

Perspectives: Not Just an Introduction to The Inaugural Issue

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Abstract. This paper problematizes how perspectives play a significant role in locating the point of convergence between the organization, LEAP, Inc., and DALIN (*Earth*) Journal. While the authors/editors acknowledge, albeit reluctantly, that a nonmember's perspective on what makes the journal a microcosm of the organization is limited, they likewise illustrate other essential elements that contribute to their epistemic stances. They further elaborate on how the journal becomes inextricably linked to the organization while discussing its integrative nature, the drivers of this Inaugural Issue, and its articles. An overarching methodology is discussed to streamline the process and identify what binds all the articles in this issue.

Keywords. Parallelism, perspectives, literature, shifts, teaching.

Welcome to The Inaugural Issue of DALIN (*Earth*) Journal, a biannual, open-access journal that publishes articles, research, critiques, and creative works. It is the official peer-reviewed publication of the Literature Educators Association of the Philippines Incorporated (LEAP, Inc.).

Converging Parallels and Perspectives

What a graphic artist calls a point-projection perspective appears to be a more practical lens to see the depths of interrelationships between the organization, LEAP, Inc., and DALIN (*Earth*) Journal. It may seem grand to rationalize what makes the former a microcosm of the latter. We think, though, that to see their mutual parallelism, one needs to look closely at the vanishing point of a trajectory with the same directional vector. From a heuristic standpoint, we believe that everything seems more defined once one has learned their directional vector, our precept, which is the converging point of all we do (Fig. 1).

Figure 1

Parallels Meeting at a Converging Point

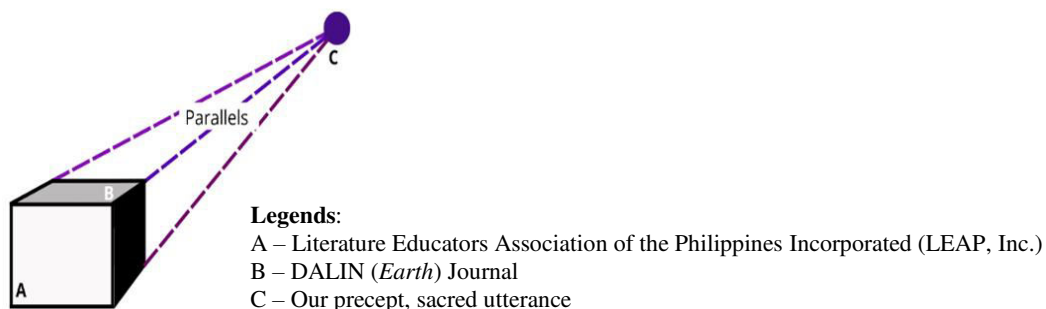


Fig. 1 shows the parallels between the organization, the journal, and the meeting point. As officers-cum-editors, we claim that in representing what we do, how we do it, and for whom we do it, perspectives are of

necessity, not just a mere option. A perspective is a viewpoint, a vantage point of seeing from a certain angle where we locate ourselves to understand and be understood.

In the science of perspective, we assert that while both have parallels on their own, they mutually share an intersection and focal point in common. While we acknowledge that our distance and angle of view influence how we see this converging point, the perspective one holds (or, in Filipino, *tangan*) explains the epistemological issue that emerges. The interrelated factors of location, milieu, positionality, and stance or positioning influence the scope and depth of this observed parallelism. It is, therefore, vital to deliberate on whether an emic or an etic standpoint characterizes such a connection.

A linguist and anthropologist, Kenneth Pike, coined two perspectives, emic and etic, in 1954. When asked about what the organization and the journal have in common, the active members have arguably perceived the connection more clearly because they draw from the emic stance, an insider’s perspective, one that comes from within the organization. On the other hand, those nonmembers perceive a parochial view since they draw their understanding from the outside. Both emic and etic provide LEAP, Inc. officers and board members with a three-dimensional view—a stereoscopic perspective of simultaneously viewing the connection through two lenses.

Figure 2

Varying Factors Affecting Perspectives on Connections

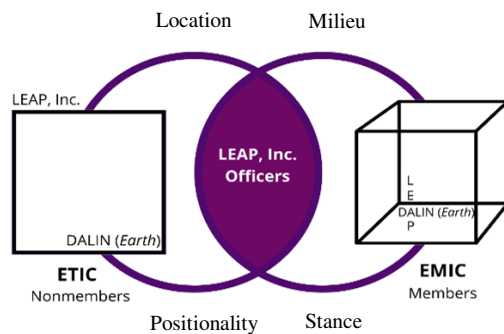


Fig. 2 illustrates factors affecting perspectives on connections between the organization, LEAP, Inc., and its journal, DALIN (*Earth*). The emic makes us understand local realities and immediate needs, while the etic assists us in analyzing them and thinking of viable solutions for the greater community.

