From the Editors

Julie Gorlewski
State University of New York at New Paltz

David Gorlewski
D’Youville College, Buffalo, New York

narrow our worldview. The more time we spend with those who share our perspective, the more difficult it is to see—and see beyond—the limits of our discipline. The dangers of becoming locked into particular ways of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are grave—for us and for our students. The prefix “inter” offers hope. Together, by seeking to learn with and from content associated with other disciplines, we can reap the benefits of living within and beyond the boundaries of our content areas.

Synergy signifies a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. It has the power to create products that can’t be imagined or predicted within disciplinary constraints.

The synergies associated with interdisciplinary learning are natural while the division of learning into disciplines is arbitrary and artificial. Children do not learn and grow in predetermined blocks of time, and neither do adolescents (nor do adults, for that matter). The articles in this issue explore, and then shatter, disciplinary divisions. Authors consider connections between and among geometry, poetry, and film, as well as collaborative opportunities between English and calculus. They explore how to engage students in spaces where science, history, and English intersect, and they share strategies for using literature to blur disciplinary boundaries. Most importantly, contributors in this issue examine the obstacles and advantages of embracing the challenges of interdisciplinary work and, in the process, they reveal new perspectives and fresh prospects for teaching and learning.

It is a fitting cliché to begin this issue of *English Journal* by defining each segment of its theme: Interdisciplinary Synergy. As these references from the virtual dictionary indicate, “discipline” is often associated with rules, conformity, and punishment. The word “discipline” connotes restriction and correction. But, like most words, “discipline” is not limited to a single definition. Devotion to a discipline, such as the study of English language arts and the pedagogies associated with it, can be liberating, provocative, and energizing. Such dedication has the potential to create unimaginable synergies. Nonetheless, an unintended consequence of disciplinary dedication is the creation of boundaries; our time and energies are finite, so vocabularies and categories emerge. These categories sometimes harden into borders, walls, and silos that restrict our work and

Julie Gorlewski and David Gorlewski are former secondary English teachers who are currently teacher educators. Among their publications are two co-authored books, *Making It Real: Case Stories for Secondary Teachers* (Sense, 2012) and, with Thomas Ramming, *Theory into Practice: Case Stories for School Leaders* (Sense, 2012).