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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 *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* 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, research, poetry, and classroom practices. The *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* 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 the original and one copy. We request that manuscripts not have been published elsewhere. If you wish your original returned, include a self-addressed envelope with first-class postage. If the manuscript is accepted, a copy on a 3.5 disk will be requested (IBM PC or compatible, Microsoft Word). The deadline for the Fall 1999 issue is July 15, 1999. See the Call for Manuscripts near the end of this issue for further information.

Submit Manuscripts to:

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Title and Author	Page
HOW I USED PORTFOLIOS AND VIDEOTAPE TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND LIVED TO TELL ABOUT IT Marilyn Brooks	1
LEARNING TO TEACH (ENGLISH): QUESTIONS AND REFLECTION IN STUDENT TEACHING Brian White	6
THE DAUNTED BECOME DAUNTLESS: COMPOSITION STUDENTS AND THE RESEARCH PROJECT M. J. Ewald	13
MAKING RESEARCH WRITING MEANINGFUL Greg Shafer	15
NEW SYSTEMS REQUIRE NEW STRATEGIES: HELPING OUR STUDENTS BECOME BETTER ONLINE READERS Patrice Heinzman	19
JUST A CLICK AWAY: THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF USING THE INTERNET IN RESEARCH Geoff Wickersham	23
CHOOSIN' AND CRUISIN' THE INFO SUPERHIGHWAY: USING TECHNOLOGY TO TEACH RESEARCH WRITING Nancy S. Tucker	27
WHAT I LEARNED AS A TEACHER RESEARCHER Jill Darrow	32
SEEING IN THE FOG Gloria D. Nixon-John	36
"YOU'VE GOT MAIL": EXTENDING LITERARY RESPONSES THROUGH E-MAIL DIALOGUES Susan Steffel and Charles Steltenkamp	37
I NEED TO KNOW, BUT I'M TOO EMBARRASSED TO ASK Nancy Orr Elliott	40
QUESTION: WHAT'S A TEACHER SUPPOSED TO DO? ANSWER: YOU GOTTA BE THE TEACHER Barbara Kane Schneider	42

About This Issue

Perhaps we were doing research ourselves. Our question: If teachers at all levels, elementary through college, were asked to write about research, how many definitions would be used by those submitting articles? The result: From our small and unscientific sample, four definitions emerge to inform the articles chosen for this issue.

Definition 1: Research is a formal, carefully planned inquiry which yields results sure to help us change the manner in which we operate in our classrooms. Marilyn Brooks verified the effectiveness of an alternative assessment by testing the method in comparison to two more traditional assessments using three of her high school speech classes. Drawing material from the reflection journals of a group of future teachers in a field experience, Brian White studied the concerns of pre-service educators.

Definition 2: Research is one of the processes in which teachers guide their students with the goal of helping them gain useful skills for future use. Greg Schafer and M. J. Ewald describe the research processes they used successfully in high school English classes.

Definition 3: Research is that which emanates from this new beast in our classrooms, the on-line computer, which we must tame, which we must corral, which we must master in order to have a useful working animal. Patrice Heinzman describes strategies for helping students to become better on-line readers. Also concerned with how students use the internet, Geoff Wickersham provides new insights and important warnings gleaned from his website research. Nancy Tucker required on-line sources for her university students' research projects and found her students intrigued and inspired.

Definition 4: Research is informal observation of our students through the days and through the years that yield results sure to help us change the manner in which we operate in our classrooms. Jill Darrow asked the question, "Who does research?" and answered, "I do." She observed her fifth-grade literature circles and drew valuable conclusions for future use. In her poem, Gloria Nixon-John reflects upon the nature of observation. Susan Steffel and Charles Steltenkamp set up an e-mail link between university pre-service teachers and a class of high school students and were able to gain new insights about sharing reading experiences. Nancy Elliott studied a survey of new and pre-service teachers. She urges everyone in the teaching profession to ask "How do I meet the concerns of these newer members of the profession?" Finally, in her review of *Research in the Classroom*, Barbara Kane Schneider confirms the conclusions of other writers in this issue when she says that "classroom research has to empower teachers to examine their own practice . . ."

While the authors in this issue may have disagreed on what was meant by the call for manuscripts, their informative and thought-provoking responses have contributed to an issue that is sure to inspire reflection, and yes, perhaps research.

Susan Steffel

Jill R. VanAntwerp