Our Precept, Sacred Utterance

DALIN (*Earth*) Journal is deeply linked to LEAP, Inc. Our sacred utterance, “*Para sa panitikan at guro*” (For literature and literature teacher), is a vector and precept that keeps us on track—reminding us of who we are and why we are here. Over the years, it has fueled the making of our annual packet sessions and national and international conferences, birthing tangible, transformative, and integrative solutions to pressing issues in literature education. Similarly, we celebrate the magnificence of creative work while challenging and interrogating existing conceptual, theoretical, and pedagogical knowledge.

We always aspire to provide a platform for these opportunities despite unprecedented challenges. For instance, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in the first quarter of 2020, some lamented that it would thwart our annual programs. Others even had a long, weary sigh, thinking they would be alone in confronting a precarious situation, let alone teaching while ‘feeling’ lost. We, however, extended effort beyond limits and overcame doubts to respond to the needs of the academic community. Hence, a lead-off virtual series of packet sessions, where we, among other officers, served as a knowledge resource, happened in the third quarter of the same year. In 2021, LEAP, Inc. held the first-ever International Conference on Literature Education with renowned writers and distinguished literature luminaries overseas. With our milestone, so to speak, we still contemplate and time and again ask: Are we accomplishing enough prism to evaluate if we have resonated with

the same sacred utterance? Should we settle for what we have done for years? The answer is crystal clear and reverberates with the launching of the DALIN (*Earth*) Journal.

DALIN (*Earth*) Journal

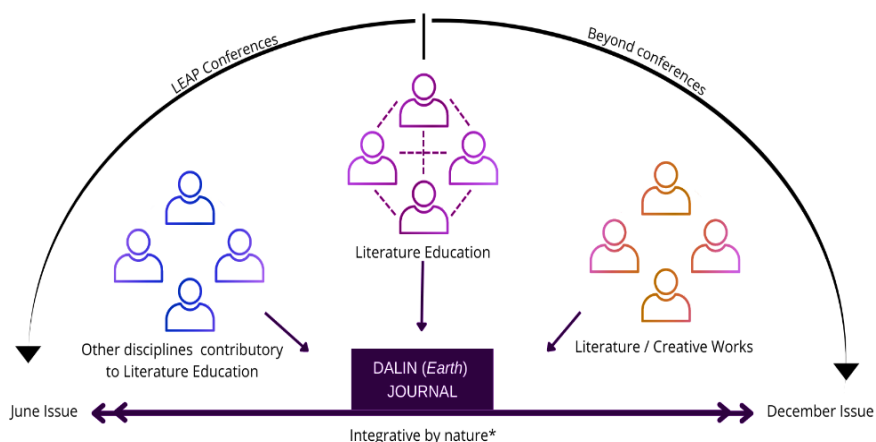
Echoing the same sacred utterance, DALIN (*Earth*) Journal, a microcosm of LEAP, Inc., provides a space to advance critical discourse and academic debates while sharing scholarship with the world. Together with our international reviewers, we ensure that every issue in each volume is of high quality and of the utmost relevance for literature teachers. All contributions that successfully pass the initial screening of the editorial team undergo the DALIN Manuscript Development Program (DMDP). This collaborative scheme employs a dialogic approach, steering contributors through the countless opportunities at their disposal in making the manuscript ready for publication.

At DALIN (*Earth*) Journal, while it centers on anything literature, it is still primarily integrative by nature (Fig. 3). We allow contributors from other disciplines to submit their works, informing new knowledge and theory about literature education.

Fig. 3 displays the knowledge source of our journal. We intend to reserve all June issues for the annual national or international conference outcomes. On the other hand, the December issues are devoted to other submissions working on a particular theme. If a need for a special issue arises, we shall open new calls for publication immediately. This Inaugural Issue and forthcoming issues will further articulate the enriching relationship between LEAP Inc. and DALIN (*Earth*) Journal.

Figure 3

*Knowledge Contributors to DALIN (*Earth*) Journal*



The Theme - Shifts in Literature Education: Challenges and Future Directions

1. The Need

Literature education is challenged by the pandemic and a new generation of students. The new dynamics of literature education have urged stakeholders to make a shift to make it more accessible and palatable to many. Our pedagogy is constantly being tested, especially with how rapidly the media penetrates our lives. The fourth wave of technology urges us to change how we deal with work and life. Technology is critical in the educational shift of the 21st century. Developing niche technology and innovation systems for teaching became more prominent when the pandemic struck in 2020. Literature teachers were urged to shift mode, making technology a constant variable in the teaching equation drastically. Beginning in 2020, re-tooling educators for contextualized and technology-ready literature education has become our priority.

