

JoLLE@UGA[®]

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Editor's Introduction:

Transformation Through Radical Support

Merida Lang

In sitting down to write this letter, it seemed important to me to not just discuss this issue's theme, *Toward Transformative Justice: Cultivating Accountable Community and Empowering Solidarity in Language and Literacy Education*, but to discuss it within the context of this year. Anything I could say about this year has already been said, and yet bears repeating; it has been devastating, exhausting, debilitating. We are weary, grieving, and depleted. And yet, we wake up every day, with, for many of us, the same set of responsibilities and obligations, or even additional burdens, that we had prior to 2020. We teach, we conduct research, we are parents and caregivers, we support and engage with our communities. And so, what does it mean to be accountable to and in solidarity with our communities, at a time when we are all stretched so terribly thin? Isn't this a reality that we need to bring into the light, especially if we, as our theme suggests, want to be truly transformative, and not merely give lip service to the idea of justice?

This spring in JoLLE has, in many ways, been a transformative time for us as a journal. We welcomed our new faculty advisor, Dr. Usree Bhattacharya, and our editorial board was warmly brought into her generous fold, where she supported us in the production of the journal, as well as in helping us grow as scholars. In our weekly time, she dedicated time to helping us with the emotional challenges that accompany the life of new scholars; time management, pressure to publish, isolation, and loneliness. She reserved time each week to check in with us individually, both in and out of class, and in times of great need for our editorial board members, rallied the JoLLE crew to support one another in meaningful ways.

This sense of camaraderie helped to propel our work with JoLLE forward when, at times, we were experiencing the fatigue of the pandemic, or of the state of racism and violence. The community that we built helped us to have grace with one another and pick up the slack when someone else couldn't carry the load.

As the semester ends and we imagine how to move toward transformative justice, considering all we have collectively endured, I am reminded of Tuck's (2009) vitally important piece, "Suspending

Damage: A Letter to Communities,” in which she urges researchers to move away from “damage-centered research” and towards an approach that centers the desires of the communities in question instead. She writes that, “desire-based research frameworks are concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives” (p. 416). Tuck’s notion here lies at the center of what it means to be a part of “accountable community,” in that one is embedded deeply enough in the communities in which their work is based to have a clear and honest understanding of their desires, and to cultivate a sense of accountability. As educators and researchers, our work is always in service of others, but to do it right, to work from a desire-based framework and not a deficit-based framework, our lives and desires we must be intertwined.

We cannot know what people around us, communities, students, young people, or schools need, unless we engage, humanely and respectfully. Radical support means learning to listen, to working to give what is needed, when we can, and it is a step in the right direction toward building accountable community and empowering solidarity.

JoLLE 2021 Winter Conference

We are so grateful to our conference co-chairs, Shuang Fu and Yixuan Wang, for organizing our excellent virtual conference, *Toward Transformative Justice: Cultivating Accountable Community and Empowering Solidarity in Language and Literacy Education* which took place on February 5-7th, 2021. Our keynote speakers, Dr. Yolanda Sealy-Ruiz, Associate Professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Dr. K. Wayne Yang, Provost of John Muir College and Professor at the University of California, San Diego, both gave intimate and stirring speeches. Further, we had a variety of workshops and presentations inspired engagement and lively participation, which remains a hallmark of the JOLLE conference.

Both Dr. Sealy-Ruiz & Dr. Yang’s conference presentations are available to view in this issue. Dr. Sealy-Ruiz’s talk is entitled *Enacting Critical Love: An “Archaeology of Self” Approach Towards Anti-Racism in the Academy and Beyond* and speaks to the deep “excavation” that we must do in order to engage in work that is grounded in love, which, she argues, is how the most affective research and justice work can be done. Dr. Yang’s talk, titled *Literacy for Solidarity: Or, How to Honor Ancestors Not Our Own*, speaks directly to the theme’s imperative to build empowering solidarity, which is a reflective practice of honoring others, while also working to be aware of our own complicity in colonialism and white supremacy. Both presentations were thought provoking and served as a reminder for how powerful justice-oriented research and education can be.

