there is true social justice potential in every classroom, in every assigned material.” This piece encourages

educators to use the resources available to them in order to address important issues in their classrooms, offering ways to handle resistance and other curricular obstacles.

Jill M. Hermann-Wilmarth, Rosemary Lannen, and Caitlin L. Ryan “explore the intersection of critical literacy pedagogy and transgender topics” by looking at a fourth-grade student, Brandon’s, journey and work through a classroom that employed a critical pedagogy focusing on LGBTQIA+ issues. Their article is titled *Critical Literacy and Transgender Topics in an Upper Elementary Classroom: A Portrait of Possibility*. This manuscript, while focused on one classroom, finds a way to exemplify how students at any level from kindergarten to graduate school can explore these topics. As their conclusion points out, it is a timely piece in a moment when “the federal guidelines regarding transgender students during the last months of the presidential administration of Barack Obama have been revoked in the first months of the presidential administration of Donald Trump.”

In *Are We Making ‘PROGRESS’?: A Critical Literacies Framework to Engage Pre-service Teachers for Social Justice*, Holly C. Matteson and Ashley S. Boyd write, “As one way to engage pre-service teachers in the social justice endeavors endorsed by CAEP and to develop and subsequently assess their knowledge of critical concepts, we here offer the original framework PROGRESS,” which stands for: positionality, race, orientation, gender, relationships, environment, social class, and stereotypes. The authors offer readers a hands-on approach to this framework by applying it to their work with *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. In their conclusion, Matteson and Boyd write that their goal for this framework is that pre-service teachers “would extend this learning into action in their everyday worlds, translating the recognitions spawned by PROGRESS into deeds for social change.”

Angela Wiseman, Melissa Pendleton, Christine Christiansen, and Nicole Nesheim’s article, *A Case Study of Struggle and Success: Profiling a Third Grader’s Reading and Writing in a Multimodal Curriculum*, reports findings on a case study of Ellie as she participates in a language arts curriculum that incorporates multimodal literacy practices, including photography, drama, and art to teach reading and writing. Wiseman asked, “How does the integration of multimodal instruction affect how a struggling third grade reader and writer responds and learns in the language arts classroom?” She argues that incorporating multimodal instruction has the potential to provide more opportunities for students to build and share knowledge, particularly if they struggle with print-based literacies. She found that Ellie’s reading and writing practices were complex and that visual strategies supported significant aspects of her literacy learning. This case study shows one example of literacy education that is more complex than the traditional combination of reading and writing, and how it can help students flourish when they might have floundered in a classroom that only employs canonized pedagogies.

Sue Christian Parsons, Robin Fuxa, Faryl Kander, and Dana Hardy dove into young adult literature with a critical eye aimed to analyze the representations of adoption in their article, *Representations of Adoption in Contemporary Realistic Fiction for Young Adults*, which addresses how “A fun-house reflection that distorts or misrepresents identity or experience can be highly problematic, particularly when this distortion is repeated across multiple texts.” They argue how books that feature adoption are a small part of the young adult landscape, so each book can have a significant impact on the way that a reader constructs adoption. This impact is important, according to the authors, because “Negative, oversimplified, or unexamined depictions” are presented, and “accuracy and authenticity are lost in pursuit of a gripping tale.” The scholars end their article

with useful recommendations for how educators can build their libraries appropriately in consideration of these concerns.

Our final academic article, *Power and Agency in a High Poverty Elementary School: How Teachers Experienced a Scripted Reading Program*, by Rebecca Powell, Susan Chambers Cantrell, and Pamela Correll, uses post-intentional phenomenology to investigate “the impact of a scripted program in an urban, culturally and linguistically diverse, low socioeconomic elementary school” and explores “how teachers within this context experienced a scripted reading program while also facing the challenges associated with working in a high poverty environment.” Seventeen teachers were interviewed for this study after their first year using a mandatory scripted reading program. Despite the removal of autonomy this program seemingly encouraged, teachers were able to demonstrate agency in various ways. This article shows how teachers shape and mold their classrooms within a very constricting space.

Book Reviews and Poetry and Art

Our editorial board members, led by feature editors, have assembled academic and children’s and young adult literature book reviews, as well as original artistic and poetry pieces related to language and literacy education in addition to the academic articles featured in this issue. Our Academic Book Review Editor, Kathleen R. McGovern, has assembled a diverse collection of reviews for our readers, continuing the theme of “Out of the Box and Into the Margins” with her first two selections, *WHAM! Teaching with Graphic Novels Across the Curriculum* by William G. Brozo, Gary Moorman, and Carla K. Meyer, which was reviewed by Chyllis E. Scott, Cadence Taylor, Bridgette Buhlman, Ana Dunne, Chelsea Garmon, Nerissa Lopez, and Alexandria Miles, who completed this review together as a class. The second text, *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap* by Paul C. Gorski, was reviewed in a multimodal way by Matthew J. Moulton.

