

2015

## Front Matter, Editor's Note, Table of Contents

Editorial Staff

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# New Jersey English Journal

## 2015 Issue

*New Jersey English Journal* is a peer-reviewed publication of the 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 English Language Arts education.

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## CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

# 2016 Issue of New Jersey English Journal:

# THE TEACHING PROFESSION: Past, Present and Future

*New Jersey English Journal*, a peer-reviewed publication of The New Jersey Council of Teachers of English, invites you to share submissions on “The Teaching Profession: Past, Present, Future,” with a specific focus on English Language Arts. We seek researched articles as well as creative written responses that shed light on the many possibilities, topics, issues, problems and solutions related to the development of the Language Arts teaching profession. All articles and essays should relate directly to English Language Arts teaching and learning and this theme. This year we will add a new section: 300-word (maximum) personal reflection on the teaching profession. We value responses from both veteran and new teachers.

We invite you to respond to the theme of “Past, Present and Future” by considering such questions as:

- How is the teaching profession changing? How is it staying the same? How can we preserve it?
- Teacher preparation: What works? (English Education perspectives)
- Why should people enter the teaching profession? Why did you? Why do you stay?
- What is honorable/ true/ rewarding about the teaching profession?
- What is the role of the teacher in a school? In a community? In students’ lives?
- How can teachers advocate for the profession?
- How can teachers use voice and agency to create impact in and beyond the classroom?
- How do teachers survive in the current educational climate?
- Perspectives from administrators/supervisors: How do we protect and support teachers?
- How can teaching contribute to the social good?
- What does it truly mean to be a “highly effective” teacher?

In addition to submissions that respond to the theme, we also welcome poetry. Submissions will be accepted between April 1 and **December 15, 2015**. Submissions should not have been published in any other journal. Submissions must use MLA formatting. All submissions will be reviewed by multiple members of our editorial board. Submitters will receive a response by February 1, 2016; journal will be released by April 1, 2016. Send queries and submissions to 2016 journal editor Liz deBeer at [ldebeerwardell@gmail.com](mailto:ldebeerwardell@gmail.com).

# From the Editor

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In the world of education today, the word “assessment” is seemingly everywhere. Of course we hear – and use – the word in relation to what happens in the classroom with students and teachers. We also hear the word – perhaps too much -- in relation to student standardized testing (this year was the full roll-out of PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessments), teacher evaluations and SGOs.

The assessment train is long, and its whistle carries the intent to collect and to analyze data from many sources and to use data for the express purpose of improving student learning. Students and teachers are not the only passengers; also being assessed are supervisors, administrators, schools and districts.

Debates rage, of course, in relation to the intent behind the escalation of assessment. Some people defend the use of data to guide instruction from P-16 and say it will improve student learning and global competitiveness. Other people express suspicion that the escalation of assessment is part of a political plan to take control away from teachers and schools – and even to destroy public education.

For many people, “assessment” has actually become a dirty word, with connotations of punishment, control and ulterior motives. Some educators criticize the over-emphasis on assessment, likening it to putting the cart before the horse or having the tail wag the dog.

As of the writing of this note, the assessment controversy threatens to grow, with large-scale protests from parents and students in regard to mandatory testing and its interruptions to school calendars and curricula. Where we go from here is to be determined.

This issue of *New Jersey English Journal* seeks to refresh your thinking about the word “assessment” by questioning the role of assessment. We do not seek simply to repeat ideas that you have already heard about assessment, nor to advocate any one stance in regard to assessment topics. If anything, we hope this issue renews your thinking about assessment practices that serve to drive forward learning and student development. We hope this issue also helps you reflect upon the teaching of English Language Arts.

In the interest of educating and inspiring you – as well as celebrating the people whose work we are proud to showcase here – we have assembled here a variety of articles that represent many angles on assessment. We are happy to showcase a broad range of voices and perspectives, and we are grateful to our writers for sharing their work with us.

Jennifer Kingma Wall will take you through a consideration of the creative and engaging learning experiences that digital assessments can offer to students. Through consideration of how the process service learning can address Common Core State Standards, Maureen Connolly, Alison Buske and Brian Garsh will help you reflect on how process can be more important than product. David Crews calls your attention to the needs of each and every student. Oona Marie Abrams helps you consider approaches to self-assessment. Liz deBeer and Meg West let you hear the honest voices of the teacher and of the student, adding to reflection about what assessment means and why do we do it. And Walter H. Johnson caps off our articles by offering you a celebratory assessment of the work of Robert McCloskey.

