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#### Dissertations

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2009

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2009



Jim Beitler & Jennifer Buehler

May 2, 2009

# *Dimensions and Directions*

*The Joint Ph.D. Program in English and Education  
of the University of Michigan*

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## From the Chairs

The title of our newsletter, *Dimensions and Directions*, takes on special significance this year because JPEE is moving in new directions and taking on new dimensions. The most significant of these is Lesley's retirement as full-time University of Michigan faculty member and, of course, JPEE Co-Chair. Lesley joined the School of Education faculty in 1997 and worked closely with JPEE students before assuming the co-chair position in 2004. She is moving to Eugene, Oregon at the end of the fall semester and will complete her final semester as a full-time faculty member from there. Thanks to web communications, she can continue working with JPEE students as they finish their exams and dissertations and search for professional positions. Lesley will continue her scholarly work as an emeritus professor and is looking forward to her book projects, to developing her Open Resource web sites, and to working internationally.



Lesley Rex and  
Anne Ruggles Gere

We will miss working together. The ease of our collaborative leadership and the generosity of spirit it engendered shaped the program. While we have never spoken for each other, we knew we were speaking in agreement to enact the spirit of collegial community that distinguishes JPEE. We will miss putting our heads together to ward off problems, find resources, and extricate our charges from predicaments. We will miss the shared satisfaction arising from our common belief in our students' intellectual and personal strengths. We have delighted together in each of their attainments.

Anne continues to direct the Sweetland Writing Center, and a new dimension of JPEE is that an increasing number of students are becoming involved in research at the Center. Laura Aull, Tim Green, and Anne Porter are collaborating with Anne on research related to the 2009 shift in the system of Directed Self Placement in writing used by the University for all first-year students. Zak Lancaster is collaborating on a project that looks at the development of critical thinking skills among students in Upper Level Writing Requirement courses. Another new dimension of JPEE is the increased emphasis on new media writing. Staci Shultz, Ben Gunsberg, Chris Gerben, and Steve Engel have turned to web 2.0 and are all involved in digital initiatives that have implications for teaching and research. Within the School of Education, the Teacher Education Initiative is moving toward new directions for the professional development of teachers, and several JPEE students, including Ebony Thomas, Melinda McBee Orzluk, and Stephanie Moody, with JPEE alum Vicki Haviland coordinating, are involved in developing the English education strand of that work. They will be joined soon by Steve Engel and Danielle Lillge.

Despite the disturbances that the current economic crisis has imposed on education, the foresight of University of Michigan has provided a relatively stable environment for the program. JPEE students and faculty remain resourceful in creating productive new directions and innovative dimensions for research and teaching. Read the pages of this newsletter to learn more about what they are doing.

## Fall 2009 Cohort



**Danielle Lillge** returns to the University of Michigan, where she earned her master's in English Education to explore questions about secondary disciplinary literacy, learning, and classroom instruction; these questions emerged from her high school English teaching, collaboration with colleagues as a secondary literacy coach, and facilitation of professional development offerings in northeast Wisconsin. Grateful for life experiences such as growing up in Germany, teaching in England, leading college service trips, as well as working to encourage first-generation future college students, and grounded by plenty of time spent learning with and from teenagers, sculpting concrete, and geocaching, keeping it "real" is of the utmost importance for Danielle as she seeks understanding that has import for practitioners and therefore learners in diverse contexts.

**Melody Pugh** is excited to join JPEE after three and half years teaching introductory composition and literature in a liberal arts environment. In 2006, she earned an M.A. in English Literature from Loyola University Chicago, but a love of teaching composition and an interest in literacy efforts among both urban and rural communities has helped redirect her research interests. These interests include: the significance of place in composition studies and pedagogy, understanding the significance of social networking theory in the writing classroom, and the use of narrative in research. In addition, she is always excited to think about any of these issues through the lens of gender. Prior to teaching, Melody spent four years working in the field of digital media marketing, editing, and copywriting.



**Christie Toth** grew up in a nomadic Navy/Air Force family, living in South Carolina, Hawaii, Iceland, Maryland, Chile, and the United Kingdom before graduating from high school in Germany. She attended Bowdoin College, where she majored in anthropology and minored in Africana Studies. After graduating, she stayed in Maine, serving as an AmeriCorps\*VISTA, working with developmentally disabled kids, and dabbling in freelance journalism and grant-writing before moving to Portland, Oregon. Christie began her English MA at Portland State University planning to focus on cultural and postcolonial studies, but after teaching writing to low-income high schoolers through the Upward Bound program, she switched to composition and never looked back. After completing her MA, Christie researched student success issues at Portland State while getting her classroom fix by teaching composition courses at the community college. Her primary research interests are the pedagogical needs of older, returning, and first-generation students in community college writing classrooms, and she is very excited to be part of a program where she can study composition issues in the context of postsecondary education research.

