

LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR

Welcome to the Sandbox

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FIRST PUBLISHED IN
THE SANDBOX

YEAR PUBLISHED
2025

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Dear Readers,

During my childhood summers, my family and I would go to Jones Beach on the southern coast of Long Island, New York and enjoy all the sun, water, and breezes the Atlantic Ocean had to offer. A favorite pastime of mine, my siblings, and cousins was to dig into the rich, moist sand and use it to make model castles, houses, cars, animals, and flowers right there on the beach. Often our parents and grandparents would join us in our play. With each object we made we were making a world that reflected our individual dreams but contributing to a collective vision too. Eventually, as the sun began to say farewell for the day, we would leave the world we made by sand to be washed into the earth from which we created it, until the next time.

When summer went away, our play with the sand did not always end. Some of the city's public parks had sandboxes: large squares in playgrounds filled with sandboxes

where the young (and the young at heart!) engage in a joyful practice of communal imagination and manifestation.

We named the CLC's publication *The Sandbox* because we see the work of community literacies research, advocacy, and pedagogy as practices of community, wonder, and possibility that can be found in every sandbox. *The Sandbox* invites community literacies workers to write thought provoking, accessible, but brief essays, policy memos, or reports on a timely issue within literacy learning and practice. The publication's purpose—that's the "short papers, big ideas" part—is for the works featured to provide nuanced insight into a salient issue for general audiences, creating a resource for people to use in efforts to shape literacy learning, development, and practice for the better and across a wide range of contexts.

In our issues of *The Sandbox*, born digital and then printed in a collected volume annually, we strive to make the work accessible in all senses of the word, including those called for by numerous activists and scholars of disability justice. The wide range of work we publish includes scholarly essays (800-1500 words); policy memos/

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reports (1-5 pages); book reviews (750-1500 words); review essays of 2 or more books] (1500-3000 words); literacy and learning narratives/literacy autobiographies (1000-1500 words), and interviews. Coauthored and collaborative work is more than welcome. All contributions undergo an editorial process of anonymous peer-review, and once accepted, authors engage in a collaborative process of revising the work toward publication and are engaged at each stage including copyediting, proofreading, and visual image selection.

Unlike most scholarly publications, we can provide an honorarium for all writers whose work is selected for publication in *The Sandbox* at a rate that is competitive with freelance writing for mainstream publications such as The New York Times and Washington Post. In future issues, we hope to feature reports from some of the various community partners with whom the Brown Chair

and CLC have had the pleasure of collaborating, from multiple literacy councils across Arkansas to literacy educators, advocates, and researchers with projects all over the country, including Conway, Arkansas; Ames, Iowa; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Tallahassee, Florida; Fort Worth, Texas, and Houston, Texas. We hope that you will answer our open call to be contributors to future issues and consider pitching an essay, policy memo, or report for publication consideration.

The Sandbox is a critical part of the purpose and work of the CLC which, in the months leading to and after our launch on May 6, 2022, facilitates and supports a variety of literacy partnerships in Arkansas and nationally, ranging from scholarly research and educational and policy initiatives to community programming centered on various aspects of empowerment and advocacy.

The three parts of CLC's name speaks to a vital part of the full essence of the CLC and its work. By '**community**' we seek to grow and nurture literacy within communities in Arkansas and beyond, while honoring that literacy and community are vital to and constitutive of one another. With '**literacies**', we refer to the practices of meaning-making that include but are not limited to traditional modes of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Literacies are inherent to every measure of self and communal expression, from what we read and write to the clothes we wear, the histories we archive, and the diversity of languages we honor and embrace across communities. Lastly, '**collaboratory**' characterizes the incubator in which we invite, sponsor, and sustain collaborative community literacies work among various literacies stakeholders who, though not always collocated, are no less mutually invested in the transformative power of literacies.

Through the principled ethics of justice, imagination, community accountability, and love, the CLC creates and support partnerships and programs in four key areas: research, education, advocacy, and empowerment. As with The ww, the CLC invites all literacy stakeholders—advocates, educators, librarians, researchers, policymakers, and creatives—to dream projects that will help all people practice literacies more fluently, richly, productively, and joyfully. Such partnerships include supporting scholarly research with clear statewide, national, and international literacy and education policy outcomes that can positively impact literacy learning and practice in schools or adult literacy programs, through to smaller programs that focus on literacy development within small gatherings of readers and writers, to literacy learning and practice in applied trades and crafts such as farming, sewing, painting, theater, and photography.

We anticipate that the articles published here will inspire all who read them to pursue their own deep thinking, tenacious visioning, and collaboration on topics related to the contents of the articles we feature and however they speak to the work of literacy learning and practice in your life and work wherever that work takes place, such as your home, classrooms, community organizations, libraries, religious and spiritual spaces, work, or virtually, and through writing, reading, speaking, listening, or any number of applied and artistic trades and crafts.

Before sending us off to read and engage the works in this publication, I wish to thank all authors whose work grace the pages of this journal for seeing *The Sandbox* as a home for your wonderful work and for your patience as we bring each issue to life. I want also to thank the Brown Chair and CLC's staff: Jami Padgett, associate editor of the journal and assistant to the Brown Chair; graduate assistants Jackie Chicales and Molly Mingo; and Braxton Kocher of Bandt Agency, a wizard of web design and marketing, who supports Team CLC to more sharply articulate the work we do and to make sure *The Sandbox* reflects that in every way possible. Most notably, Braxton helped us to meet the goals to make the journal as accessible as we possibly could, as this is something we will keep expanding on because it is at the heart of our work. My thanks also to the Advisory Board of the CLC which consists of faculty in higher education, librarians, and authors, who have committed to the vision of the CLC and work diligently to help us manifest it every day. You can learn more about each of them on our website.

In addition, I wish to thank the University of Arkansas College of Arts and Sciences, with special thanks to Kim Gillow and Kristen Young in the Office of Major Gifts and Grants, for their generosity and many efforts to make the CLC and the work of the Office of the Brown Chair in English Literacy a success. My gratitude also to all of the students and my colleagues in the Program in Rhetoric and Composition in the Department of English at the University of Arkansas. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the Brown Chair in English Literacy—an endowment created jointly with a very generous donation from the Brown Foundation and the Walton Family Gift which funds the CLC. As a community-accountable Black queer feminist scholar-teacher-educator, and a lifelong literacies advocate, it is a deep honor to be able to leverage the resources of this position for work I hope will do its part in creating the world in which we all deserve to live; one where we all have peace and happiness. My great hope is that you feel those commitments in every aspect of this publication and all the CLC's work now and forever.

Now, I get to finally say: welcome to *The Sandbox*! We are so glad you have chosen to read our journal that we have been so intentionally, enthusiastically, and imaginatively created for you. We hope it will be of great use to you in your literacy work and everyday life. We also hope that you too will someday join us as a contributor to *The Sandbox*, sharing with us all your big ideas and short papers on literacy and learning.

With the love of literacy and learning,

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Eric Darnell Pritchard (they/them) is an award-winning writer, cultural critic, and Brown Chair in English Literacy and Associate Professor of English at the University of Arkansas. They are also on the faculty of the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College. They earned their BA in English-Liberal Arts (magna cum laude) from Lincoln University, the nation's oldest historically Black college and university (HBCU). They also earned an MA in Afro-American Studies and a PhD in English (with distinction) from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.