In this issue, we are also honored to include writing by both speakers: a poem by Dr. Sealy-Ruiz entitled, “Racial Literacy Poetics for the Academy & Beyond,” and an essay by Dr. Yang called *Twisted Colonizations, Twisted Ancestries: Towards a pro-Black Asian Politics*. We are grateful for both their contributions.

Research Articles

The first research article in our spring issue is by Alexandra Panos and James Damico and titled “Less than One Percent is Not Enough: How Leading Literacy Organizations Engaged with Climate Change from 2008 to 2019.” This literature review addresses the dearth of attention the issue of climate change has received in literacy scholarship, both in print and within conferences. The authors weave a stirring call to action for the literacy education field to highlight one of the most critical issues of our time.

Jessie Findora and Thomas C. Hammond’s piece, “These Are Normal People”: White High School Students’ Responses to Interracial Literary Fiction,” is based on research the authors did in an English classroom in a majority white school. They compared the book club experiences of white high school students reading canonical literature by white male authors with those of white high school students reading literature by authors of color. The researchers determined that the white students who read books by non-white authors, empathized with the characters while also engaging in discussions with their peers on racism and discrimination, without teacher direction.

This issue’s third article, “Disciplinary Literacy: Successes and Challenges of Professional Development,” by Emily Howell, Wendy Barlow, and Jeanne Dyches considers the current role of professional development in teachers’ understanding of and approach to disciplinary literacy and discusses what their professional development needs may be.

Our final two articles both address issues in teacher education. Jessica Whitelaw’s piece, “Collage Praxis: What Collage Can Teach Us about Teaching and Knowledge Generation,” considers the transformational role that collage can play in a teacher education curriculum. Finally, “The Voice Lies Within Them’: Teacher Candidates’ Conceptions of Literacy and Social Justice Pedagogy,” by Rick Marlatt and Meghan E. Barnes analyzes the relationship between teaching candidates’ conceptions of social justice and literacy, and how they may impact one another.

Voices from the Field

The first Voices from the Field piece, “What Can Translation Do? Language, Power, and Identity in an Elementary Classroom,” by Eric Fishman, reflects on the power of translation in his elementary classroom. Using practitioner research, Fishman considers the potential of translation work to develop critical bilingualism and monolingualism.

In “Chasing New Worlds: Stories of Roleplaying in Classroom Spaces,” Karis Jones, Scott Storm, Jennifer Castillo, and Sasha Karbachinskiy share the different ways that roleplaying in classroom and other school settings served to develop criticality and deepen understanding of texts in both secondary and higher education spaces.

Academic Book Reviews

The academic book reviews in this issue, organized by our Academic Book Editor, Dan Jin, address a range of issues related to literacy education, focusing primarily on issues of multiculturalism and

reaching a diverse student population. We hope that readers of JoLLE will be equally inspired by the topics covered in these books.

The books reviewed in this issue are *Review of De/constructing Literacies: Considerations for Engagement* (Lemieux, 2020), reviewed by Jason D. DeHart; *Review of Read, Write, Inquire: Disciplinary Literacy in Grades 6-12* (Spires, et al, 2020), reviewed by Madison Gannon; *Narratives of Hope and Grief in Higher Education* (Shelton & Sieben, 2020), reviewed by Allyson Pitzel; *Plurilingual Pedagogies: Critical and Creative Endeavors for Equitable Language in Education* (Lau & Van Viegen, 2020), reviewed by Sae saem Yoon; and *Engaging with Multicultural YA Literature in the Secondary Classroom: Critical Approaches for Critical Educators* (Ginsberg & Glenn, 2019), reviewed by Caleb Chandler.