**Crystal VanKooten** fell in love with reading, writing, and language at a young age growing up in Anchorage, Alaska, where she devoured novels, learned to give speeches, and even wrote some poetry. She found the perfect place to continue to read, write, and think in the English and Spanish departments at Calvin College, where she earned a BA in Secondary English and Spanish Education in 2002. She earned an MA in English Literature and Culture in 2004 from Oregon State University, focusing her graduate work on pedagogy and the teaching of reading and writing. Putting theory into practice, Crystal taught high school English and Spanish for 5 years in Hillsboro, OR, and she found her life filled with the joy, surprise, frustration, sorrow, laughter, emotion, and spontaneity that 15- and 16-year-olds bring to the classroom. She enters the English and Education program with renewed excitement to further explore reading and writing pedagogy, the use of technology in teaching, and the ability of readers and writers to impact and reflect society.



**Joanna Lin Want** received a BA in English from Indiana University-Bloomington. After graduation, she joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and spent a year teaching at Our Lady of Guadalupe Middle School for Girls in southwest Detroit. Continuing to pursue a love of both writing and teaching, she returned to Bloomington to earn an MFA in Creative Writing. Over the past six years, she has taught creative writing, composition, and secondary English in a variety of settings, most recently at Western Michigan University. Her poetry and reviews have appeared or are forthcoming in *Crab Orchard Review*, *Flyway*, *Indiana Review*, *The Aurean*, and others. As an E&E student she hopes to explore how teaching writing can contribute to more imaginative, sustainable, and socially just communities. Joanna lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan with her husband.

## JPEE Awards

**Laura Aull** received the Susan Lipschutz Award; which supports spring and summer research. This award is for Rackham students who have demonstrated exceptional scholarly achievement, a sense of social responsibility and service, and a lively interest in promoting the success of women in the academic community.

**Laura Aull, Mike Bunn, and Randy Pinder** have received Rackham Graduate Student Research Grants.

**James Beitler** and **Staci Shultz** are recipients of 2009 Rackham Outstanding Student Instructor Awards. This award recognizes exceptional ability and creativity as a teacher, service as an outstanding mentor, and continuous growth as a teacher and scholar. The Rackham Outstanding GSI Award is a highly competitive award: there were only twenty recipients across the entire university this year.

**Heather Thomson Bunn** was selected to participate in the Sweetland Dissertation Institute for spring term (2009).

**Michael Bunn** was a recipient of this year's David and Linda Moscow Prize for Excellence in Teaching Composition. This award is given to instructors remarkable for the energy, passion, insight, pedagogical skill and creativity, and commitment they bring to the teaching of writing.

**Amy Carpenter Ford** has been awarded a four-month Community of Scholars fellowship at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

**Bethany Davila** was a recipient of the Harold and Vivian Shapiro/John Malik Award.

**Bethany Davila** and **Melinda McBee Orzulak** were awarded Rackham Graduate School Humanities Fellowships in 2009.

During 2008-2009, the following students were awarded a Rackham One-term dissertation Fellowships: **Hannah Dickinson, Randy Pinder, and Staci Shultz.**

**Steve Engel** and **Ben Gunsberg** were named Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory Scholars (HASTAC) for 2009-2010.

**Moises Perales Escudero** received the Rackham International Student fellowship, which assists outstanding international students.

**Staci Shultz** was the 2009 U of M nominee for the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann national fellowship.

**Ebony Elizabeth Thomas** is the 2009-2010 recipient of the Michigan Center for the Education of Women Mary Malcolmson Raphael Fellowship. Also, **Ebony** is completing her second year as one of twelve NCTE Cultivating New Voices Among Scholars of Color selected nationally.



## JPEE Current Student Activities

At the NCTE convention in November **Laura Aull**, **Moises Escudero**, and **Zak Lancaster** presented their panel "Representations of Style: Composition Textbooks as Disciplinary Barometers."

**Laura Aull**, **Steve Engel**, **Zak Lancaster** and **Anne Porter** presented at the Language and Rhetoric conference on the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor campus this fall.

