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About Language Arts Journal of Michigan

The *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* is published twice a year (Fall and Spring) by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, a nonprofit state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, and is a member of the NCTE Affiliate Information Exchange Agreement. The *LAJM* publishes articles that discuss issues, theory, theory-based practice, and research in the teaching and learning of the language arts at all levels, kindergarten through college. It publishes articles, interviews, annotated bibliographies, reviews, essays, research, poetry, and classroom practices. The *LAJM* invites teachers at all levels—elementary, secondary, college—to submit manuscripts for consideration. Articles from many perspectives on the themes are welcome.

Guidelines for Submitting Manuscripts. Manuscripts should be 4-12 pages in length, double-spaced, and use the new MLA style for parenthetical documentation and the NCTE Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language. Send one original and one copy. We request that manuscripts not have been published elsewhere. Manuscripts will not be returned unless requested and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If the manuscript is accepted, a copy on a 3.5 disk will be requested (IBM PC or compatible, Microsoft Word 6.0). The deadline for the Fall 2002 issue is August 15, 2002. Manuscripts may also be submitted via e-mail to both editors as MS Word attachments. See the *Call for Manuscripts* near the end of this issue for further information.

Submit Manuscripts to:

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

There never were in the world two opinions alike, no more than two hairs or two grains; the most universal quality is diversity.

— Montaigne

In the opening article of this issue of *LAJM*, Rose Casement states, “Diversity, I believe, gets confused with multiculturalism.” She makes important observations about the literature we select for our students and also sets the tone of this issue when she concludes, “How these words are defined and what they include and exclude not only have a significant influence on what is included in our classrooms and curricula, but may be the most important considerations in the elimination of stereotypes for any group”

Several contributors describe classroom projects that helped their students appreciate cultural diversity through literature. Ernest Morrell describes the use of popular culture in his diverse classroom as an “authentic opportunity to create vibrant learning communities.” Kristi Elliott presents a unit of study that might help students better understand cultures and religions that seem distant and strange. Elliott suggests that world peace is in the hands of our future citizens, our students, and we need to do our part to help them to understand the cultures of the world. A 17th century piece, Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Blackness*, is the basis for a fascinating project that Kristen McDermott carried out with her African-American women students at Spelman College.

Brian White and Julie Mix realize that their students’ backgrounds become important indicators for classroom activities. White responds to the concerns that future teachers have when their life’s experiences have not prepared them for dealing with nonstandard dialects in the classroom. Julie Mix describes her use of image-making when working with a group of college writers for whom image-making is a part of their cultural experience.

Stephanie Hall-Sturgis and Denise Jacobs look at diversity from other perspectives. Hall-Sturgis asks, “What difference does age make in an intergenerational writing course,” while Jacobs examines the portrayal of gays and lesbians and bisexuals in young adult texts. Another kind of diversity, “the diversity of learning styles,” is the focus of Denise Stephenson and Sarah Hochstetler’s work using constructive toys in writing workshops.

Two book reviews are included in this issue. Mary Anna Kruch reviews Maity Schrecengost’s *Writing Whizardry* while Marcela Fuentes recommends Paul Beatty’s *The White Boy Shuffle* for upper level high school students.

The final three articles give *LAJM* readers a rich array of resources to celebrate diversity. Dee Storey honors Carter G. Woodson and the award that bears his name as she discusses the awards given by the National Council for the Social Studies to “non-fiction trade books set in the United States centered on an ethnic group or ethnic groups and their particular issues, celebrations, or achievements.” Tracey Bos shares her research done in search of authentic Native American literature. Bos gives guidelines for choosing authentic stories and also reviews books that she recommends. Finally, Maryann Ramseyer reviews a group of books for children that will show students that people with disabilities are a lot like they are.

Our contributors took up the challenge of this issue: to define diversity and to help *LAJM* readers celebrate diversity with their students. Ramseyer concludes with a thought that all of our contributors might echo: “Because our students live in a diverse world, we need to help them feel comfortable with and be appreciative of the diversity around them.”

Jill VanAntwerp

Susan Steffel