Forum

Arthur Applebee: In Memoriam

Edited by Mary M. Juzwik

May the chorus of our collective voices offer a louder tribute than [a] single song of praise.

—Deborah Appleman

In this Forum, colleagues remember and celebrate the life and legacy of Arthur Applebee, a former editor of Research in the Teaching of English and a leader in the field for many years, who passed away after a short illness on September 20, 2015. Intellectually, Arthur will be remembered for the sheer scope of his work over four decades, for his mentoring of several generations of scholars, for his contributions to research on literature and writing instruction in secondary schools, and for his theoretical work on “curriculum as conversation,” which has left an indelible mark on classroom discourse studies and English teacher education. More personally, Arthur’s friends and colleagues cherished his human kindness, generosity, humility, thoughtfulness, gentleness, equanimity, and affability.

The Scope of Arthur’s Contributions to the Field

Martin Nystrand, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Arthur and I were graduate school classmates (in a class of two) at Goldsmiths, University of London in 1971. We both went to Goldsmiths to study with James Britton, known to all as “Jimmy,” who had been the British guru of the Anglo-American Dartmouth Conference in 1966. When I first checked in with Professor Britton, he advised me to look up Arthur Applebee, which I took to be a reference to an important scholar, like Piaget or Vygotsky, whom we read thoroughly and discussed in our Monday afternoon seminar (which started at 3 p.m. in Britton’s office and continued in the college bar for some time afterwards). Arthur and I spent nearly every afternoon of the week discussing our readings.

At the time, Arthur was all of 25 and had already published research in a refereed journal: Applebee, A. (1971). Research in reading retardation: Two critical
problems. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 12*, 91–113. When I met him, he was at work on * Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English* (1974), which I read in typescript and which went on to become a classic in our field. He would go on to defend his dissertation a scant two years after his start at Goldsmiths: hundreds of pages in typescript (I studied them all), it was published as a jewel of a study, *The Child’s Concept of Story: Ages Two to Seventeen* (University of Chicago Press, 1974), his most cited work.

Professor Britton’s recommendation to “look up Arthur,” we now know, was prescient given that in the next 44 years Arthur would publish 24 books and monographs (more than a book every other year), as well as over 100 journal articles and other publications, and would become the most frequently cited author in research handbooks in English language arts.

Along with Britton, Arthur was easily the most influential person in my career. My own classroom discourse research—for example, the book *Opening Dialogue: Understanding the Dynamics of Language and Learning in the English Classroom Discourse* (Nystrand, 1997)—was inspired by Britton’s *Talking to Learn* (Britton, 1969) and shaped in its statistical approach by Arthur’s empirical methods as outlined in his *Writing in the Secondary School* (Applebee, 1981).

Arthur and I were also close friends, taking time off from studying to go grocery shopping at Harrods and Fortnum and Mason in preparation to celebrate Thanksgiving in 1971 with Professor Britton and his wife. Arthur was also best man at my wedding at the Lewisham Registry (in London’s East End) in the spring of 1972. Much later, I would join Arthur and Judith Langer as a director of the National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement (CELA). All these endeavors, I’m pleased to report, were successful.

In our generation, Arthur Applebee has done more perhaps than anyone else in our field to raise the tone and level of our professional discourse. It was my personal privilege to be, in Britton’s words, a spectator with the clearest of views.