**Laura Aull** presented "A qualitative and quantitative corpus approach" at the American Association of Corpus Linguistics in Edmonton, Canada.

**Laura Aull** will present "Remixing Directed Self Placement: Fostering Student Reflection; Linking Assessment and Instruction; and Tracking Progress" at the 2010 Conference on College Composition and Communication in Louisville. **Beth Davila**, **Moises Escudero**, and **Zak Lancaster** will present a panel "Revisiting Identity, Critical Analysis, and Composition Theory: A Linguistic Analysis of Writer-Reader Interaction and Knowledge Construction." **Hannah Dickinson** will present "Beyond Injury and Healing: Research on Student Writing about Violence." **Brett Griffiths** will give a presentation titled "Revisiting Critical Pedagogy, Remixing the Self: How Do Contemporary Theories of Identity Invite us to Re-envision the Conscientizacao of the Self?" **Stephanie Moody** will present a paper titled "Rethinking the Extracurricular Literacy Practices of College Students: Incorporating Romance Novels into Composition and Literature Classrooms." **Randy Pinder** will present on the topic of contract grading in composition classrooms. **Staci Shultz** will present "This Literacy Practice Brought to You By...: Sponsoring Online Fanfic Participation."

**Anne Curzan**, **Moises Escudero**, **Brett Griffiths**, **Zak Lancaster** and **Stephanie Moody** are coordinators of the Language and Rhetorical Studies Interdisciplinary Workshop. They organized the graduate-student conference "Making Meaning: Language and Rhetoric in Real World Spaces" on September 25th and 26th.

**Hannah Dickinson**, **Chris Gerben**, **Tim Green**, **Melinda McBee Orzulak**, and **Stephanie Moody** contribute to the Policy Research Briefs that appear in each issue of the National Council of Teachers of English's quarterly Council Chronicle.

**Steve Engel**, **Chris Gerben**, **Ben Gunsberg** and **Staci Shultz** are graduate student coordinators of the Digital Media Studies Group (DMSG), a new Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop devoted to those in the University community whose work is grounded in digital humanities.

**Steve Engel** and **Chris Gerben** presented at the National Media Literacy Educators annual meeting in August. The title of their presentation was "Seeing Arguments: Using Digital Media to Visualize Academic Literacy."

**Chris Gerben** and **Randy Pinder** have been named the 2008-2009 Graduate Student Mentors (GSM) for the English Department Writing Program.

**Zak Lancaster** is working on a research team at the Sweetland Writing Center that is investigating students' critical thinking and writing in upper-level undergraduate courses.

**Stephanie Moody** recently contributed a chapter to the Sage Handbook of Gender and Leadership entitled "Women's Leadership and Popular Romance: Contemporary Anglo-American Romance Writers and Scholars."

**Brett Griffiths** has joined The Ohio State University Literacy Studies group and attended the Working Class Studies Conference in Spring 2009.

**Brett Griffiths**, **Stephanie Moody**, and **Staci Shultz** participate in the Sopranos study group led by **Bob Bain** and **Elizabeth Birr Moje**.

**Anne Porter** presented a talk, "What Is (or could be) Global Literacy?" at the Expanding Literacy Studies Conference at The Ohio State University. Also, she was one of the co-editors of Michigan Feminist Studies, an interdisciplinary graduate student journal published at the University of Michigan.

**Lesley Rex**, **Heather Thomson Bunn**, **Mike Bunn**, **Beth Davila**, **Hannah Dickinson**, **Amy Carpenter Ford**, **Chris Gerben**, and **Melinda McBee Orzulak** collaborated on "A Review of Discourse Analysis in Literacy Research: Equitable Access," which will be published this fall in Reading Research Quarterly.

For the third summer in a row, **Staci Shultz** graded AP English literature exams in Louisville, KY. **Ebony Elizabeth Thomas** completed the National Writing Project Summer Institute at the Oakland Writing Project site.

## 2008-2009 Dissertations

### Jennifer Buehler Words Matter: The Role of Discourse in Creating, Sustaining, and Changing School Culture

Chair: Lesley A. Rex

This three-year ethnographic study analyzes how “toxic” school culture was produced through interactions among staff members at Centerville High School, an under-resourced high school where I conducted fieldwork from 2004-2007. Using discourse analysis, I examine adults’ competing beliefs about low-income and minority students, and I analyze how differences in belief immobilized the staff. Against this backdrop, I trace the attempts of one small group of teacher-leaders to change their discourse interactions as they grappled with difficult questions about race and class in the context of school reform. This study shows that the widespread helplessness and frustration which plagued Centerville staff members developed in part because adults were unwilling to talk publicly about the dilemmas that shaped their work. When staff members admitted what they did not know about teaching low-income and minority students, they opened up a productive space for exploring the challenges of work in urban and under-resourced settings.



