

The Art of Encounter in Teaching and Learning

The 26th annual summer conference of The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

of the National Council of Teachers of English (www.aepl.org)

June 25-28, 2020, YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, CO

Only connect. —E.M. Forster, *Howard's End*

All real living [and thus all real education] is meeting. —Martin Buber, *I and Thou*

I see humanity as a family that has hardly met.... The art of encounter is in its infancy.
—Theodore Zeldin, *An Intimate History of Humanity*



On the surface our times exhibit an epidemic of disconnection. Yet for many of us who teach, the art of connection has become the heart of our practice, and has opened new realms of deeper learning to our students. AEPL's 26th annual summer conference seeks to connect, affirm, and unite those for whom deep encounter—with others, with the world, and with ourselves—lies at the heart of learning.

We will share stories, practices, and ideas. We will come together in joyful and thoughtful community. And we will consider how together we might help make the I-Thou relationship—that AEPL founder James Moffett, in 1968, found to lie at the center of the universe of human discourse—become the warmly beating heart of the whole of human life.

FEATURED PRESENTERS:

Mary Rose O'Reilley



Mary Rose O'Reilley is Emerita Professor of English at the University of St. Thomas, MN. Two of her many books are both perennial educational classics and newly relevant to our times: *The Peaceable Kingdom* ("How can we teach English so people stop killing one another?") and *Radical Presence* ("You can listen someone into existence.") She has been an ACLS Contemplative Studies Fellow and consultant with the Society for Contemplative Mind in Society in its exploration of meditative disciplines in education, and works as a spiritual director, trained in the Christian and Buddhist traditions. She is the author of five essay collections, most recently *The Love of Impermanent Things: a Threshold Ecology and The Barn at the End of the World: the Apprenticeship of a Quaker, Buddhist Shepherd*. Her first book of poetry, *Half Wild* won the Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets and her debut novel, *Bright Morning Stars*, just won the Brighthorse Prize for Fiction. These days she is active as a musician, potter and permaculture homesteader on a rural island in Puget Sound.

Jacqueline Jones Royster



Jacqueline Jones Royster is Professor of English in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She was Dean of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts at Georgia Tech for nine years. Publication highlights include: *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies* (co-authored), *Calling Cards: Theory and Practice in the Study of Race, Gender, and Culture* (co-edited); a college textbook for writing courses, *Critical Inquiries: Readings on Culture and Community*; and two secondary textbook series—*Writer's Choice* (consulting writer) for grades 6 – 8 and *Reader's Choice* (co-editor) a literature series for grades 9 – 12, both published by McGraw-Hill. Her leadership roles and awards include: Chair of CCCC and of the executive committee of the MLA Writing Division; the CCCC Braddock and Exemplar Awards; the state of Ohio's Pioneer in Education Award; the MLA Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize and Andrew March Award; and Fellow of the Rhetoric Society of America.

Gesa Kirsch



Gesa E. Kirsch is a Professor of English at Bentley University and the Thomas R. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Louisville (Fall 2019). She teaches and consults globally with Andy Aylesworth, offering creativity and innovation seminars for international MBA students and corporate clients, bringing her interest in contemplation and mindfulness to this teaching. She has authored, co-authored, edited and co-edited nine books and numerous articles, including *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition and Literacy Studies*, co-authored with Jacqueline Jones Royster, and winner of the Winifred Bruce Horner Outstanding Book Award, and *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Experience*, co-edited with Liz

Rohan. Two of her articles are particularly relevant to AEPL and the 2020 conference: "From Introspection to Action: Connecting Spirituality and Civic Engagement," CCC, and "Creating Spaces for Listening, Learning, and Sustaining the Inner Lives of Students," JAEPL. Gesa has twice won the Bentley Innovation in Teaching Award, as well as the Mee Family Prize for a lifetime of distinguished research, Bentley's highest distinction.

To Propose:

Send a title and a program-ready abstract of up to 250 words for a) a 75-minute interactive workshop (our customary format), making sure to include descriptions of the activities in which you plan to involve your participants; or b) a 20-30 minute interactive talk, a short teaching demo, or a short story of a meaningful educational encounter or misencounter (see the "Connections" section of JAEPL for models (past issues are available Online)). Send proposals to: aeplconf2020@gmail.com. For early consideration, submit by December 1st. For regular consideration, by January 15th. Submissions after that date will also be considered if room remains on the program. **(Be advised, though, that early submissions on this topic have far exceeded that of any in AEPL's more than 25-year history!)**

Suggestions for proposal topics can be found on the reverse.

Registration: \$245 until April 15; \$295 after April 15; discounts for students, adjuncts, retirees, and K-12 teachers, and for multiple attendees from the same institution. Discount policy and membership information on website. Conference registration and a link to lodging reservations at the YMCA of the Rockies are available at: www.aepl.org. AEPL membership (\$15-30/year (see website) which includes a subscription to our award-winning journal) is required and can also be purchased online.

