Editorial: Fast Forward in English Education: Policy into Practice

[Janet Alsup](#), Purdue University
Chair of the Conference on English Education

Welcome to the special issue of the *Contemporary Issues in Technology and English Language Arts Teacher Education* journal dedicated to work initiated at the June 2009 Conference on English Education (CEE) meeting at Elmhurst College in Chicago. The theme of this conference, our first open-invitational meeting in approximately 10 years, was "Fast Forward in English Education: Policy into Practice." The conference planning team of Marshall George, Jill Van Antwerp, and me created a dynamic program combining traditional conference speakers, panels, and roundtables with working groups.

The conference was organized around seven thematic working groups, in which participants volunteered to spend most of their conference hours. One of these groups, the one most relevant to this special issue, considered 21st-century literacies and English teacher education. The projects shared or initiated during this strand meeting focused on research and classroom practice exploring the integration of technology in English education. The two articles in this special issue expound on two of these exciting projects that use cutting-edge technologies to teach preservice and in-service literacy educators.

Professors Suzanne Miller and Jamie Myers ably led the 21st Century Literacies group. They discussed their own technology and English teaching projects and also led other participants in lively discussion during the 2 days of discussion and project planning at Elmhurst. The strand was the largest at the conference. It became clear when so many registrants opted to work in Suzanne and Jamie's strand that many English educators across the nation (and the world) are interested in the intersections between literacy teaching, learning, and technology. Some members of the working group were already skilled in integrating technology such as blogs, wikis, digital video, and social networking into their methods classes; others in the group were there to learn from their more seasoned peers.

The 2009 conference was not the first time the topic of technology and English teacher education has been discussed at a CEE event. The first CEE summit held at Georgia State University in 2005 resulted in many important position statements, which are now posted on the CEE website, including one titled "Beliefs about Technology and the Preparation of English Teachers." The strand authors wrote in their introduction,

> Today new technologies are changing the types of texts we and our students create and interpret even as they are influencing the social, political, and cultural contexts in which our texts are composed and shared. Since these technologies are influencing the development of individuals, institutions, and communities (and since individuals, institutions, and communities are shaping these technologies and their uses), it is essential for English educators to turn a critical eye toward the benefits and affordances; the limitations and liabilities of integrating these newer technologies into our teaching. (http://www.ncte.org/cee/positions/beliefsontechnology)

This portion of the 2005 position statement set the stage perfectly for the work done at the 2009 conference. The members of the Elmhurst working group certainly turned a critical eye toward the exciting possibilities for using technology in the English education classroom. The articles in this issue address topics ranging from implementing video-based, dialogic instruction to mentor preservice English teachers to preparing teachers to integrate digital literacies and multimodal composing in their secondary classrooms.

What these projects have in common is that they explore the use of cutting-edge and interactive media to engage teachers and students in literacy learning in ways consistent with accepted theories of teaching literacy and language—theories and practices based on research often conducted by English educators and members of CEE. Our foundational beliefs about literacy teaching and learning have not been overturned or replaced with the increased emphasis on technology. Instead, the authors of these essays demonstrate that technology allows us to heighten our focus on classroom collaboration, attention to process, teacher inquiry, and reflective thought, qualities we all value in English teacher education and mentoring. The technology is not taking the place of the teacher, or the traditional literacy skills of reading and writing; instead, technology is enhancing English teaching by expanding the tools used to communicate, the forms and genres in which this communication occurs, and the range of potential audiences for student compositions and teacher reflections.

Despite recent anxieties surrounding the pros and cons of living in a technologically driven world and the effect of technology on the reading and writing habits of young people, English educators are viewing technology in smart, reflective ways and using it to enhance literacy teaching and learning. So I invite you to read the fascinating essays that follow, explore their hyperlinks, and even respond to the authors and their ideas through the journal's commentary option. Let's certainly continue the conversation about technology and English teacher education. The future promises countless exciting possibilities to explore.

I thank the *CITE* journal and its co-editors Carl Young and Jamie Myers for sponsoring this special issue.

References

Conference on English Education. (2005). *Beliefs about technology and the preparation of English teachers.* Retrieved from
http://www.ncte.org/cee/positions/beliefsontechnology