**This study shows that the widespread helplessness and frustration which plagued Centerville staff members developed in part because adults were unwilling to talk publicly about the dilemmas that shaped their work.**

### James Edward Beitler III Rhetorics of Interdependence: Composing the *Ethos* of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Chair: Anne Ruggles Gere

This dissertation explores the rhetorical performances surrounding the operation of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to demonstrate how its members and advocates attempted to establish authority to carry out the Commission’s mandate and legitimate its claims about killings that took place in Greensboro, North Carolina on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979. The study argues that they did so, in part, by drawing upon the rhetorical traditions circulating within the field of transitional justice. These traditions provided rhetorical resources that the Commission’s members and advocates reaccentuated in their own performances to construct the Commission’s *ethos*. The dissertation also attests to the role that performances of *ethos* play in positioning individuals and constituting community, highlights how the field of transitional justice is developing in the United States, and suggests ways that truth commissions may be implemented more effectively in the future.





Photo taken by  
Mike Gould

**L. Jill  
Lamberton  
received the  
2008  
Distinguished  
Dissertation  
Award from  
the American  
Society for  
the History of  
Rhetoric**



Rackham Graduate  
School

## JPEE Alumni

**David Brown '08** is one of this year's recipients of the Dimond Dissertation Award in the School of Education. The Dimond family created an endowment to recognize excellent scholarship conducted by School of Education students in the form of their dissertations. David's dissertation is entitled "Curricular Approaches to Linguistic Diversity: Code-Switching, Register-Shifting, and Academic Language." The chair of his committee was Anne Curzan.

**Jennifer Buehler '09** has taken a position as Assistant Professor of English Education at Saint Louis University, where she teaches courses in young adult literature, content area literacy, English methods, writing pedagogy, and foundations of urban education. She continues to produce monthly podcasts on YA lit for ReadWriteThink.org, and as a member of ALAN (the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE), she served on the inaugural Amelia Elizabeth Walden book award committee. With co-authors Anne Gere, Christian Dallavis, and Vicki Haviland, she published articles this past year in the *American Educational Research Journal*, the *Journal of Teacher Education*, and *Multicultural Perspectives*.

**Todd DeStiger '96** is continuing his work with fellow EE alumnus **David Schaafsma (90)** at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is pleased to report that they just submitted a manuscript that is a collection of essays on what teachers can learn from the life and work of Jane Addams. His piece, "In Search of a Form: The Educational Legacy of Jane Addams," outlines Addams' integration of local and regional activism, her complex and evolving understandings of democracy, and her leadership in shaping American pragmatism. This term he also began a project in which his "Teaching of Writing" methods students will be tutoring in a local Chicago public high school that's attempting to teach AP Composition to its entire senior class. He will be conducting research on this project and plans to write about it during a sabbatical next academic year. Finally, this October he will be one of five UIC faculty to be presented with a UIC Excellence in Teaching Award.

**Vicki Haviland '07** is working at UM coordinating undergraduate English education and representing English in the Teacher Education Initiative, which is a major redesign of Michigan's undergraduate teacher education program. She continues to write with Anne Gere, Jennifer Buehler, and Christian Dallavis from their five year research of undergraduates committed to teaching in urban schools. They've recently published three articles from this work in *JTE*, *AERJ*, and *Multicultural Perspectives*, and are at work on a book for teachers on addressing the achievement gap through culturally responsive pedagogy.

**Christine Hult '82** took early retirement from Utah State University this past July after teaching there for 25 years and is now Professor Emerita. She decided to retire so that she could spend all of her time on her textbook writing projects. She currently has three projects in various stages with Pearson Education: *The New Century Handbook, 5e*; *Critical Reading and Writing in the Disciplines* (new writing in the disciplines book for first-year English--due out in 2010); and *College Composition the e-Book* (an entirely electronic textbook with versions written for the web, particularly useful for online classes, and Kindle-style book readers--due out in 2011). She also continues as the Principal Investigator on a National Science Foundation Institutional Transformation (ADVANCE IT) grant whose mission is to improve the promotion and retention of women faculty, particularly in the sciences and engineering. The grant is in its dissemination phase wherein we communicate our findings to other colleges and universities. For more information, see <http://advance.usu.edu>

**L. Jill Lamberton '07** is in her first year of a two-year Visiting Assistant Professor appointment at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. She teaches in both the English Department and the Rhetoric Department. Her dissertation, "Claiming an Education: The Transatlantic Performance and Circulation of Intellectual Identities in College Women's Writing, 1870-1900" received the 2008 Distinguished Dissertation Award from the American Society for the History of Rhetoric.