**Anne Ruggles Gere, University of Michigan**

I met Arthur Applebee for the first time in 1977 when I went to Urbana, Illinois, for a meeting of the Secondary Section at NCTE headquarters, where Arthur was on the staff from 1976 to 1978. During that meeting, I learned about his book *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History* (NCTE, 1974). In the years since, I have tried to keep up with Arthur’s many other books, but I keep returning to that first book. It does such a good job of contextualizing the teaching of English in larger educational movements while at the same time looking at the challenges ahead. Not long ago, I went back to this book again and was struck by the prescience of what Arthur called “The Problems Remaining.” Over 40 years later, we are still dealing with issues like the political dimensions of teaching literature, narrow conceptions of language that focus on function, and the pressure to treat English as a body of knowledge to be imparted. Arthur is, alas, no longer with us, but his legacy of insights, questions, and strategies will occupy us for many years to come.
Samantha Caughlan, Lansing, Michigan
Whenever I write about English education, I cite Arthur Applebee—I can’t *not* cite Arthur Applebee. So much of what I think English *is*, as a discipline, a curriculum, a set of practices, and an ethos, comes to me from my experiences working as a graduate student for the National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, a collaboration between Arthur and Judith Langer at the State University of New York at Albany and Marty Nystrand and colleagues at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and from my study of their works, including Arthur’s *Curriculum as Conversation* (1996), *Literature in the Secondary School* (1993), and *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English* (1974). Currently, research on English teaching, and particularly English education, tends toward the local study of some facet of curriculum or instruction. In contrast, Arthur aspired to panoramic vistas of the field, based in solid research and scholarship. Forty years after *Tradition and Reform* was published, it is still the only comprehensive history of the subject as it developed in the United States. *Curriculum as Conversation* is similarly an expansive and generous definition of the English curriculum and our relationship with it. Arthur links our heritage to our urge toward equity and reform through his conception of a living discipline. And Arthur and colleagues’ empirical studies of teaching literature on a national scale are unparalleled, providing the background for the smaller studies we see. Even if I wanted to, I could not escape the long reach of Arthur Applebee in English education.

George Newell, The Ohio State University
For over 40 years, Arthur Applebee’s scholarship crisscrossed the landscape of English language arts, with work in the development of literary understanding and the teaching and learning of literature, the teaching and learning of writing, writing assessment, and teachers’ enactment of curriculum. Arthur’s scholarship benefited the field by providing theoretical constructs such as the child’s concept of story, tensions between tradition and reform in literature teaching, instructional scaffolding, writing and learning relationships, teachers’ epistemologies, structured process in writing instruction, and curriculum as conversation. Arthur was a compelling intellectual and academic who relied on empirical work to make schools and classrooms better places for teachers and students. I aspire to sustain Arthur’s legacy through my own scholarship.

Intellectual Mentorship
George Newell, The Ohio State University
As a graduate student and later as a professor, I benefited from Arthur’s understanding of the value of apprenticeship into the practices of research and scholarship. I recall struggling to find a theoretical footing for my dissertation project on “writing and learning.” Finding myself frustrated and confused, I relented and made an appointment with Arthur. As we talked, he pointed out, indeed, that no current theory existed that I could re-apply to my own work, that the point of doing research would be to develop theory, and that I likely would have to rely...
on multiple “related” theories from a range of sources to construct something relevant to my own research. He then shared an early draft of a research proposal that demonstrated his own theorizing that became part of *How Writing Shapes Thinking* (1987). From Arthur, I learned that theories are not plucked like fruit from some abstract academic garden, but rather developed through detailed, time-consuming, and often imaginative work with an equally committed mentor asking the right questions.

Early in my career, when I was an untenured assistant professor, Arthur and Judith Langer—his wife and colleague—met with me at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association. I vividly recall moments when I sat in front of them, trying to describe how I might “revise and resubmit” a manuscript for publication or begin a nascent research project. After listening to me stammer on a bit, Arthur, with a grin, would lean back and ask a series of questions that would instantly sort out what I needed to focus on and what to ignore—he gave me a kind of intellectual “through line” to deepen my thinking and clarify my intention. He also asked about my own research program and the contributions I hoped to make to the field. I did not realize it at the time, but by asking me to contextualize my work as part of a larger project that other researchers were also engaged in, he was apprenticing me into the then-current conversations about research in written composition that would eventually allow me to get tenure at two different research-oriented universities.

At the 2014 AERA meeting, the last time I spoke with Arthur, we covered a lot of ground, including the possible impact of the Common Core State Standards on ELA, writing instruction, and the teaching and learning of literature. He was concerned, as I recall, that writing standards grounded in students’ slotting information into pre-set forms and a focus on test preparation would set back the gains ELA scholars and teachers had made over the nearly 40 years of his professional life. Arthur also wondered if my work and that of all his former graduate students might apprentice new scholars to continue the work of establishing and extending the intellectual and empirical basis of ELA. I hope it will. If it does, Arthur Applebee deserves full credit.