PRE and POST-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Encountering Oneself

with Nan Phifer

Helping Students Encounter Their Freedom through Contemplative Encounters with Their Personal Voices, Their Cultural Identities, and the Worlds of Rhetoric and Literature

with Geri DeLuca



Nan Phifer, Resident Scholar of the Oregon Writing Project, and closely affiliated with AEPL for over two decades (and our most popular workshop leader of all time!), is author of the award winning *Memoirs of the Soul: A Writer's Guide*. She travels internationally to lead workshops such as "Writing to Find Purpose & Meaning," "Wilderness Without and Within," "Writing to Make Whole," "Multi-Faith & Spiritual Writing," "Writing to Reconcile and Transcend," and (most fun) "Write to Fictionalize Your Life." From the National Writing Project, she gleaned a process that makes vividly reminiscent writing almost completely spontaneous. Her most gratifying moments occur when a participant scrawling a quick first draft stops writing and gazes upward, astonished by a revelation that suddenly emerged. Workshop participants and users of her book not only gain unexpected insights, they create legacies for their families and friends. Teachers may request complimentary copies of the book at memoirworkshops.com.



Geraldine DeLuca, recently retired from Brooklyn College, is a writer and painter who lives in North Hartland, VT and Philadelphia, PA. She has been practicing meditation for many years and recently published *Teaching Toward Freedom: Supporting Voices and Silence in the English Classroom*. A prominent recent tribute to the kinds of teaching practices Geri will share in her workshop comes from her former student, and now acclaimed poet and novelist, Ocean Vuong, who thanked her in the Acknowledgements of his stunning debut novel *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous*: "for always seeing (and keeping) the road true." The book started as an article that she published in JAEPL in 2006 about how listening to her yoga teachers changed the way she taught. The journal and the organization AEPL have been "courage teachers" for her, supporting her as she advocated for diverse students' "right to their own language," and as she and her colleague David Forbes established a program in contemplative teaching at Brooklyn College with funding from the Center for Contemplative Mind in Northampton, MA. Her website is geraldinedeluca.com.

Proposal Topic Suggestions:

Some suggested realms of encounter for concurrent session proposals (feel free to imagine others!): Student(s) and teacher(s); student(s) and student(s); students and their own and others' personal, cultural, class, and gender identities; students and their development of personal callings and aspirations; students and authors; students and literary or other texts (including social media and nonverbal media); students and the natural world; students and the human destruction of the natural world; students and the historical world; students and cultural worlds; students and the political world; students and the spiritual world; students and the human and natural future; students and social and emotional learning; classroom and out-of-classroom community; students and/or teachers and classroom, administrative, and governmental authority and power.

Do note that since we will be seeing "encounter" as an art form, we are inviting proposals in a new, aesthetic presentational format: the reading of a short story of a meaningful educational encounter, or misencounter, followed by a round of appreciative and constructive comments and questions from other participants, perhaps grouped with other stories with a shared theme.

Pre- and post-conference workshops: Geri DeLuca's workshop will be held before the conference, on Thursday. Nan Phifer's workshop will be held afterward, on Sunday. (This has changed from our first conference announcement.) The sessions will be from 1:30-4:30, allowing same day travel for most. Cost: \$40 until January 31st; \$60 February 1st-April 15th; \$80 after April 15th. Register at aepl.org. Write aeplconf2020@gmail.com to arrange for group discounts.

Main conference schedule (as of early January): The main conference begins with a beer, wine and cheese reception at 4:30, dinner offered from 5 onward, and the opening plenary at 6:30. The last plenary will end no later than noon Sunday, but depending on the number of quality proposals we receive, concurrent workshops may continue through Sunday night .

About AEPL: The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPL) is an official assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)—as well as being an official standing group of the Conference on College Composition and Communications (CCCC)—is open to all interested in expanding the boundaries of teaching and learning beyond traditional disciplines and methodologies. Areas of interest include but are not limited to: aesthetic, emotional, and moral intelligence; archetypes; body wisdom; care in education; community writing; creativity; deep reading; felt sense theory; healing; holistic learning; imaging; intuition; kinesthetic knowledge; listening and noticing; meditation and mindfulness; narration as knowledge; reflective teaching; silence; spirituality; visualization; the awakening of hope; and the wisdom tradition.

About our conference site: Stunningly situated, the YMCA of the Rockies is a premiere conference venue. It provides comfortable modern lodging and access to a range of activities, including hiking, biking, and horseback riding through Rocky Mountain National Park. allowing accompanying friends and family to have a wonderful time in spectacular surroundings while you enjoy the conference and/or for you to enjoy a little vacation of your own before or after. Prices, starting at \$63/ person/night, include all meals. Attendees are responsible for reserving lodging separately from conference registration. To reserve, call 888-613-9622 and mention booking number 64148, or use the electronic link on the AEPL website: www.aepl.org

We highly recommend you stay onsite to get the most of your AEPL experience! Write aeplconf2020@gmail.com if you would like us to try to arrange a bed for you in a shared room (3-5), to make new friends while you save money. And call Mark at 970-586-3341 #1040 if you would like to extend your stay on this magnificent site before and/or after the conference.