

2023

## Front Matter

Neo Hopkins

*College for Creative Studies*

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# LANGUAGE ARTS JOURNAL OF MICHIGAN

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 2, SPRING/SUMMER 2023 MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

**"Teaching to Transgress:" Amplifying Voices, Lesson Plans, and  
(Classroom) Communities as Spaces for Healing and Justice**

**Enacting an Engaged Pedagogy in an  
11th Grade ELA Classroom**

Teaira McMurtry

**Impact Students' Hearts and Minds**

Eddie Thigpen III and Jaime Valente

**Engaging Students and Teaching  
Life Skills Through Community  
Collaboration**

Kim Stein

**Helping Animals and the Planet**

Madelyn (MJ)

**Supporting Black Doctoral Students**

Shondra L. Marshall, Clyde Barnett III,  
Quentrese Hinton, Courtney BrieAnn  
Morris

**The Joys of Washing My Afro**

Zuri Hudson Stanbrough

**Literacy, Joy, and Book Clubs**

Community Leader Brandi Ely-Ayres

**Creative Writing in the ESL  
Classroom**

Alyssa A. Jewell

**Teaching Social Justice through  
Gothic Young Adult Literature**

Lindsey Carman Williams and Ashley S.  
Boyd

**Self-Care, Literacy, and Reviewing for  
LAJM**

Ayah Issa

**Opens the High School Classroom to  
Afrofuturism**

Carrie Mattern



*Spotlight, Neo Hopkins*



**Gabriel Eysselinck, 4th Grade**



**Da'Moni Heady, 4th Grade**



**Greyson Egan, 4th Grade**

As you read this issue of LAJM, enjoy student artwork included throughout the pages. The works featured in this issue are heart paintings created by 4th graders.

**Fall/Winter 2023: Continuing the Marathon Through Reflection, Rest, and Resistance: A Call to Action**

**Deadline: January 15, 2024**

“You were not just born to center your entire existence on work and labor. You were born to heal, to grow, to be of service to yourself and community, to practice, to experiment, to create, to have space, to dream, and to connect.”

Tricia Hersey, *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*

“...Even in trying times like now, it’s like the world is in panic, but we gotta keep going. The marathon continues.”

Nipsey Hussle

How are you showing up for yourself? Your loved ones? Your students? In what ways are you fostering and centering your students’ dreams? What are your reflection, rest, and resistance practices? Collectively, as co-editors, we read, dream, and heal together. We retreat and pause because we must. We believe in the power of reflecting, resting, and resisting – even when the world is in panic. We chase joy and justice. In an ever-changing world and educational landscape, we recognize there is a sacredness to enacting the positioning of Tricia Hersey and Nipsey Hussle. In *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*, Hersey (2022) asserts our bodies are a site of liberation and that exhaustion does not honor the sacred. Furthermore, she suggests that rest is a healing portal to our deepest selves and is radical. Connected to this, we draw inspiration from the late hip hop artist, Nipsey Hussle’s, three words, “the marathon continues,” which initially graced the title of his 2011 mixtape. This year, as we celebrate 50 years of contributions from hip hop in various artforms, it is not lost on us its humble beginnings, and despite its monumental influence on all aspects of culture as a global phenomenon, its grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue to experience inequities in education, while navigating exhaustion, poverty, racism, and other societal ills.

We honor both Hersey and Hussle’s call to action to uplift ourselves, our communities, the young people we serve and teach, and to collectively resist systems that disregard and neglect our divinity. But as we look in communities, whether a school, a neighborhood, an organization, or an academic journal, how are we creating spaces that honor the humanity, culture, and lived experiences of those often unheard or marginalized?

In keeping with the theme of Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) Fall 2023 Conference, “Our Marathon Continues: Navigating Challenges and Reaching the Finish Line,” for our fall/winter issue, we invite submissions that consider the following:

How do we support the development of multiple and historical literacies (Muhammad, 2020) so that Nipsey Hussle’s words are interpreted as he originally intended, rather than a white-washed interpretation that promotes capitalism, white supremacy, and production?

What does it mean to be “about seeing long-term, seeing a vision, understanding nothing really worthwhile happens overnight” in education? In what ways are we pushing back on inhumane pacing guides in K-12 ELA classrooms and the other ways capitalism shows up in education, knowing “grind culture is violence”? How are we promoting rest, care, and healing, so we and our students can thrive?

How do educators interrogate the ways their personal histories perpetuate harm or promote healing in the classroom? How do we rest and heal ourselves in order to “be of service to yourself and community, to practice, to experiment, to create, to have space, to dream, and to connect”?

How do educators prioritize students’ histories and self-love in the English Language Arts classroom so students can “put things together” in meaningful ways and disrupt dominant systems?

How do we love ourselves, our students and their families, our communities, and our colleagues? What are the possibilities for how love can look in schools, colleges and universities, and community organizations? How can literacy and language support this kind of radical love?

The *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* is a peer-reviewed journal published by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English as a service to educators interested in literacy and the English Language Arts at all instructional levels. LAJM is published biannually. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of MCTE or its members.

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Raven L. Jones, Michigan State University  
Tanya Upthegrove Gregory, Michigan State University  
Alexandra M. Sánchez, East Lansing Public Schools

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VOLUME 38, ISSUE 2, SPRING/SUMMER 2023



## *Spotlight*

**Neo Hopkins** is an artist and designer with a deep passion for community engagement and interaction. His artwork features a mix of painting and printmaking techniques. He is interested in creating immersive work that bridges gaps between communities. Neo is a Saginaw native and is a third-year student at the College for Creative Studies, focusing on Studio Art and Craft.

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