## JPEE Alumni continue

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**Margaret Marshall '91** accepted a position as Director of University Writing at Auburn University with tenure as full professor in the English Department and will begin January 1, 2010. This new initiative at Auburn aims to expand and improve the teaching of writing to include all disciplines, is part of the strategic plan for the university and reports directly to the Provost. She is excited to have this opportunity to use her education to influence the pedagogical culture of an institution and to work with faculty who actually seem interested in learning to teach writing in their fields. Though she never thought she would end up in the deep South, she actually found the community and the institution to be a good fit. Randall will continue his position as Legal Director of the ACLU of Florida but primarily from the Pensacola and Tallahassee offices. Meanwhile, Margaret has developed two new courses that she teaching this year at UMiami: a graduate seminar on nineteenth-century magazine culture and a first-year seminar on American public rhetoric. Both have allowed her to continue working on a scholarly project that involves magazine coverage of race and education in the post-reconstruction era, a project that originated in (and got left out of) the dissertation.

**Tim Murnen '02** is an Associate Professor of Literacy & Teacher Education at Bowling Green State University, and the program coordinator of secondary education, in charge of approximately 700 undergraduates. Among other things, he has been working on a documentary on urban school reform in Toledo, Ohio. The documentary, *Turning Point*, aired on WGTE TV30 public television in Toledo, and featured Anthony Francis, former Waite High School social studies teacher, now a doctoral candidate in the UM Teacher Education program, working with Bob Bain. You can find out more about the documentary at the following website: <http://turningpointfilm.com/>. In addition, he just returned from a semester at Keele University in England, where he worked with BGSU students in the Keele Study Abroad program. He taught a number of courses including comparative education, studied schools in England, and found time to meet former JPEE colleague Sean Henne in Oxford on St. Patrick's Day--where they toasted JRR Tolkien and CS Lewis in the *Eagle & Child*.

**Sarah R. Robbins '93** has begun a new job this year at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, where she joined the English Department as the Lorraine Sherley Chair in American Literature.

**Randall Roorda '94** is a Fulbright lecturer this fall at Masaryk University in Brno, ancient capital of Moravia, in the Czech Republic, teaching Thoreau, Green poetry, and literacy studies while spreading the international gospel of ecocriticism.

**Gary Salvner '77** continues as chair of the English Department at Youngstown State University and as Executive Secretary of ALAN. This fall he published the book *Teaching the Selected Works of Gary Paulsen* (Heinemann).

**Shari Steadman '04** relocated from Florida to North Carolina in January to join the English Education faculty in the College of Education at East Carolina University. The University, which began as a teacher's college, has a vibrant and comprehensive teacher education program. Shari is teaching undergraduate English Education and graduate educational research courses. Her own research continues to focus on preservice teacher development (notably the work of university supervisors/mentors) and also now includes university-high school partnerships designed to address issues of new literacies.

**Carla L. Verderame '98** was promoted to Professor of English at West Chester University of PA. She continues to enjoy coordinating the English Education Program at WCU and looks forward to seeing all of her JPEE friends at NCTE in Philadelphia in November.

**Morris Young '97** was promoted to professor of English this past spring. He continues to serve as Director of English 100 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he is also a faculty affiliate in Asian American Studies. The collection he co-edited with LuMing Mao, *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*, will be recognized with an Honorable Mention for the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize at the 2009 MLA Convention in Philadelphia this December. He will appear as a featured speaker with LuMing Mao at the 2010 Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition held at the University of Louisville.

## **Stephen Dunning Student Support Fund**

As you think about your end-of-year charitable contributions, please consider a gift to the Stephen Dunning Student Support Fund. This is the fund that supports special events, Chalk and Cheese refreshment, and, when monies permit, supplements research-related expenses.

Contributions of all sizes are most welcome. Write checks to the University of Michigan E&E Gift Account and send them to Jeanie Mahoney Laubenthal, 2014 School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259. Photo taken by Mike Gould.



School of Education

### **A Special Thank You to Contributors:**

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