**Russel Durst, University of Cincinnati**

As a master’s student in linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh in 1980, I planned to enter the new field of composition studies. Not wanting to stay in my hometown at the school where I’d also been an undergraduate, I asked Bill Smith, one of my professors (and an *RTE* author himself), about other doctoral programs. He explained that, ideally, for a doctorate one did not go to a school or department; rather, one studied with a particular individual, a mentor. Bill made me a list of 10 leading composition scholars, and he said the best was Arthur Applebee at Stanford. I wrote to everyone, heard back from several, but got my most promising response from Arthur, who said my linguistics background would come in handy on his federally funded research project examining the teaching and learning of written language in US secondary schools. That summer, I headed off to Stanford, where I spent four years working intensively with Arthur and his wife Judith Langer on studies...
of high school writing—generally putting more time into my research assistant work than my classes. I soon rose to middle management, training and supervising other graduate students. Under Arthur’s tutelage, I developed scholarly tools that have sustained me through three decades as a composition professor and scholar.

Midway through my first year as an RA, fellow grad student George Newell and I were working hard, including evenings and weekends, on a discourse analysis of student writing for Arthur’s National Study of Secondary School Writing. One Monday morning, we were scheduled to discuss the completed draft at our weekly staff meeting. As a first-year RA, I fully expected that the piece would be a single-authored article by Arthur in which he thanked his grad students for their help. Imagine my surprise when Arthur distributed copies of the draft with George and me listed as his coauthors. That draft turned into my first publication. From this experience, I began to see myself not just as a grad student but as a junior colleague with the opportunity to develop as a professional doing the very work that I loved to do. What better mentor and role model could I have had?

Steven Z. Athanases, University of California, Davis

During my doctoral studies at Stanford, Arthur Applebee’s office hours were a tight schedule of half-hour slots. A peer noted how she began meetings with muddy thinking, Arthur offered succinct and clarifying ideas, the meeting was over in 10 minutes, and she wasn’t sure what to do with the remaining 20. Arthur wasn’t big on chitchat. Once, however, pondering my own future, I veered from our meeting agenda and asked why he liked being a scholar. Arthur answered, “I want my work to help shape directions of the field.” Clearly, his work accomplished that.

Arthur’s countless research reports, coupled with a career-long commitment to NCTE and publishing in *English Journal*, clarified his stance: that to shape directions of a field meant being both of the academy and of the English teaching profession. In fact, I first read Arthur’s research and *RTE* editorials as an English teacher in the Chicago area. I found his writing conceptually clear and accessible, and that is a part of Arthur’s legacy that I value.

Christine Dawson, Skidmore College

I first “met” Arthur through his written words. In the late ’90s, I was assigned to read *Curriculum as Conversation* as part of my master’s program, and my teaching changed forever. Guided by his words, I began to question the way my students “read” my curriculum, how they understood the connections between our shared studies across a year. When I later had the opportunity to work with Arthur and Judith on the National Study of Writing Instruction (NSWI) and our resulting book *Writing Instruction That Works*, I found this same deep commitment to meaningful student learning throughout Arthur’s speech and actions. He had a way of explaining conceptual trajectories in literacy education, and his work to foreground the significance of writing instruction (what kinds of writing are students doing in secondary schools?) resonated with me. And Arthur welcomed *me* into conversations in our field, helping me value and develop my own ways of knowing and doing. He listened deeply, thoughtfully contemplating questions and
guiding inquiry. Kind and ethical, Arthur embodied a sense of intellectual humility that made him approachable and trustworthy. His smile welcomed and affirmed. I am forever grateful to Arthur for his teachings and the model he provided of how to live as a scholar and teacher. I am also thankful that I may continue to visit with him, even now, through his written words.

Story and Literary Response in Secondary Schools

Deborah Appleman, Carleton College

Muriel Rukeyser said, “The universe is made of stories, not of atoms.” It is this fundamental acknowledgement of the importance of story that to me marks the signal influence of Arthur Applebee. Through his own work, as well as his collaborative work with Judith Langer, Arthur taught a whole generation of readers, teachers, and scholars not only what story might mean, but how to consider the richest and most productive ways in which stories, and literary texts more broadly construed, might be experienced in school settings. Arthur’s work has shaped how literature gets taught, what literature gets taught, and why literature gets taught. We can see, hear, and feel Arthur’s influence each time the holy trinity of teacher, text, and student meet.

Perhaps the first work of Arthur’s I read was The Child’s Concept of Story. While I knew how powerful and universal his explication of the child’s developing sense of story and internalized story grammar was, I was surprised to see its resilience, its theoretical traction, when I first began teaching literary study to incarcerated students. As an introductory exercise, I asked students to create a literary timeline of their reading history. Listening to men serving life sentences write about The Boxcar Children, Curious George, and other stories, I found myself thinking about and rereading Arthur’s work to help me find a way to understand how the power of story had obtained in even the darkest of places.

