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Leila Christenbury and Ken Lindblom

Aimed at accomplished veteran teachers, Continuing the Journey offers practical advice, encouragement, and cutting-edge ideas for today’s English classroom. Coauthors Leila Christenbury and Ken Lindblom, well-known teachers, writers, and former editors of English Journal, are joined in this book by almost two dozen classroom teachers and researchers. Together they present real strategies for real classrooms and offer teachers ideas, insights, and support. Focused on literature and informational texts, this lively book (the first in a series) is a road map to professional renewal and to becoming a better teacher. Topics include:

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• What it means to be a better teacher
• Teaching literary texts and literary nonfiction
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Submit all manuscripts through the English Journal Editorial Manager at http://www.editorialmanager.com/ncteje/. Questions can be sent to EnglishJournal@ncte.org.

Submission Guidelines

• Manuscripts should be double-spaced throughout (including quotations, endnotes, and works cited), with standard margins. Please save copies of anything you send us. We cannot return any materials to authors.

• In general, manuscripts for articles should be no more than 10 to 15 double-spaced, typed pages in length (approximately 2,500 to 3,750 words including citations).

• Provide a statement guaranteeing that the manuscript has not been published or submitted elsewhere.

• Ensure that the manuscript conforms to the NCTE Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language. (See address below.)

• Number all pages.

• Use in-text documentation, following the current edition of the MLA Handbook. Where applicable, a list of works cited and any other bibliographic information should also follow MLA style.

English Journal is refereed, and virtually all manuscripts are read by two or more outside reviewers. We will attempt to reach a decision on each article within five months. The decision on pieces submitted in response to a specific call for manuscripts will be made after the call deadline.

Prospective contributors should obtain a copy of the Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language from the NCTE website at http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang.

Theme: Biography as Curriculum
Submission Deadline: May 15, 2018
Publication Date: January 2019

Students come to us with their own unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Within these backgrounds, we can find the key that unlocks their potential for academic success.

—Socorro Herrera, Biography-Driven Culturally Responsive Teaching (2016)

In her well-known collection of essays about transforming classrooms, Teaching to Transgress, writer bell hooks reflects on her own educational experience of surviving the desegregation era of the 1960s. She explains that since that historical moment, schools have generally struggled to teach students “how to live in the world”; hooks insists that engaged teaching necessarily values student expression, which is an extension of “how to live in the world”; hooks insists that engaged teaching necessarily values student expression, which is an extension of “how to live in the world”.

The multicultural high school English classroom may be one of the only spaces where students discuss the hierarchies of skin color with their peers and a supportive adult professional, which makes our role in aiding these conversations significant. How can our classes be both provocative and safe, allowing students to explore the meanings of color in the stories they read and reflect on what those meanings tell us about ourselves and the world we live in?

This issue of English Journal explores the literature we teach that addresses issues of race, ethnicity, and skin color hierarchies and the importance of the role of English teachers in engaging students in substantive discussions about identity and selfhood. The editors are especially interested in teachers’ stories of examining cultural dominance with their students. How have students responded to your efforts to share texts that critique our racialized society? Which novels, short stories, poems, and plays have inspired your classes to analyze the hierarchies of skin color? What criteria do you use to select readings for your classes and how does your own racial identity influence those criteria? How have you used a balance of both classics and contemporary classics to address race and racial identity? In the selection of literature, how do ELA curricula value or disregard perspectives on race? What lessons have you learned about using literature that “employs skin color to reveal character or drive narrative” that you would want to share with others?

General Interest
May submit any time

We publish articles of general interest as space is available. You may submit manuscripts on any topic that will appeal to EJ readers. Remember that EJ articles foreground classroom practice and contextualize it in sound research and theory. As you know, EJ readers appreciate articles that show real students and teachers in real classrooms engaged in authentic teaching and learning. Regular manuscript guidelines regarding length and style apply.

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Speaking My Mind

We invite you to speak out on an issue that concerns you about English-language arts teaching and learning. If your essay is published, it will appear with your photo in a future issue of English Journal. We welcome essays of 1,000 to 1,500 words, as well as inquiries regarding possible subjects.

Poetry

For Gwendolyn Brooks, writing was essential to life and “like breathing or eating,” she once shared. More specifically, she noted, “Poetry is life distilled.”

As such, we invite teachers and teacher educators to write poems that “distill” their lives—in and out of the language arts classroom. We seek well-crafted poems that connect our readers to the worlds of teaching and learning.

Send up to two original poems—with no more than 30 lines each—by email attachment to englishjournal@ncte.org. Use the subject line “Poetry Submission for Review.” The poems must be original and not previously published or simultaneous submissions. In your message, please include a brief biographical sketch (40 words maximum) and your contact information. Poets whose work is published will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their work appears.

Additional inquiries about poetry submissions should be directed to the editors at englishjournal@ncte.org. We look forward to reviewing your work.

Original Photography

Teacher photographs of classroom scenes and individual students are welcome. Photographs may be sent as 8” × 10” black-and-white glossies or as an electronic file in a standard image format at 300 dpi. Photos should be accompanied by complete identification: teacher/photographer’s name, location of scene, and date photograph was taken. If faces are clearly visible, names of those photographed should be included, along with their statement of permission for the photograph to be reproduced in EJ.