The International Conference on Literature Education (ICLE) 2021 solidified this priority. We questioned the old, predictable teaching of literature and created new paths. On the one hand, Dr. Verita

Sriratana from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, delivered the first keynote on what literature teachers should do amidst the pandemic, even during political upheaval. On the other hand, Dr. Genevieve Asenjo from De La Salle University delivered the second keynote on how literature teachers could redefine their classroom and pedagogy. The international writer, Ms. Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, discussed reading and writing literature as a coping strategy to help teachers find hope in literature amidst trying times. Dr. Alma Janagap, a Metrobank Outstanding Filipino and Department of Education supervisor, and Prof. Marla Papango, one of the Philippine Normal University experts on literature education, engaged in reflective conversations and characterized the 21st century literature teacher. The conference also provided a platform for researchers and literature enthusiasts to present their research. Among the highlights, the ICLE2021 officers and board members led the Contextualized Worktext in Literature Teaching workshop.

2. The Idealized Solution

The LEAP, Inc. thought of a three-pronged approach to addressing the urgent need: (1) re-tooling literature educators through ICLE2021; (2) proposing a Contextualized Worktext for Literature Teaching to serve as a starting and common reference in delivering instructions; and (3) releasing The Inaugural Issue of DALIN (*Earth*) Journal as a tool for broader dissemination of information. We envisioned these approaches to be viral, aggressive, and massive—reforming and radical yet research-grounded.

Figure 4

Interweaving Elements Sustained by Our Precept, Sacred Utterance



Fig. 4 presents the interweaving elements that make LEAP, Inc. the organization it is today. Central to all that we do is our precept or sacred utterance.

a. Conference Design

The International Conference on Literature Education 2021 was held from October 28 to October 30, 2021. The conference facilitated academic exchanges about the strands of literary studies, empirical research on literature education, and the sharing of innovative literature teaching practices. The keynotes on literature toward a better normal and shift in the classroom (*redefining literature classroom/pedagogies*) amplified these strands. The panel discussion focused on the significance of the shift and responses by covering reading and writing literature as a coping strategy, developing learning modules for literature, and promoting quality in the classroom. The conference also sponsored four workshops, including concept-building in literature, technology-mediated literature instruction, research integration, and sustainable assessment in literature. The conference accommodated a combination of a panel and sixty-three paper presentations by undergraduate, graduate, and young and experienced professionals.

b. Proposed Contextualized Worktext for Literature Teaching

The Contextualized Worktext for Literature Teaching (CWLT) was grounded in some identified competencies in 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World (a subject in Grade 11 or 12). It comprises the teaching objectives (*designed for teachers*), essential or enduring links (*designed for learners*), concept-building, discussion proper, technology-mediated activities,

cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary understanding, deepening activities, or making connections through research and references. The articles included in this Inaugural Issue also discussed some significant concepts from ICLE2021.

c. DALIN (*Earth*) Journal: The Inaugural Issue

The articles for this Inaugural Issue have established the significance and implications of the CWLT as a basic structure underlying concepts in literature education. Each topic works on the same rubric of embedding the FREE Critical Paradigm to accommodate the shifts in the literature education landscape, address the emerging pedagogical challenges, and suggest strategies for an innovative literature class.

In their article, Parungao-Callueng and Clarin discuss the issues confronting a literature teacher. In so doing, they go through the nature and process of literature teaching. A significant feature of their article is their discussion of the ideologies of the FREE Critical Paradigm, where inspiration was drawn from Dr. Isagani R. Cruz (1990). The authors propose a critical paradigm for more progressive and humanistic literature teaching by transcending a basic conceptual description of how literature is taught.

In an attempt to exhibit evidence supporting the FREE Paradigm, Wyson and Panelo employ enduring understanding (EU) and essential questions (EQ) as strategies in discussing the literary text, a graphic novel in this case. While the article brings the shifts and demands of literature teaching to the fore, it also encompasses pedagogical practices to address them. An interesting discussion on the possibility of technology integration using a few applications is also made. While the samples are just a few, they comprehensively discuss the crucial roles of EU and EQ for a quality literature teaching experience.

Buena's article is likewise instructive about how a traditional teaching modality can be transformed into technology-mediated teaching and accommodated in a virtual environment where literature teachers and learners can quickly adapt and reconcile the emerging issues. Complementing the article by Wyson and Panelo, Buena proposes various teaching web applications and online activities. It critiques studies that have explored technology-mediated literature pedagogy. Recognizing the relevance of local context, the author strengthens possibilities for e-learning instruction designed for literature teaching.