My own work, introducing the multiple lenses of contemporary literary theory to high school students, was deeply influenced by Arthur’s writing. He raised profound questions about how texts are taught, questions that made me impatient with the pedagogical status quo, questions that made me seek some radical new approaches.

Because of the influence of his work on mine, I asked Arthur to write the foreword to my book, Critical Encounters in High School English. It took me weeks to screw up the courage, even though I am not generally known for diffidence. Arthur’s willingness to write the foreword was but one of a million gestures of intellectual generosity, gestures to which many who read and write for this journal could attest.

Because our names are so similar—Applebee, Appleman—the front cover of the book caused some unpredicted confusion. More than once, I was asked, “Are you two related?” My answer at first startled me. I said, “Unfortunately, no.” Why unfortunately? Well, who among us would not want to claim a close connection to someone whose keen brilliance was accompanied with matching humility and kindness? This constellation of qualities makes Arthur almost impossible to de-
scribe and thus impossible to honor appropriately. May the chorus of our collective voices offer a louder tribute than my single song of praise.

**Michael Macaluso, University of Notre Dame**

**Carlin Borsheim-Black, Central Michigan University**

**Amanda Haertling Thein, University of Iowa**

As newer-generation English education researchers, we continually find ourselves standing on the shoulders of giants as we look back in order to look forward. One such giant, perhaps the giant, for our collective interest in critical literature instruction in the English classroom, has been Arthur Applebee. Some of our initial required reading in graduate school included *Curriculum as Conversation* (1996), *Literature in the Secondary School* (1993), and the seminal *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English* (1974), and they have now become staples of our work and libraries. Arthur’s large-scale survey research, illustrating the persistence of canonical literature curriculum and instruction, has served as a backdrop for our own studies of critical literature instruction and critical literary responses in high school classrooms. More importantly, it was through Arthur’s scholarship that the three of us found each other, and in building upon his ideas, we have become critical friends, collaborating on a variety of topics, from manuscripts and conference proposals to dissertations and budding projects. So while Arthur may be remembered—and rightly so—for his rich scholarship, his broad and articulate grasp of literature and English education, and his nuanced perspectives about the discipline, he leaves behind a greater legacy that cannot be measured by a number of pages or a list of citations. That legacy, quite simply, is us: individuals committed to and passionate about English education who continue in Arthur’s tradition, however modest and small our contributions may be. We are indeed amazed by all of the wonderful work Arthur has done, but we are even more grateful that he has helped us find our voices and each other.

**Mary M. Juzwik, Michigan State University**

Arthur’s work, especially his 1978 book on narrative and his 1974 history of the field, has influenced my explorations of the ethical dimensions of English as a subject area. In *The Child’s Concept of Story*, Arthur argued that stories serve as powerful vehicles for moral socialization, both in and out of schools. My imagination was captured by the possibility of examining not just the forms and functions and moral dimensions of literary narratives in classrooms, but also the forms and functions and moral dimensions of spoken narratives—whether by teachers or students—in classroom talk. Part of the interest, for me, was primarily rhetorical in nature: understanding how language works and how people work (in) the world through language. In my dissertation and first book project, I probed the poetic, aesthetic, interactional, and ethical valences of narrative classroom discourse about the Holocaust and then, in subsequent studies, I went on to explore the connections between classroom narrative talk and literary texts under study. More pragmatically, I have also sought out the implications for helping teachers reflect on the purposes, powers, and perils of storytelling in instructional discourse. I would
often send my papers on narrative to Arthur, because I felt he would “get” what I was trying to do, and he never failed to send back kind words of encouragement and an incisive question or two. I miss his intellectual companionship.

**Writing Research in Secondary Schools**  
*Steve Graham, Arizona State University*

To me, Arthur’s most important scholarly impact was his focus on teachers and writing instruction in secondary schools. This work provides multiple examples of what exemplary writing instruction looks like. As writing becomes ever more important and ubiquitous in school, at work, and in everyday life, we need to provide teachers, those who prepare teachers, and policymakers with models of success, illustrating the variety of ways we can facilitate youngsters’ growth as writers. Arthur and his colleague and wife, Judith Langer, provide a window into such classrooms. I am confident this will be a continuing theme in writing research for as long as we teach writing.