Original Cartoons

Cartoons should depict scenes or ideas potentially amusing to English language arts teachers. Line drawings in black ink should be submitted on 8½” × 11” unlined paper and be signed by the artist.

Columns and Column Editors

Beyond Binary Gender Identities

Column Editor: sj Miller
Deputy Director, Center for Research on Equity in Teacher Education
Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools
Research Associate Professor
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
New York University
sj.miller@nyu.edu

Contemporary youth express gender identity in powerful and dynamic ways—in and out of school. Gender identity, the internal sense of how someone feels or experiences their gender, is constantly evolving and shifting, expanding the boundaries of language use and performance. As English teachers, it is our responsibility to center the lives of our students in our classrooms and schools in caring, respectful, and equitable ways. This responsibility includes advocating for students who question and contest cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity. It also includes ensuring that they are valued in all aspects of school and see themselves reflected in curricula, instructional choices, and educational policies. Currently, gender identity narratives are practically absent from the texts taught in high school English classrooms, and there are gaps in school policies that enumerate protections or validate multiple gender identities. We can change this together. The only pressing question is How?

This column invites writers to share the stories of how they recognize and affirm myriad gender identities in their classrooms and their schools and to offer concrete and creative suggestions for developing remarkably responsive language arts instruction. We also welcome narratives that describe lessons, assignments, and educational practices that question and critique entrenched ideas about gender identity is necessary to address the kind of insensitivity that characterizes most educational settings. We have all been taught the “appropriate” social expectations for gender and gender identity, but by examining the effects of that instruction, working diligently to reject the gender identity binary, and being willing to learn from and support our students in their ever-evolving and dynamic expressions of gender identity, we can strengthen our schools and communities.

Inquiries, submissions, or suggestions for future columns should be directed to sj Miller at sj.miller@nyu.edu. Submissions of 1,000–1,200 words should be sent as attachments.

Books-in-Action

Column Editor: Nicole Sieben
Assistant Professor, Secondary English Education
Coordinator, Graduate Programs and Adolescence
English Education
SUNY College at Old Westbury
siebenn@oldwestbury.edu

According to hopemonger Shane Lopez, hope is the belief that the future will be better than the present and that we, as individuals and communities, have the power to create that better future. In his research, Lopez found that all youth have the capacity for hope, but only one in two school-age youth report feeling hopeful about their futures. His findings suggest there may be a “hope gap,” which is also present in our educational systems. English teachers have a role to play in helping to mediate that gap, and many are already doing so. As a framework, hope is a harbinger of possibility, the spine of agency, and a reason to strive. As a learning trait, it provides an important scaffold for academic progress and success. The more we inspire our students to envision the possibilities and pathways of their lives—through the literature and writing approaches we teach, the discussions we facilitate, and the assignments we design—the more we offer them hope.

This Books-in-Action column features essays that consider the ways in which various professional resources help ELA teachers put hope into action in the classroom. It invites writers to focus on the how of hope as they discuss recent publications that help us reimagine our teaching practices. Rather than traditional book reviews, essays should, instead, embed the writers’ reviews within narratives that describe how the
ideas in books can be translated into curricular approaches that inspire our students to see their futures as hopeful. We especially welcome submissions that explore questions about the cultural and institutional practices that contribute to the “hope gap” and then offer creative suggestions for mediating that gap.

Inquiries, submissions, or suggestions for future columns should be directed to Nicole Sieben at siebenn@oldwestbury.edu. Submissions of 1,000–1,200 words should be sent as attachments.

Critical Global Literacies
Column Editor: Bogum Yoon
Associate Professor
Department of Teaching, Learning, and Educational Leadership
College of Community and Public Affairs
State University of New York at Binghamton
byoon@binghamton.edu

Joel Spring, who writes prolifically about American education and globalization, has noted that we live in an era in which “nothing is static.” Across the globe, nations, economies, and governing structures face incessant change, competition, and disruption. The dynamic social forces that undergird globalization spotlight its reliance on interdependence and intercultural awareness. The development of critical literacy practices that focus on global perspectives is central to preparing students to navigate this increasingly interconnected world. As English teachers, we might ask ourselves, “How do we invite our students to become socially responsible and critically conscious global citizens?”

Reading and writing activities that promote global awareness and cross-cultural understanding are important, but they need to be coupled with an emphasis on critical consciousness. A critical lens is fundamental if we are to be successful in opening an intellectual space for discussions of what it means to live in a world in which cultural boundaries are shrinking because of human migration, market practices, and advances in technologies.

This column invites essays that focus on global perspectives as an integral part of the secondary English curriculum. Topics that we are particularly interested in, but not limited to, include instructional frameworks that English teachers can use in the classroom to promote students’ global thinking and cross-cultural awareness with a critical stance; case studies that show how English teachers develop students’ critical global perspectives through various materials, including global literature; and instructional practices that demonstrate how English teachers can bring the world to the classroom.

