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NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

# NEW JERSEY ENGLISH JOURNAL



## WHAT'S NEXT?

## EMBARKING UPON A NEW DECADE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## **Editors' Note**

LAUREN ZUCKER

*Northern Highlands Regional High School & Fordham University*

EMILY HODGE

*Montclair State University*

We are delighted to introduce you to the 2020 issue of *New Jersey English Journal (NJEJ)*, our first issue as co-editors. This year's theme is, "What's Next? Embarking Upon a New Decade of English Language Arts." We hoped that authors would engage with issues around the continuous evolution of the ELA classroom due to changes in technological innovation, the sociopolitical landscape, and learners' interests and needs. In our call for submissions, we asked authors,

- How and when can ELA teachers make space for new voices, texts, and approaches?
- In what ways might interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches shape teaching and learning in ELA and beyond?
- How have your teaching methods evolved over time, or in what ways do you anticipate they will evolve?
- How can technology enhance traditional methods and/or create innovative modes for student communication, assessment, and learning?
- What opportunities and challenges does technology pose? Which traditions and practices will (or should) grow obsolete, and which should be preserved?

This issue features work in three genres: poetry, reflective pieces, and research articles. In response to our call about the next decade of English Language Arts, this issue addresses a variety of topics, including Young Adult literature, social justice, artificial intelligence, climate change, and mindfulness. We are proud to share work from writers across the country, including pieces by first-time authors, graduate students, and early-career teachers.

During a time of great change in education, several of our pieces highlight the value of maintaining some established practices in contemporary English Language Arts classrooms. For example, "Helping Students Improve the Quality of Their Sentences," "The Importance of Grammar for English Learners and English Teachers in the Coming Decade," and "What If the Arts Were Taken Away?"

Additionally, many of our pieces respond to the dynamic, changing nature of English Language Arts by adapting best practices for today's classroom, such as "Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders for Yesterday: AI and Standardized Grammar Assessment," and "Student-Text Connections in the Twenty-First Century ELA Classroom."

One theme that emerged from our submissions is the importance of student choice, demonstrated through pieces like "The Gift of Choice," "At the Corner of Technology and Student-Centeredness," and "Helping Students Choose a Reading Frame: Three Ways of Teaching Jacqueline Woodson's Harbor Me."

We write this note amidst an unprecedented phenomenon, the COVID-19 pandemic, that has truly upended teaching and learning. New Jersey educators, like many of our colleagues across the globe, have met the challenge of converting their courses to a fully online format without much notice. We are in awe of the ways in which educators have responded to new demands in a time of great uncertainty and anxiety. We hope that our 2021 issue can give teachers a space to share their experiences and give a voice to what teaching and learning was like during this chaotic time. Accordingly, next year's theme will be "Course Correction: The Adaptive Nature of English Language Arts."

Aptly, this is the first year that we have moved the journal over to a completely digital format. Though many of us will miss the excitement of reading and distributing a print journal, we are hopeful that this open-access, digital format will reach a broader audience. This past year, we uploaded 7 previous issues to make them accessible to our readership. As of March 2020, these 187 articles have 1,760 unique downloads from 69 different countries representing 154 institutions. We are grateful to Montclair State University for hosting our journal on their library's Digital Commons repository through the BePress publication system, which helps readers find our pieces through search engines, institutional databases, and keyword searches.

This year's cover was designed by 11<sup>th</sup> grader Noreen Hosny of Northern Highlands Regional High School in Allendale, New Jersey, winner of our 2020 cover design contest. We plan to modify this design in subsequent years to align with the new theme.

We would like to thank and acknowledge those who contributed their time and expertise to this issue. We deeply appreciate our editorial board members, who assisted with the theme selection and the transition to our new submission system. We are grateful to the NJCTE Board for their support and recommendations. Special thanks to our reviewers for their quick and attentive work to our submissions. To the previous editors, Liz deBeer and Patricia Bender, we thank them for their trust and encouragement. And finally, we thank Audrey Fisch, our NJCTE President, for her guidance, inclusivity, and service.



Author Georgia Hunter's keynote at NJCTE's Spring 2019 Conference.

**New Jersey English Journal**

## 2020 Issue, Volume 9

*New Jersey English Journal is a peer-reviewed publication of New Jersey Council of Teachers of English (NJCTE). This journal is intended to serve our members through the sharing and showcasing of research, best practices, and ideas related to K–12 and college English Language Arts education, and to encourage diverse discussions and inclusion.*

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Board Members representing NJCTE at the 2019 NJEA Convention.

## **NJCTE OPPORTUNITIES**

### **NJEJ REVIEWERS**

*NJEJ* seeks educators with experience in P–12 and/or postsecondary English Language Arts to serve as reviewers. Reviewers are typically asked to read and evaluate 2–3 submissions per year. Instructions to join our reviewer pool can be found on the journal’s website: <https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/nj-english-journal/>

### **WRITING CONTESTS**

NJCTE offers several student writing contests. Please encourage your students to submit to them—and join us as a judge. For more information, see <https://www.njcte.org/writing-contest>.

### **AWARDS**

NJCTE offers several awards for teachers. Please consider making a nomination. More information about these awards and past award winners are listed on our website: <https://www.njcte.org/teacher-awards>.

- The Marcia Holtzman Pre-Service Teacher Award honors preservice teachers aiming to work at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- The M. Jerry Weiss Early Career Teacher Award honors teachers with one to five years of teaching experience.
- Our Educator of the Year Award recognizes an exceptional English/language arts educator—a dedicated, innovative, dynamic Pre-K–12 teacher, university teacher, supervisor, or administrator—whose activities have significantly and widely impacted New Jersey ELA.



NJCTE Board Members at the Fall 2019 Conference.

## BLOG

Please consider sharing your work—a project, an anecdote, some words of inspiration, a classroom story—with our members around the state by becoming a "teacher who writes" for our NJCTE blog. Read the blog at <https://njcte.wordpress.com>. Email [njcteblog@gmail.com](mailto:njcteblog@gmail.com) to share your ideas.

## CONFERENCES

NJCTE hosts two conferences a year. We hope you will join us as an attendee or presenter! Learn more at <https://www.njcte.org/conferences>.



Author book signings at the 2019 NJCTE Fall Conference.