Jocson, Wright, and Villaflor question the traditional teaching of literature and propose integrating research into literature teaching by suggesting teaching and learning tasks beyond the classroom. While the article underscores the conduct of emancipatory research, it presents fundamental questions that literature teachers should ask themselves before integration. More importantly, the authors offer teachers three research-teaching nexuses: research-led, research-based, and research-informed teaching. The choice depends upon the teacher's personal, instructional, and professional goals. Finally, the article offers directions to take to strengthen this integration.

Raquitico and Barquilla extend the notion of assessment, promoting sustainable and responsive mechanisms among 21st century learners. They emphasize the importance of dialogic feedback and offer various effective delivery strategies. Drawing from the recommendations of experienced practitioners in assessment, the authors provide steps to mitigate the challenges or difficulties in assessment practices. The article wraps up with implications for re-tooling learners and teachers of literature.

The creative work of Magpile mirrors reality and serves as a stern reminder to not just be aware of the shifts, along with their evolving affordances, but to be conscientious, doing and responding to changes appropriately. The poem is lucid, amusing, yet real. It indeed complements the theme of this Inaugural Issue.

Overarching Methods

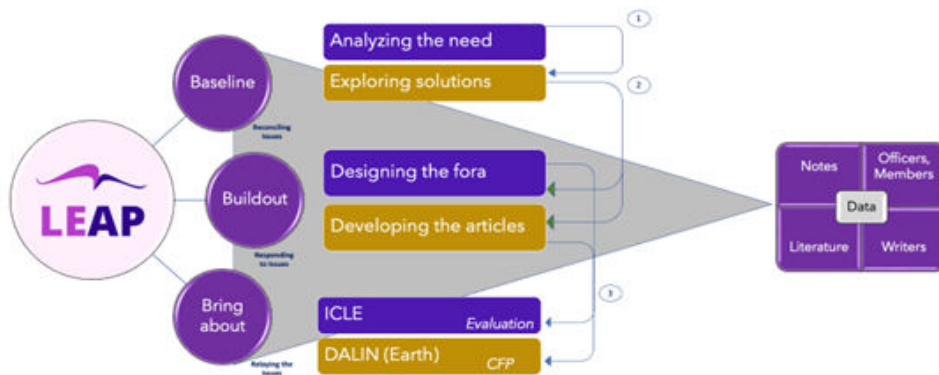
With the end goal of improving the teaching of literature, we intended to identify the needs of our teachers and develop tangible and contextualized solutions to those needs. In realizing these goals, we situated ourselves under design-based research, involving three critical methodologies: (1) collaboratively addressing a

contextualized problem; (2) technology-integration of design to solve the problem; and (3) conducting a reflective inquiry (Collins, 1992 & Brown, 1992, as reported by Alghamdi & Li, 2013). Within this design-based research, we collaborated to address the identified problems.

These critical methodologies are contextualized in Fig. 4 and are trisecting to these phases: baseline, buildout, and bring about. These phases actualize LEAP, Inc.'s methodologies in responding to the paradigm shifts. They are data-driven, incorporating information from the notes from the organization-conducted needs assessment (structured or informal with its officers and members) and writers. They are also research-informed, encompassing comprehensive information and methodological development in literature studies. The specific procedure begins with a needs analysis and ends with the intended outputs: conducting the ICLE and releasing the DALIN (*Earth*) Journal.

Figure 5

Methodologies in Response to Paradigm Shifts in Literature Education



1. Baseline: Collaboratively Addressing a Contextualized Problem

This phase has two parts: *analyzing the need* and *exploring solutions*. It was through the officers of LEAP, Inc. that needs analysis was actualized. During their monthly meeting from January 2021 to October 2021, the officers planned on the needs (*recorded in the organization's notes*) that must be addressed immediately in literature education. Consequently, the officers responded to the voices of their members and identified the need to cater to the paradigm shift in literature education in line with the local and international trends. In turn, the officers and members explored the options available (Arrow 1) and prepared an avenue to disseminate knowledge. The regular meetings paved the way to reconciling the current issues in literature education.

2. Buildout: Integrating Technology in the Design to Address the Contextualized Problem

Two media were identified as solutions: the fora to gather literature educators and disseminate knowledge through conferences and written articles (Arrow 2). The officers began plotting the conference design, carefully making decisions on the people to involve, preparations to be made, the number of days and target date of its implementation, and the human and technical requirements. Aldobie (2015) suggested that the *form* needs to be decided upon, and during the pandemic, when physical movement was restricted, LEAP, Inc. agreed to conduct an international conference virtually comprising talks, breakout sessions, and workshops. Training kits, technical runs, and virtual support were given sufficient attention for a smooth program.