Inquiries, submissions, or suggestions for future columns should be directed to Bogum Yoon at byoon@binghamton.edu. Submissions of 1,000–1,200 words should be sent as attachments.

From Campus to Classroom
Column Editor: Melanie Shoffner
Associate Professor
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, Virginia
shoffnme@jmu.edu

Preservice teachers, practicum students, and teaching interns view the familiar landscape of the secondary English class-room from a different vantage point. Their current learning experiences—in and out of the classroom—offer opportunities to rethink understandings of their content, their future students, and their development as English teachers. By sharing their perspectives as they grapple with the complexities of ELA education, they extend and diversify the professional conversation while fostering their own growth as reflective practitioners. Their insights have the power to provoke veteran teachers and teacher educators to think differently, as well, revisiting familiar assignments, reconsidering current perspectives, and reexamining long-held beliefs about teaching and learning.

This column seeks to share the viewpoints of those poised to enter the classroom as they consider the nature of teaching and learning the English language arts. We invite preservice teachers and interns to contribute thoughtful first-person essays about navigating the theory and practice of ELA teaching as they interact with students and teaching colleagues. Essays may address any topic and may be coauthored with fellow preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, university supervisors, or professors. Authors might address such questions as, Why is the ELA content I will soon teach viable for 21st century students?; How do I engage with issues of justice, equality, and diversity, in and out of the ELA classroom?; and What do I consider the most pressing issues facing soon-to-be teachers? Essays grounded in the theory of ELA pedagogy are of particular interest.

Original submissions of 1,000–1,200 words should be sent as an electronic Word file to Melanie Shoffner at shoffnme@jmu.edu. Inquiries about potential topics are welcomed and encouraged.

Journeys Inward
Column Editor: Mary Ellen Dakin
Retired English Teacher and Literacy Coach
Revere High School
Revere, Massachusetts
maryellendakin@gmail.com

In The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life, Parker J. Palmer asserts that teaching is composed of three essential knowledge bases: knowledge of our subject, knowledge of our students, and knowledge of ourselves. “Who is the self who teaches?” he asks; the search for answers to this question has the potential to transform our classrooms and our lives. English teachers work at the crossroads of the epic and the everyday. We wander with our students through the shifting terrains of literature, and we sometimes find that the texts we teach and the conversations they provoke challenge us to explore our own “inner landscapes.” These moments urge us to consider the kind of teacher we have been and also the kind of teacher we are becoming.

This column invites writers to craft authentic nonfiction narratives of self-discovery, redirection, and renewal. Have you seen your own life reflected in the literature you teach and paused to ponder the implications? What specific events, situations, texts, classes, or ideas challenged the teacher within and sent you on a journey toward some greater understanding of your subject, your students, your world, and yourself? Tell us the story of that journey. We are especially interested in lively, personal writing that shares specific classroom moments that inspired introspection, challenged your thinking, and pushed you to consider how you are influences how you teach. We welcome submissions that showcase voice, sensory details,
Writers for the column should consider how the strategies they discuss are relevant to those teaching struggling readers and emergent English learners, as well as those teaching students with advanced literacy skills. We are especially seeking classroom narratives that push against equating a Shakespeare play with a summary of plot and characters or with watching the film version. We invite stories that illustrate the value of attending to language, movement, staging, and expression and that cast studying a Shakespeare text as an opportunity for students to explore identity and perform their understanding in innovative and multimodal ways. To complement these stories, we welcome classroom and student videos, podcasts, and other Shakespeare-inspired creations as posts to our “Teaching Shakespeare” group on NCTE Connects.

Questions to consider might include, When you teach Shakespeare plays, which scenes work best “on your feet”?: What film clips pop for discussion?: or How do you guide your students to use images, dictionary definitions, and period sources to complicate a reading of “Moor” for Othello, or the Prince of Morocco in The Merchant of Venice, or Aaron in Titus?

Inquiries, submissions, or suggestions for future columns should be directed to Laura B.Turchi at lturchi@uh.edu or Ann C. Christensen at achrist@uh.edu. Submissions of 1,000–1,200 words should be sent as attachments.

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Poem for the Boy Who Hates Poems

You will catch the next pass and carry it to victory, fans chanting your name, erecting banners to your glory.

You will marry that beautiful girl whose hand you’ve been holding. She’ll worship you for your strength, your wisdom, as well as your earning capacity.

As you age, your children, wholesome and eager, will care for you. Some of this is a lie. We don’t know which part. We do know only what poems know: that your fingers will close around the leather, that the shouts of the fans will reach as far as your last decade, that you will weep in the end zone or in midfield, that there are many kinds of tears, all salty and delicious.

—Karen Maceira

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A native of New Orleans, Karen Maceira holds an MFA from Penn State, where she studied with poets Bruce Weigl and Robin Becker. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals including The Lindenwood Review, Blackbird, The Beloit Poetry Journal, Louisiana Literature, The New Orleans Review, and The Christian Science Monitor. She has published reviews in The Harvard Review and essays in the Hollins Critic and the Journal of College Writing. Karen has been a member of NCTE since 2000 and currently teaches English at Pearl River High School in Pearl River, Louisiana. Contact her at kmaceira@bellsouth.net.