**Research on Writing in US Secondary Schools**  
*Jill Jeffery, Leiden University, Center for Linguistics*

The foreword for the report of the first national study of writing instruction in the US (Writing in the Secondary School, 1981) invites readers to imagine “a high school writing program certain to fail” (p. xi). Such a program not only denies students opportunities to develop writing abilities, but also “pointedly confuses them about how skilled writers compose and specifically precludes their gaining any insight into the ways writing can be useful to them.” To realize this goal, such a program rarely, if ever, allows students to engage in discussing ideas for writing; revising writing; sharing writing with others; or writing to learn, persuade, or reflect. Instead, students mostly produce short written texts in order to demonstrate command of content or merely to prove they’ve completed assigned work. The report that follows, which includes Applebee’s extensive analyses of survey, observation, interview, and writing sample data, suggests that this recipe for failure represented the typical approach in US high schools at the time of the study. However, the report also emphasizes hopeful exceptions, visions of what writing instruction could be, in which teachers convey—and students have rich opportunities to practice—writing as a tool for building knowledge, communicating ideas, and reflecting on experiences within and across disciplinary settings. The National Study of Writing Instruction (Applebee & Langer, 2013) further builds upon this vision, revealing both how writing instruction has progressed over the 30 years since Applebee’s initial report and how much further progress is needed to realize his vision for success—the failed program scenario’s opposite. Arthur’s rich, generous, carefully considered insights into what writing in school could look like, as he shared these across decades of writing about writing, will crucially inform writing researchers for generations to come.
What’s Happening in the Teaching of Writing in Schools Implementing the Common Core State Standards?

K. C. Wilcox, University at Albany, State University of New York

In one of his last published writings, Arthur reflected on the state of writing instruction in U.S. schools as the then new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were being implemented. He explained that the rapid implementation of the CCSS and associated assessment systems create a number of significant challenges for English teachers. Arthur’s concerns for the potentially narrowing influences of standards and assessments on writing instruction are ones that have influenced my own and others’ research in myriad ways. One of the many important contributions of his last major study (the National Study of Writing Instruction) relates to how disciplinary writing is approached in a range of schools serving more and less ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse schools. Arthur’s concerns for how writing instruction can not only evoke and promote disciplinary conversations, but also provide models of how to learn to do new things in new ways, were a guiding force in the study and subsequent reports. In this view, writing tasks and their products can be viewed as socially and historically-derived tools that can be applied in new ways to new situations with far-reaching implications. Arthur’s generosity, breadth of knowledge, and modeling in how to engage in rigorous scholarly work will echo on for many years to come among all of us who had the pleasure of knowing him: a mark of a uniquely cherished and charitable human being.

How Writing in Math Could Shape Disciplinary Conversations

Marc Nachowitz, Miami University

Applebee’s work argues that teachers need to scaffold students in the kinds of literate thinking, embracing reading, writing, but also speaking, listening, and thinking in ways appropriate to the discipline. In his final research endeavor, the National Study of Writing Instruction (NSWI), Applebee concluded that in an era dominated by high stakes assessments correlated with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), “writing as a way to study, learn, and go beyond—as a way to construct knowledge or generate new networks of understandings [was] rare” (Applebee & Langer, 2011, p. 25). This alarming finding propelled my own research interests to investigate typical writing practices in the mathematics classroom. Using NSWI data as a baseline, I examine typical practices of writing in math and posit a theoretical framework, a blueprint for writing in math, that has potential for achieving Applebee’s vision for knowledge-in-action, using writing to transform learning and deepen student understanding of math content as well as fostering engagement with the essential conversations of the math discipline. This framework continues Applebee’s work in developing pedagogical practices that foster student development of not just the what, but the how and why of writing that might develop the kinds of intra- and inter-personal, essential conversations correlated with deep understanding of mathematical content. My blueprint for writing in math suggests that these kinds of disciplinary conversations in math
that have typically existed in the domain of AP Statistics courses can benefit all students by providing them access to highly valued ways of thinking and engaging in the essential conversation of mathematics for all students, not just those who populate honors and advanced placement courses.

