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From the Editors

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From the Editors...

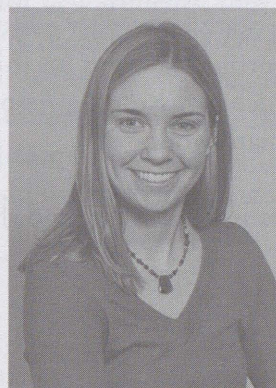
by Kathryn L. Roberts, Ph.D. and Poonam Arya, Ph.D.

Welcome back! The start of the school year is always exciting; every year for as far back as we can remember, we recall sleepless nights and that mixture of nerves and excitement. A year ago, we wrote in this letter about the challenges faced by schools, teachers, and students, and how we viewed literacy as having a role in addressing them. A year later, we still believe in schools, teachers, and children as catalysts for positive change; and are honored to be on a small part of that journey with you.

It is with *nearly* the same level of excitement as the night before a new school year that we bring you this fall's issue of the journal. For most issues, we have a theme that the articles loosely fit with (e.g., *social justice*, *new literacies*). In this issue, the theme that best describes the collection of articles is something like, *topics that we are excited about sharing and we hope you find as interesting as we do*. What it lacks in snappy title, it makes up for in content.

We open the issue with two articles in the *Bridging Research and Practice* section. The first one is by Alyssa Whitford (Doctoral Student, Michigan State University) and is about ways to support both reading comprehension and reading motivation in elementary classrooms; the second is by René M. Lefevre (Geneva Community Unit School District, IL) on using wordless picture books to develop writing in first-grade classrooms. For the *Voices from the Region* section, we have an article by Dr. William P. Bintz (Kent State University, OH) and Dr. Sara D. Moore (University of Kentucky), in which they share an instructional lesson that uses hand claps, rhymes, and songs to teach mathematical concepts. Additionally, we have an article by Dr. Danielle L. DeFauw (University of Michigan-Dearborn) and Shellie Forgione (Lapeer Schools, MI) in which they discuss how student-of-the-week tasks can be purposefully used to build classroom community and meet curricular requirements. For the popular *Critical Issues* section, we present a written interview with Leala Holcomb (Doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville), Dr. Debbie Golos (University of Minnesota), and Dr. Annie Moses (John Carroll University, OH) about issues related to literacy as they apply to children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The other *Critical Issues* piece is by Dr. Laura M. Jiménez (Boston University, MA) in which she discusses the issues of representation and voice in children's literature and shares resources that can help us select and think critically about children's and young adult literature in new ways.

In this issue, we also provide 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 Angela Harris (Dove Academy in Detroit, MI). This section also includes reviews of children's books, focusing on verse novels for this issue, led 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).



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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 and following Michigan Reading Association on Pinterest. 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 Laura Guzman 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!

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