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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Although the Spring, 1990 issue of *LJM* is not a "special focus" issue, its articles do put special emphasis on breaking away from traditional approaches to teaching, especially through the sharing of reading and writing both inside and outside the classroom. The willingness to encourage honest and full sharing by our students often requires us to exit the traditional teaching stage, leaving behind many of the scripts and props upon which we tend to rely. In the opening article in this issue, Joel Chaston helps us find new ground by providing some instructive images of the writing teacher found in the literature our students read. Gail Parshall then urges elementary teachers (and other teachers as well, we think) to look past the disconcerting appearance of our students' writing—in this case, invented spelling—to the actual writing that is going on. In a message that can be applied to other concerns as well, Parshall argues that spelling will improve in time only if the writing is allowed to proceed relatively unimpeded. Mary Dekker, in turn, provides us with a set of strategies for making the students themselves more at the center of the classroom by having them write to each other in a variety of ways about their reading. Next, Mary Branding suggests that we occasionally allow our students to take a vacation from the standard modes of writing by doing and sharing a kind of autobiographical writing called "Life Book Writing." Continuing with the theme of the importance of students sharing their ideas with each other as well as with the teacher, Lucia Doherty argues for increasing the oral language component in all of our classrooms. Ruth Nathan then explains in very practical ways how this strategy of encouraging open communication and multiple perspectives is essential to the curricular review process that inevitably affects our teaching lives. Finally, Richard Selter presents a discussion of print and film versions of a popular story as a way of urging us to make a multi-media approach part of our breaking away from traditional, instructor-dominated teaching.

We hope that over the years *LJM* has offered the "breaking away" argument in a variety of ways that assist as well as persuade. To provide our readership with some help in finding those ways, we have included in this issue a bibliography of all contributions made to *LJM* since its inception in 1985. We hope you will not only benefit from the Spring, 1990 issue of the journal that follows, but be encouraged by this bibliography to explore *LJM's* past offerings as well.

The Editors