Curriculum as Conversation: An Intellectual Legacy for Classroom Discourse Studies and English Teacher Education

Richard Beach, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

One of Arthur Applebee’s major contributions to the field of English education is his documentation of the pervasive lack of substantive interactions between students in classroom discussions, with discussions dominated by teachers’ use of closed questions as opposed to “authentic” questions or follow-up questions asking students to elaborate on or extend their responses. Arthur’s Curriculum as Conversation: Transforming Traditions of Teaching and Learning countered this limited use of discussion by proposing an alternative “living” curriculum that emphasizes the value of students engaging in open-ended dialogic interactions as part of ongoing “conversations” about their literary responses and everyday experiences in classrooms “where diversity yields richness” as “each voice speaks in all its uniqueness, and at the same time [becomes] part of a larger whole” (1996, p. 128). His own unique, prophetic voice that resonated within the larger field of English education will be sorely missed.

Peter Smagorinsky, University of Georgia

Arthur Applebee’s Russell Award–winning theoretical book, Curriculum as Conversation, made a significant impact on my writing for those aspiring practitioners who are learning how to teach the subject of English. Applebee’s notion of curriculum as the structure through which an ongoing, thematically related exploration of significant ideas becomes available has helped me conceptualize what an English curriculum could achieve. In particular, when writing the book Teaching English by Design (2008), I drew fruitfully on his work to help teachers see how instruction can be related in a curricular spiral that returns to and enriches themes and ideas over a course of study. His idea of connecting the various units of study through an “overarching theme” was very helpful to me in explaining how individual units of instruction covering shorter spans of roughly four to six weeks should not be designed as discrete emphases of study, but instead should be integrated across the span of a semester or year by means of a unifying idea. This idea could be thematic, such as exploring the notion of the American Dream in the 11th grade. It could be strategic, such as continually asking students to question a narrator’s reliability and positionality, as well as other aspects of perspective, regardless of unit theme or topic. It could be oriented to a sort of task, to use Hillocks’s term, such as writing extended definitions of a variety of themes investigated across a series of units: success, progress, courageous action, and so on. This notion of
overarching theme helped me see the idea of an “instructional unit” as less of a stand-alone sub-study and more of a contributing part of a greater whole, one that enables students to see the logic of a curriculum and immerse themselves in a program of inquiry that increasingly builds on prior knowledge to understand each new concept in greater depth than otherwise would be possible.

Steven Z. Athanases, University of California, Davis

I admired how preservice teachers in Stanford courses, where I was a teaching assistant, benefited from the ways Arthur guided research-based curriculum development, modeled effective teaching, and fostered reflections on adaptations for K–12 learners. Though preservice teachers frequently report that university-based research is jargon-laden, teacher bashing, and irrelevant to school realities, Arthur’s research gets high marks from early-career teachers. They cite his work with confidence.

Among the most useful of his works is Curriculum as Conversation: Transforming Traditions of Teaching and Learning (1996). I recently guided James, a preservice teacher, using concepts from this work to map a unit of literature instruction. The focal text was Orwell’s 1984, and James was stuck on how to engage students in the work and make it meaningful for culturally and linguistically diverse youth in 2016. We began with the notion of moving past deadly traditions of English teaching to what Applebee refers to as a conversation of ideas meaningful for students’ lives. We discussed links between Orwell’s Big Brother and current issues of surveillance, freedom of speech, and censorship; the ways search engines can track our movements into what James called “marketing bubbles”; and links between groupthink and how people rally as one when videos go viral. We explored dystopian narratives and cautionary tales and ways to weave a set of concepts into a conversation that might remain with students as meaningful.

A second concern Applebee raises in Curriculum as Conversation is how such conversations can be orchestrated so students can enter into them. Here James and I brainstormed about uses of noncanonical, multimodal materials to help engage youth in the conversations (e.g., TED Ed talks, posters, artwork, songs), and to go beyond teacher-controlled Q and A using dialogic interaction, the focus of our teacher inquiry work on campus.

A third concern in Curriculum as Conversation is the need to develop assessments that aid students’ attempts to access culturally significant domains for conversation. Here James considered concept maps to organize his own and his students’ understandings of the many ideas swirling around this conversation and linkages among many resources. In this way, students might move beyond deadly traditions of English teaching that treat texts out of context, and instead enter into culturally significant conversation. And they might further, as Applebee argued, reconstruct the conversational domain, bringing new resources and new thinking to the conversation.
Personal and Collegial Remembrances

Charles Bazerman, University of California, Santa Barbara

Arthur always had a warm, welcoming smile and a modest presence, but had a quietly insistent way of working. He would identify what he saw as the crucial issues, wait to see how the discussion unfolded, and let others make all the points they would make; then he would simply state what he thought people were overlooking or needed to consider more. He almost always won the day, because he was almost always right. He kept a strong view of the total picture and made sure group deliberations took a balanced total view. He earned the respect and love of all he worked with. He is missed. I miss him.

