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## Viewing Literacy from Many Angles

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# Viewing Literacy from Many Angles

## An Editorial

**T**he current issue of the *Journal* contains five articles, two special features, and several advertisements from the Michigan Reading Association and the International Reading Association. In the first article, **Kathy Brimmer, Mary B. Johnston, and Cheryl Pocius** examine the changes that primer-level basal readers have undergone during the past fifty years. In the second article, **B. Joyce Wienczek** discusses guidelines for implementing literacy centers in primary classrooms. In the third article, I share a hermeneutic (or interpretive) review of Parker Palmer's book, *The Courage to Teach*, in which I tell how my current approach to the teaching of reading evolved as I became a seasoned teacher. In the fourth article, **Raymond Francis** demonstrates how a teacher may connect the language arts curriculum to Michigan content standards and benchmarks at the middle school level to make teaching and learning more meaningful. In the fifth article, **Alan Weber** explores five myths that plague writing across the curriculum (WAC) and challenges all teachers to be involved in writing. Finally, as special features, **Vera Milz** reviews several children's books and shares some book jackets for our enjoyment, and **Lori McElrath-Eslick**, the illustrator who has created the cover for the MRA 2000 conference guide, tells us how she gets the inspiration to illustrate books for children.

### The Cover

The cover of the Fall 1999 issue comes from actual pages of *The Western Primer* or *Child's First Lessons in Spelling and Reading* published in 1847 in New Haven, CT by the Babcock Publishing Company and from Samuel Worcester's *A Primer of the English Language for the Use of Families and Schools* published in 1826 in Boston, MA by Hicking, Swan and Brewer. Unlike earlier primers, the pages of the *The Western Primer* are composed of both stories and lists of spelling words that have been divided into syllables.



Nila Banton Smith in her book titled *American Reading Instruction* calls the curricular behavior of this time (from 1840 to 1890) the Education for Intelligent Citizenship period. During this time, people believed that the success of our new democracy depended upon developing good citizens who could make intelligent choices regarding leaders and policies. Thus, reading materials of this period focused on overlapping educational methods that were influenced by the theories of the Swiss educational reformer, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi.

For the benefit of those individuals who would like to explore other readers published during this period, I would like to suggest (a) *Worcester Second Book for Reading and Spelling*, (b) *The American Spelling Book*, (c) *Appleton's School Reader*, and (d) *McGuffey's New First Eclectic Reader*. Again, all of these may be seen at the Park Library located on the Central Michigan University campus in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan..

### A Word of Welcome

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome five new reviewers, **Dr. Mary P. Cavanaugh** of Saginaw Valley State University, **Dr. Esther M. Coleman** of Marygrove College, **Dr. Sally Edgerton** of Saginaw Valley State University, **Larry Hert** of Delta College, and **Dr. Lynda R. Ludy** of Detroit Country Day School, who have accepted my invitation to join the Editorial Review Board.

Sincerely,

*Helen Gill*



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