Also sprinkled into the journal are works of arts from students at Tenafly High School – including a cover design (with commentary) from Tomer Aberbach, a junior. We are happy to include the poetry of Patricia Bender, Sara deBeer and Joseph S. Pizzo. We feature the artwork of Yuri Han, a high school freshman who drew her images expressly for this issue. Thank you to Tenafly High School art teachers Kathy Kirschbaum and Pat Pacheco for their help with the student contributions to this issue.

The writing included in this journal has been peer-reviewed by the dedicated editorial board whose members are listed on page one. Every article was reviewed by at least three members of our board, who represent diverse educational perspectives.

Thanks also to members the Executive Board of the New Jersey Council of Teachers of English (NJCTE), who also participated in the journal's creation.

On behalf of the New Jersey English Journal editorial board, I welcome you to this issue. Please consider sending you work to us for our 2016 issue, “The Teaching Profession: Past, Present and Future.” We would love to publish your work here next year.

# **New Jersey English Journal**

## **2015 Issue**

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Dana H. Maloney

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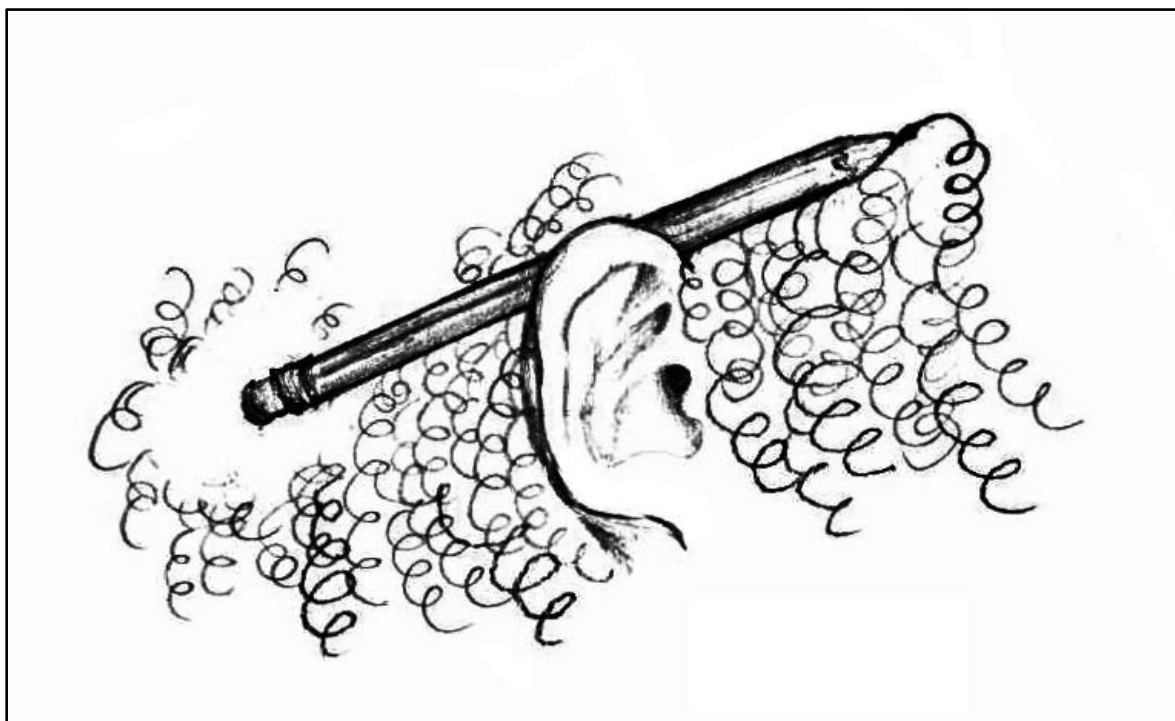
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**COVER DESIGN** by Tomer Aberbach for *New Jersey English Journal*. Tomer is a junior at Tenafly High School.



Drawing by Yuri Han