The officers integrated the design into technology as an essential aspect of materials development. This process also involved checking for the strengths and weaknesses of what had been designed among the developed e-materials, such as the Conference Program and kits for the ICLE2021 (*prepared by the conference organizers*) and the articles for the DALIN (*Earth*) Journal (*penned by the worktext writers/workshop facilitators*). During the development of the articles, the authors incorporated relevant literature and studies and proposed answers to the challenges in literature education. The topics covered included FREE critical paradigm, e-learning in literature instruction, essential questions and

enduring understanding, integrating research into literature teaching, and sustainable assessment. The conference and the articles were the concrete response to the identified issues in literature education.

3. Bring About: Implementing and Creating Opportunities for Reflective Inquiry

As Aldoobie (2015) puts it, this phase transforms what has been developed into action. The organization created the fora and implemented the designs (Arrow 3). In the three-day conference, the organizers initially disseminated what was intended to be covered in the articles. The writers themselves had cascaded valuable content through a series of workshops as part of the ICLE2021. In turn, the outcomes are documented for broader dissemination through the DALIN (*Earth*) Journal.

To facilitate reflective inquiry as part of the design, we revisited the two primary sources of data, which are evidence of collaborative involvement with literature practitioners and experts: (1) The results of the needs analysis from a pool of literature educators (LEAP, Inc. Officers) and (2) The results of the conference evaluation administered among the 105 participants of the ICLE. We provided the conference attendees with an evaluation form through email. The evaluation consisted of five critical points, which required the conference participants to rate from Fair (1) to Excellent (4). They were also requested to identify the best and weak points of the conference. In addition, the officers conducted qualitative evaluation through a post-conference meeting.

The Conference Evaluation

1. Quantitative Data

The 105 respondents reported that the conference was excellent (96.25%). The towering result confirms a well-organized program and a good sequence of topics. It further validates instructional design results, which involve a systematic process leading to effective instruction (Aldoobie, 2015). The speakers were also excellent (94.04%) and had mastery of the subject matter. It can be noted that the speakers were not only degree holders in literature but also considered experts in the field. Scholars firmly established the importance of subject matter knowledge in making an impact on learners, resulting in a positive change (Kamamia et al., 2014). The respondents considered the conference effective as it enhanced their knowledge and skills.

2. Qualitative Data

Although we found that the respondents' comments were lean, we thematically clustered their responses, resulting in the following points on best learning and points to improve. Using *In Vivo* coding (Saldaña, 2015), the following categories and themes were extracted from the data. The respondents revealed that the conference had shown positive points in its sessions, sources, and the gains they had made. Likewise, they recommended that the technicals be enhanced. These qualitative evaluations were validated during the post-conference evaluation of the organization. The specific themes can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
Respondents' Evaluation of the Conference

Categories	Themes
Session	Interactive
Gains	Knowledge Concrete examples, literary theories, possible research topics, literary innovations, diverse oral literary tradition

Continuation

Categories	Themes
	Practices Practical tips, different practices
	New Learning Experience New tech tools
Sources	Veteran Teachers
Improvement	Logistics/Technicalities Break workshop into smaller groups More time to process Backups for technical issues

Future Directions: Where Do We Go From Here?

After reflecting on the results of the evaluations, we found that implementing our design, comprising the conference and the worktext, is not enough. We, therefore, aim for broader dissemination of the results of our initiatives. The publication of this issue answers such a goal. We believe that with an additional medium to hold what transpired from our series of evaluations, planning, and implementation, our perspectives on the importance of what we do will be profound. Indeed, the organization and the journal are deeply linked. They both seek to reach a broader scope of readership and community of literature educators. We are transparent in this initiative. We envision more literature educators being assertive in applying their principles to practice. We, therefore, would like you to journey with us by seizing the hard work of our fellow literature educators in the comfort of your (e-) windows. Through this, we justify why we are enthusiastic about advocating the FREE Critical Paradigm and the Contextualized Worktext for Literature Teaching.

Moving ahead, we intend to sustain our commitment to relay the issues and offer feasible solutions. We envision ICLE becoming a constant avenue to deliver and evaluate our services to our members and nonmembers. Likewise, we expect DALIN (*Earth*) to consistently release the Call for Publication to sustain our desire to bring about what the organization has started—from members to nonmembers, from our perspectives to yours.

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