Steve Graham, Arizona State University

I feel that Arthur’s influence as a scholar, no matter how great, is only part of the overall picture. Arthur the person was equally impressive. When I met Arthur at the National Institute on Family Literacy years ago, I was struck by how he carried himself. He was affable, putting those he knew and didn’t know immediately at ease. And what a smile! When he smiled, you couldn’t help but smile back. He was thoughtful. He was not the first to speak, but when he did you paid attention, as what he said made sense and went to the heart of the matter. He was incredibly calm. I never saw Arthur flustered, at that meeting or any in the years to come, and I can’t imagine him being so. I realized at that first meeting that Arthur was a great role model, and I have tried over the years to be like Arthur in my professional interactions with others. I have not been as successful as Arthur in doing so, but you never know—I might still get there.

Sandra Murphy, University of California, Davis

As we all know, Arthur was a giant as a researcher and scholar, and he’s been widely recognized for his accomplishments over the years, winning many important awards for his work. But equally impressive are his efforts in public service. He put his scholarship and wisdom to work in improving education, advising educational organizations at international, national, and local levels throughout his career. One telling example is his stellar work with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). He began working as an advisor for NAEP in the early 1970s, helping to plan, develop, and interpret results of national assessments of US students’ abilities in writing. Arthur served as cochair of the planning committee for the development of the new (2011) framework; under his leadership, the 2011 framework foregrounded purposes in defining the domains: “to persuade, to explain; and to convey experience, real or imagined.” A second change involved nothing less than a redefinition of NAEP’s writing construct. Under Arthur’s guidance, the committees that developed the framework decided to “assess students’ writing using word processing software with commonly available tools” instead of pen, pencil, and paper. Now in the NAEP assessment, students at grades 8 and 12 write using computers and digital writing tools, and there are plans to phase in a similar assessment at grade 4 by 2018-2019. We were all very lucky to have Arthur’s
guidance during the critical period of the framework development process. Indeed, Arthur was a leader for a new generation of writers. Arthur led with his wisdom and a clear vision of what NAEP could do in service of our nation’s children. Men of such talent, capability, and human kindness are rare.

**P. David Pearson, University of California, Berkeley**

It is genuinely hard for me to accept the fact that Arthur is no longer with us. It seems like just yesterday that we exchanged views on one professional issue or another. Most recent was an exchange of manuscripts on the flaws surrounding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, both noting that we had independently come to the same conclusions about how the implementation plans we had witnessed were undermining the standards themselves. This is but the most recent example of what it meant to be in his intellectual company, to share a perspective on how to better understand and improve what we were doing in literacy education. That was a privilege.

It’s hard to accept the fact that we will no longer have his wisdom to guide us through uncertain policy and curricular waters. It’s hard to believe that we will no longer be able to look forward to one of his brilliant papers or books of such great consequence, taking stock of our history or our current portfolio of practices for teaching writing or literature.

But his loss is more than professional; it’s personal as well. One of my all-time most fondly remembered experiences was a two-week tour of mainland China that my wife Mary Alyce and I shared with Arthur and Judith in the summer of 1984. It was during the time when touring China was possible only through an organized tour sponsored by China’s official national travel service. The four of us traversed several cities and a few hamlets in China. For our stay in Beijing, we were lucky enough to have a bright young tour guide all to ourselves—just the four of us. She was such a skilled English speaker that she was constantly coming up with puns and inventing jokes. Since we spent so much time with her—at least three or four days—she got to really practice her English and her emerging humor. Our favorite joke was the collective name she gave to us—The Gang of Four. And this was not too long after the Cultural Revolution. Being in a Gang of Four with Arthur and Judith—well that’s good company, right? What’s not to like? I smile every time my memory pauses on that experience.

It’s hard for me to accept the fact that Arthur is no longer with us. But of course, he is—and always will be. We have his legacy of words, ideas, and prose to guide us. More important, we have his legacy of commitment, inquiry, and deep intellectual practices to guide us in efforts that extend what he stood for most—professional integrity and generosity. As we tell stories of his life and legacy, let us remember that we honor Arthur most by redoubling our own commitment to understanding and improving how we teach reading and writing in our schools.