Additional texts in this section are: *Learning from the Federal Market-Based Reforms: Lessons for the Every Student Succeeds Act* by William J. Mathis and Tina M. Trujillo, reviewed by Patrick Shannon; *Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities* by Django Paris and Maisha T. Winn, reviewed by Stephanie Anne Shelton; *What Connected Educators Do Differently* by Todd Whitaker, Jimmy Casas, and Jeffrey Zoul, reviewed by Melissa Adams-Budde and Joy Myers; *Maximizing Motivation for Literacy Learning: Grades K-6* by Barbara A. Marinak, Linda B. Gambrell, and Susan A. Mazzoni, reviewed by Rebecca Benjamin; *Reading Upside Down: Identifying and Addressing Opportunity Gaps in Literacy Instruction* by Deborah L. Wolter, reviewed by Yanty Wirza; and *Challenging Perceptions in Primary Education: Exploring Issues in Practice*, edited by Margaret Sangster, and reviewed by Lin Chen.

JoLLE’s Children’s and Young Adult Literature (CYAL) Book Review Editor, T. Hunter Strickland, began his section with a podcast interviewing local author and artist, Stan Mullins. Additionally, he included a great selection of texts for elementary, middle, and high school readers, reviewed both by students and educators. For elementary-aged readers, texts in this section include: *Treasure Town* by Doug Wilhelm and illustrated by Sarah-Lee Terrat, reviewed by Askia Hylton (student) and Mary Guay (adult/educator); *Inspector Flytrap* and *Inspector Flytrap in The President’s Mane is Missing*, both by Tom Angleberger and Cece Bell, and both reviewed by Pharaoh N. Nurrudin (student) and Sharron M. Nurrudin (adult/educator). For our middle school-aged readers, reviewed texts are: *Fannie Never Flinched* by Mary Cronk Farrell, reviewed by Spencer Hadley (student) and Heidi Lyn Hadley (adult/educator); and *Fuzzy* by Tom Angleberger and Paul Dellinger, reviewed by Brennan

Kajder (student) and Sara Kajder (adult/educator). Our final texts reviewed in this section are for high school-aged youth and include: *The Intuitives* by Erin Michelle Sky and Steven Brown, reviewed by Jordan White (student) and Margaret A. Robbins (adult/educator); and *The Lie Tree* by Frances Hardinge, reviewed by Brantley Power (student) and T. Hunter Strickland (adult/educator).

The final pieces of this issue of JoLLE are featured by Poetry and Arts Editor, Kuo Zhang. This section begins with a number of poems: *Sarah's First Visit to Shanghai* and *God-Read English* by Lei Jiang; *International Student Learns about American Chinese Food* by Viviane Klen Alves Moore; *Manifesto: The Mad Teacher Liberation Front* by Rebecca Powell; *Writing Club* by Agie Behounek; *Sentences Make Sense* by Sheryl Lain; and *The Disenfranchised Learner* by Vivian Yenika-Agbaw, Laura Hudock, Paul Ricks, and Rene Rodriguez-Astacio. Additionally, we feature three pieces of art, including *Intertextuality*, our cover art, by Jerome C. Harste, who also created *Out of the Box Scholarship*. The final piece is called *The Reader* and was done by Jonathan Eakle.

Thanks and Recognitions

We—Jenn and Nick—first want to thank our readers and contributors. Without your readership and scholarship, JoLLE would not exist. JoLLE is a collaborative effort run by graduate students at the University of Georgia, and it is your support that gives us a reason to do what we do. We encourage you to continue your support by submitting your work for consideration in JoLLE's future issues. We accept research articles, theoretical pieces, Voices from the Field articles, academic book reviews, reviews of children's and young adult literature, and submissions of poetry and art. For more information about our journal, submission guidelines, and additional opportunities for involvement, such as reviewing for us or submitting a piece for our Scholars Speak Out (SSO) section, please visit [our website](#). You can also follow JoLLE on both [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) (@jolle_uga).

JoLLE's editorial board rotates each semester. This semester's board has worked tirelessly to put on a [conference](#) and produce a thoughtful issue, both themed "Out of the Box and Into the Margins." We want to recognize this semester's JoLLE editorial and review boards for the incredible job they do: Heidi Lyn Hadley (Managing Editor), Bradley Robinson (Production Editor), Rachel Kaminski Sanders (Conference Chair), William J. Fassbender (Digital Content Editor), Kathleen R. McGovern (Academic Book Review Editor), T. Hunter Strickland (Children and Young Adult Book Review Editor), Kuo Zhang (Poetry and Arts Editor), Lourdes Cardozo-Gaibisso (Scholars Speak Out Editor), Kallianne L. Neumann (Communications Editor), and Sharon M. Nuruddin, and S. R. Toliver (Editorial Board Members). Finally, we would like to recognize our fearless Faculty Advisor, Peter Smagorinsky, and thank him for his leadership and continuous support.

Understanding that space is both limited and limiting as well as infinite and freeing, we constructed the Spring 2017 issue of JoLLE hoping to toy with the idea of space, including work that recognizes the issues boxing us in, constricting student creativity, and removing teacher autonomy and offering ways to break out of those boxes, even in places that literally or figuratively reside in the margins. Thank you, again, for your support of our journal. We recognize your contributions to this publication and understand that we are here to serve you, our readers, contributors, and collaborators.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jackson Whitley and Nick Thompson, Co-Principal Editors