

## Guest Editor's Introduction

Elizabeth Jorgensen, Arrowhead Union High School

This issue invited contributors to share successful, inventive instruction, lessons, assignments and perspectives that teach facets of creative writing. In our call for submissions, Pruitt and I quoted the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, which argues that "writing cannot be taught" but that "writers can be encouraged." Whether or not you believe literary creativity can be taught, I hope you agree that certain skills can be enhanced. Students can acquire insight into what constitutes effective or realistic description, style, narrative, characterization or use of language. They can also learn about voice, diction, plotting, setting and figures of speech as well as how to craft dialogue that reveals a character's personality, social position and values.

Frankly, I write alongside my students because I aim to model the challenges and triumphs of brainstorming, writing, editing and polishing prose, poems, essays, articles and short stories. I, like my students, share my work with editors, journals, newspapers, writers' workshop groups, and the education community, experiencing both successes and failures. My own teaching relies on a belief that all students, of all abilities, can write for authentic audiences beyond my classroom walls. Of course, I remind myself that my students are immersed in the messy process of sloughing off the stuff of childhood and, as the years advance, becoming more astute, more soulful, and more adult in their abilities to communicate. With this in mind, I envision myself a coach and editor (rather than critic and grader), helping guide students to more articulate, beautiful or effective prose. I hope this section of *the Wisconsin English Journal* serves as similar inspiration for writing instructors.

Teacher isolation is often referred to as the main impediment to professional development. After reading these articles, I hope you are reminded that your counterparts are also providing meaningful feedback, collaborating, and assessing for learning. In addition to connecting a community of writing instructors, this section should help you improve lessons, embolden students, and produce lifelong writers.

In editing articles, I was invigorated by an introduction to professional resources I was previously unaware of. I hope you too are encouraged to connect with writing teachers and communities through social media or conferences or other publications. I also hope we motivate you to write about your own experiences both inside and outside your classroom. We are all writers—all with our own stories to share. Please consider contributing your voice, classroom experiences, lessons and research to this community. I recommend starting with a future issue of the *Wisconsin English Journal*.