I wish to dedicate this issue to the late Professor Annette Patterson. Annette’s amazing calm, clarity of mind and sharp scholarship enabled her to produce a significant body of work in the fields of literature, reading and the English curriculum. I recall fondly using her early text book Reading Stories, (Mellor, O’Neill & Patterson, 1988) which applied complex literary theory to challenging, critical literacy classroom activities and which I used when I first started teaching secondary English. Her work on reading reached into the digital age (Rennie & Patterson, 2008) and her later work presented a historical examination of reading practices (Patterson, 2014). I will always remember her with great affection for her humour and her dedication to the field of English. Annette was also very dear to me on a personal level as my PhD supervisor and my Head of School at QUT. Annette Patterson will be missed by English educators everywhere.

Like Annette’s range of research, this issue offers an eclectic mix united by the underpinning conceptual thread of ‘spaces’: ethical spaces, ‘affinity spaces’ in digital gaming, ambivalence in the ‘third space’, subject spaces and positions and textual spaces involving text selection for reading and teachers as writers. The National Perspectives column in this issue reports on the exciting professional learning and other activities of English teachers in the states.

As two of the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum are: ‘ethical understanding’, and ‘critical and creative thinking’, Ray Misson’s opening article, offers both a provocation and a set of strategies for English educators. ‘This above all … The place of ethics in English teaching’ examines through a Lacanian lens the ways in which particular beliefs are made part of one’s identity/subjectivity. It considers in what ‘critical’ ways subject English might intervene in, or support, this process. The article then looks at the basis of ethics in some strategies for English teaching. Misson makes an argument for the importance of a conscious (if flexible) ethical position underpinning our work in English classrooms, since we are all language teachers. As Ray Misson reminds us, the attitudes and values we bring to the teaching of texts and language, ‘shape our perception of the world’.

The next article in this issue by Daniel Xerri from the University of Malta, “Poetry does really educate”: An interview with spoken word poet Luka Lesson’ like Misson’s article, addresses a way to ‘speak up’ the world. Australian poet Luka Lesson argues that performance poetry is not being taken seriously enough in the curriculum. It is, however, growing in this country. We do have a lively and growing slam poetry culture occurring in schools with the SlammEd competition and various poetry slams all around the country at state libraries and festivals in communities and schools are increasingly participating in these creative events.

The next three articles focus on textual spaces for reading and writing. The first of these, by Georgina Barton and Loraine McKay, is titled ‘Conceptualising a literacy education model for Junior secondary students: The spatial and reflective practices of an Australian school.’ The paper examines one school’s collaborative approach to improving reading practices, for its Years 8 and 9 students, in order to increase positive pathways after school. The researchers argue that when ongoing reflective practice occurs, potential transformative or ‘third space’, practices result; ensuring positive literacy learning outcomes for all students. Professor Patterson would approve of the second paper on reading by Sarah McDonald which critiques the prescribed text choice in terms of gender equality in South Australia. The author reflexively comments on her own choices of texts, which also supports Ray Misson’s article on the need for teachers to make ethical choices in terms of subject positions. The third paper in this textual
secondary English teachers’ values and expectations of
teaching. The researchers ask how and to what extent
has the early-career experience affirmed or challenged
new teachers’ initial career choice? The implications of
this are discussed in terms of the new teacher’s sense
of professional agency, resilience and career plans and,
in turn, for teacher recruitment and retention policies
and practice.

The issue ends with the wonderful Deb McPherson’s
reading and viewing section to inspire our text choices
in classrooms.

Following this issue there will be two themed
issues, both emerging from conferences. An advertise-
ment calling for papers for the second of these issues
appears on p. 62. I will gladly accept articles and papers
for the rest of the year outside of the remit of these
themed issues, to be reviewed and ready for an issue
early next year. I am particularly keen to dedicate a
special issue in 2017 to celebrate the significant contri-
butions to English teaching and research work made by
the late Paul Brock and the late Annette Patterson (see
call for papers on page 52 of this issue. So much excel-
lent teaching and research occurs unspoken and invis-
ibly and your ideas may very well be worth sharing;
so please keep valuing your work with the profession
and keep sending me your work for consideration in
the journal.

This issue will be out to you all following the
annual AATE conference in Adelaide. I hope that if
you presented your work at the conference that you
will consider submitting it for review and potential
publication. Also please send me an email if you think
someone else’s inspiring conference presentation could
become a worthy topic for a journal article in English
in Australia.

Anita Jetnikoff

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