Children’s and Young Adult Book Reviews

As has been the case throughout the history of this feature in JoLLE, our current issue’s reviews featured reviews by both young and adult readers. Our Children’s and Young Adult Book Review Editor, Judith Cecile Johnson compiled a collection of joyful, sweet, and thoughtful books, with equally compelling reviews.

The books featured in this issue for review are *Green Machine: The Slightly Gross Truth about Turning Your Food Scraps into Green Energy* (Donnelly & Jacques, 2020), reviewed by Angie Foster and her son, Daniel Foster; *Undercover Ostrich* (Kulka, 2019), reviewed by Angie Foster and Will Foster; *The Liars of Mariposa Island* (Mathieu, 2019), reviewed by Rhonda Pawlik; and *It’s Okay To Be A Unicorn!* (Tharp, 2020), reviewed by Janet Key and children.

Poetry, Fiction, and Visual Arts

Our Poetry, Fiction, and Visual Arts editor, LaTasha Hutcherson Price, curated a robust section with both poetry and visual art. The first three poems, by Joy Valentine are titled, “Repair Narratives Matter,” “On Translanguaging,” and “Incarceration Nation.” The next three poems, by Mellissa Gyimah-Concepcion, are titled “Speak Proper English,” “In a Nutshell,” and “Saying No.”

Aiysha Sinclair who created the cover art for this issue, also contributed two other pieces: “Girl with Red” & “Mushroom.” Two visual art pieces were created by Amanda Smith, titled “Underpainting Quilt” & “On Memory.” Four works of art were made by Kerry Alexander, titled “Literacy,” “Collaboration,” “The Ecology of the Mind,” “Typewriter,” “Virtual Schooling,” and “Mycelium.” Our final visual art piece in this issue is “Languages Are Connections” by Saurabh Anand.

Thanks and Recognition

The first order of thanks goes to JoLLE’s editorial board, by whose work I have been continually impressed and inspired. In spite of the incredible challenges and stressors of this year, this board has been dedicated and inspired, coming up with new ways to innovate and improve the journal. And despite the all-virtual format, and the challenges we faced, each member of the board was deeply motivated and driven, often going above and beyond in their duties. As is always the case with JoLLE,

the journal would not have been possible without each member's hard work and dedication. This year's Editorial Board includes Bhairvi Trivedi, Managing Editor; Jennifer Ervin, Production Editor; Yixuan Wang & Shuang Fu, Conference Co-Chairs; Dan Jin, Academic Book Review Editor; LaTasha Hutcherson Price, Poetry, Fiction, & Visual Arts Editor; Judith Cecile Johnson, CYAL Book Review Editor; Saurabh Anand, Communications Editor; Tamara Moten, Scholars Speak Out Editor; and Sarah K. Stice, Digital Content Editor. Thank you all for creating an excellent issue.

In addition to our editorial board, our external review board serves a vital function, providing their expertise with article reviews. As Principal Editor I have the pleasure of reading all the reviews and the insights that our editorial members offer is invaluable. Additionally, given the unprecedented stressors of this past year, I am beyond grateful that the board continued to be generous and stayed committed to JoLLE.

And finally, we would like to thank the wonderful authors who contributed to the journal and the readers who comprise our community of scholars and educators. If you are interested in submitting your work to JoLLE or serving as an External Review Board member, please refer to the JoLLE submissions page on our website (jolle.coe.uga.edu) or contact our incoming Managing Editor, Jenn Ervin (jolle.submissions@gmail.com). In addition to our Fall and Spring issues, we invite you to read and submit shorter op-ed essays to our Scholars Speak Out (SSO) feature that is published on our website and publicized in our monthly newsletters. To learn more about the SSO feature, please contact our SSO Editor, Tamara Moten (jolle.scholarsspeakout@gmail.com). For regular social media updates, please follow JoLLE on both Facebook and Twitter (@JoLLE_UGA).

Sincerely,

Merida Lang

Principal Editor 2020-2021