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From the MRA President's Desk: Reflections on a Year

BY JULIA REYNOLDS

This year has been such a whirlwind of activity for the Michigan Reading Association. We had a strong year of leadership from everyone on the MRA Board of Directors. MRA committees did outreach work to students, families, and communities across the state and the world, and MRA members enjoyed two inspirational conferences at the Summer Literature Conference in July 2007, in Frankenmuth and the MRA Annual Conference in March 2008 in Detroit. Plus, all of the local and special interest councils held events, workshops, and conferences across the state to spread the good work of literacy throughout the year.

As I finish my presidential year, I use milestones such as those listed above to self-assess how well the year went, how people are feeling about MRA, and what my legacy will be as a past president of the Michigan Reading Association. While the days are counting down, I can appreciate the hard work that has happened all year and feel good about the future of the organization.

Self-assessment is important for all of us when we think about learning and growth. It is one thing to see data, read reports, and hear people tell us what they think, but it is another to consider all of the information and come to some conclusions on our own. The self-realization of what has taken place and what the future will bring is much more meaningful if we create it for ourselves.

I self-assess whenever I teach. I continually ask my students if things are making sense, I read their exit slips to learn about their thoughts on the class session, and I look at their assignments and consider how my instruction made an impact on their application of the information. I don't need to wait for a course evaluation at the end of a semester to have a sense of how things are going.

Reflection and self-assessment plays a big part in my role as a mother. I continually think about how I am



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balancing my career and my family while also finding time to take care of myself. I read books and articles about being a parent and a working mother, and I think about how I connect to the information on the pages. I know that this will be a role that is continually changing, and I will need to self-assess as my son grows older and our lives continue to evolve.

The *Michigan Reading Journal* is a professional home for MRA members. It provides thought-provoking information to consider for self-assessment in our roles as educators. It also gives inspiration to try new things, write an article, and celebrate the amazing literacy work that is taking place in Michigan. MRA is so lucky that Mary Jo Finney and Pat Gallant were willing to be the co-editors for the last 3 years. Their vision for the journal is a legacy that will continue for many years. Thank you.

Take care!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Julia" followed by a smiley face ":)".

Julia Reynolds :)
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