

Editorial Statement
Special Issue: The Future of Whole Language

This issue of IJPE is exciting and informative in that it reminds us not only of the roots of whole language, but also helps us understand what is happening in whole language today and what we might expect in the future. The pieces we have chosen mix theoretical considerations with classroom and even media issues.

We are challenged by Brian Cambourne and Jan Turbill in their “Looking Back to Look Forward: Understanding the Present by Revisiting the Past: An Australian Perspective” to carefully and honestly examine a major goal of this issue of IJPE, that is, to understand the past and current state of literacy education. They help us to understand the complexities of literacy education in the past and today.

Susanne Gannon and Wayne Sawyer in “Whole Language and Moral Panic in Australia” bring us face to face with the powerful role of the media in the discussion of education, particularly literacy education, in Australia. Their thorough documentation of the recent media coverage of whole language in Australia reminds us of similar media coverage in our own countries. Carefully examining this phenomenon helps us to understand how ideas are communicated by the media and the effects on the public.

The last two articles hone in on classroom applications. In “Core Values of Progressive Education: Seikatsu Tsuzurikata and Whole Language” Mary Kitagawa and Chisato Kitagawa introduce us to the Seikatsu Tsuzurikata movement in Japan, a movement that reminds us of whole language philosophy and practice. Perhaps these “distant cousins” aren’t so distant after all.

Finally, a sixth-grade teacher, Gennifer Otinsky, and a teacher educator, Monica Taylor, create a partnership that results in a dynamic inquiry curriculum that investigates issues of social justice in their collaborative, “Becoming Whole Language Teachers and Social Justice Agents: Pre-service Teachers Inquire with Sixth Graders.” This article shows us how critical literacy and social justice projects can develop and flourish.

Finally, Amy Seeley Flint brings us an in-depth look at *Whole Language Teaching, Whole-hearted Practice: Looking Back, Looking Forward* (Taylor, Ed., 2005). Readers who have enjoyed this issue will find that Taylor’s book extends the conversation.

We have been informed and moved by these stories that span the globe and yet parallel our own experiences so closely. In them we see whole language principles at work in the curriculum and pedagogy in schools and universities around the world. Such stories give us new ideas, hope and renewed strength.

Carol and Dorothy