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From the Editors...

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From the Editors...

by Kathryn L. Roberts, Ph.D. and Poonam Arya, Ph.D.

Although most of us consider the new year to begin in September, we would like to welcome you to the new calendar year that the world outside of education believes begins in January. We are so pleased to be entering another year with you, and so pleased to introduce you to a new set of classrooms, ideas, and authors in this winter's issue. This issue covers a range of topics, but we are particularly proud to be sharing several articles that discuss the important ways in which literacy permeates the school day and is vital in all subject areas.



**Kathryn L.
Roberts, Ph.D.**



Poonam Arya, Ph.D.

It is no secret that our state has many more students than we should that are scoring below proficient on state-wide reading tests. Many of us are feeling the pressures of impending consequences of the third-grade reading law and yet another iteration of how schools are to be graded in the near future. It is stressful, and has, unfortunately turned reading proficiency into a goal unto itself, at times distracting us from focusing on reading for purposes beyond proving proficiency or advancing through reading levels. However, as you are reading this issue of the journal, we encourage you to think about the real reasons proficiency matters: the joy of escaping into a book; the need for civic engagement; and opening the doors to students to become mathematicians, scientists, and historians, both now and in their futures.

In this issue we have included two *Bridging Research and Practice* articles. The first one is by Laurie Ringe (Graduate student at Judson University, IL) about using poetry to teach vocabulary words; the second is by Dr. Rebecca Leigh (Oakland University, MI) on understanding children's perceptions of writing and art as modes of communication. For the *Voices from the Region* section, we have an article by Debbie Gonzales (Freelance educational consultant and author) in which she discusses how teachers can plan for an author's visit that is informative, entertaining, and transformational. Additionally, we have an article by Emily Cizmas (Doctoral student at Wayne State University, MI) in which she shares a high school science project that challenges students to apply scientific and literacy skills simultaneously as they investigate real-world problems. For the popular *Critical Issues* section, we present an article by Dr. Kristy Brugar (University of Oklahoma) and Dr. Annie Whitlock (University of Michigan-Flint) that explores the relationship between literacy and social studies as part of the inquiry process. The other piece is by Dr. Kristen Bieda (Michigan State University), David Bowers (Doctoral student at Michigan State University), and Valentin Kühle (Doctoral student at Michigan State University) in which they discuss the role that argument, as a literary convention, plays in mathematical understanding and how it contributes to the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries between language arts and mathematics.

Also included in this issue are reviews of three professional texts for teachers in a column titled, *Must Read Texts* by Dr. Meghan K. Block (Central Michigan University), Dr. Tanya Christ (Oakland University, MI), and Dr. Christopher Crowley and Anna Fleury (Wayne State University, MI). Further, this section

includes reviews of children's books, focusing on the concepts of empathy and compassion, written by Dr. Kristin McIlhagga (Oakland University, MI), and reviews of books from the Great Lakes Great Books Award list, written by Lynette Suckow (Peter White Public Library in Marquette, MI).

We encourage our readers to read updates and information about the journal by liking the Michigan Reading Association page on Facebook, following @michiganreading on Twitter, and searching for and following Michigan Reading Association on Pinterest. Also, we hope to see you at the 63rd Annual Michigan Reading Conference in Grand Rapids, March 9-11, 2019. The conference theme is *Literacy Disrupted*. For registration information, please go to <https://michiganreading.org/conferences>.

Our journal email address is mrj@wayne.edu. We invite you to join the conversation by contributing to MRJ. Please email article submissions that are appropriate for any of the sections in our journal to our email address. We look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to our Wayne State University editorial team of Angela Harris and Sarah Schrag, who have done a fantastic job of supporting the work for this issue. We would also like to thank Jonathan Gates and Charissa Elmer from the Michigan Reading Association office; our MRA president, Carol Paul; and the MRA board for all of their hard work.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of MRJ, and that you will continue to tell your friends and colleagues about us.



Happy Reading!

Kathryn L. Roberts and Poonam Arya

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