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From the Editor's Desk

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From the Editors' Desks

BY MARY JO FINNEY & PAT GALLANT

Dear Readers,

It is hard to imagine that this is our final issue as co-editors. During the last 3 years, we have enjoyed the privilege of publishing over 700 pages from more than 100 authors, addressing a range of topics pertinent to all aspects of language arts education. This has, indeed, been a powerful experience in our professional lives that has enlightened our sense of the writing process, widened our view of the role of editing, and deepened our respect for the complexity of collaboration. In this last letter to you, we share our reflection on our work as co-editors.

As both writers and teachers of writing, we understand the writing process and respect its framework for leading the writer from idea to published work. Co-editing, however, gave us fascinating new perspectives. While we had engaged in editing our own work and that of our students, this was different. We had a duty not only to each writer, but to reviewers and readers as well. We soon discovered that the publication process extends the writing process in significant ways by asking the writer to revise in light of the reviewers' and editors' senses of the reading audience. As co-editors, navigating the terrain between writer and readers enlightened our view of the writing process.

In supporting an author's manuscript, we found the editor's role to be that of carefully and purposefully supporting the writer. Writers know that their best writing is drawn from a well deep within. Yet, when writing reveals our deepest selves, it also places the writer out in the open for all to see. The editor, as the first to read the writer's work and in her duty to the reading audience, must deliver the first response to a piece of writing. This delicate work—to decide not only *what* but *how* to communicate revision information to each writer—called upon our teaching instincts. Traversing the wavy line between strengthening the writing and not re-writing a manuscript was something that we consciously and carefully attended to in every issue (and hope we got it right!). Thinking through the parallels between teacher and editor widened our views of the role of editing.

Co-editing is a complex endeavor. The inevitable challenges that unfold when two people share in a task were eased by our mutual respect for one another. We brought to the editorship our individual work styles, which, in naturally discovering our



MARY JO



PAT

similarities and differences, were further shaped by working together. As each of us solo-edited an issue, we experienced the joy of having sole propriety, but also the daunting responsibility of going it alone. Each provided invigorating challenges and learning that we treasure, knowing the complexity and incalculable value of collaboration.

As with any endeavor, we are realizing rich and immediate benefits of having edited the *Michigan Reading Journal*. Over time, we expect that looking back will bring to light even greater appreciation of all that we learned from our authors, readers, colleagues, and each other as we co-edited a journal of which we can all be proud.

It has been an honor serving the Michigan Reading Association in this way. We wish the new editors, Leonie Rose and Tamara Jetton, an exhilarating and equally rewarding journey.

A fond farewell,

Handwritten signatures of Mary Jo and Pat in cursive script. Mary Jo's signature is on the left and Pat's is on the right.