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From the Editors...

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From the Editors...

by **Laura Gabrion, Rui Niu-Cooper, Leah van Belle, and Jenelle Williams**

Dear Readers,

Although the school year is ramping up, the fall season is traditionally a time of slowing down, looking inward, and reflecting as we move toward the end of the calendar year. In that spirit, we invite you to consider how the articles in this issue might support an inward gaze. The editorial team will continue to center four themes of empowerment across all issues of the 2024-25 academic year: literacy as community, agency, liberation, and joy. While we have organized the articles in terms of possible connections to one of these themes, we encourage you to consider additional connections as you read.

Bridging Research to Practice

Literacy as Community

Because equitable literacy practices provide students with access and opportunity, Heather Rottermond, Colleen Whalen, Laura Gabrion, and Joseph L. Musial explore the value of building and sustaining an inclusive coaching community with ongoing support from an interdisciplinary ISD/RESA (Intermediate School District/Regional Educational Service Agency) team. “Nurturing a Community of Literacy Coaches: A Comprehensive Approach to Improved Literacy Instruction” includes the promising impact data that reveals the success of this model.

Critical Issues

Literacy as Agency

In “Using Interdisciplinary Arts-Based Inquiry to Support Students’ Literacy Development,” authors Julia Lynch and Andrea Perrone make the case for broader interpretations of the terms “text” and “literacy.” Their proposed arts-based inquiry model details a broad research base and provides practical suggestions for practitioners interested in not only integrating the arts but also empowering learners with multiple modes of expression. Kyongson Park and Danielle Louise DeFauw, in their article “Teacher Candidates Develop and Apply ESL Pedagogical Content Knowledge,” detail the ways one regional university integrated a block of courses designed to ensure teacher candidates learn and apply English as a Second Language methods within clinical experiences, thereby ensuring that English Learners (ELs) / Multilingual Learners (MLs) have access to well-prepared educators.



Dr. Laura Gabrion



**Dr. Rui
Niu-Cooper**



Dr. Leah van Belle



**Jenelle Williams,
Ed.S.**

Voices from the Region

Literacy as Agency

“Climate Justice Now” appeared in a column in the *Illinois Reading Council Journal* devoted to the development of urgent pedagogies about climate justice learning in elementary and middle school ELA classrooms. Kristine M. Schutz and Rebecca Woodard interviewed William Peek about his experiences teaching and learning about climate change with middle schoolers. This article includes practical ways teachers can engage young people to read, compose, learn about, and act on climate justice.

#BookJoy

Our book reviews in this issue weave together our four journal themes of community, agency, liberation, and joy with children’s books focusing on civic engagement as a key lever for collective empowerment and action. In “Reading Into Action: Children’s Books About Voting and Voting Rights,” Leah van Belle explores the ways in which children’s literature can be an invitation to and celebration of the democratic process and our individual and collective responsibilities in shaping our communities and world.

As co-editors, we are grateful to our authors and to the many people who work behind the scenes to publish each issue of *Michigan Reading Journal*. We are so fortunate that through these efforts, MRJ continues to be an open and accessible journal available to a global audience on Scholarworks at scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mrj.

Sincerely,

Laura Gabrion, Rui Niu-Cooper, Leah van Belle, and Jenelle Williams

Co-Editors, *Michigan Reading Journal*

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Michigan Reading Association 69th Annual Conference – Call for Proposals

Reading and Writing are essential components for living and thriving in spaces that provide equitable opportunities and access to knowledge. They are life-giving and offer an escape, a place for ALL voices to be heard, and a place where diverse stories are celebrated. Reading and Writing are gifts and fundamental human rights.

As literacy expert Pam Allyn would say, “Reading is like breathing in, and writing is like breathing out.” We want to create vibrant spaces in our communities and classrooms where this breathwork is explicitly taught and practiced daily.

We invite everyone in the MRA community to focus on creating space for reading in and writing out. How might we connect with our students, colleagues, and those around us through reading and writing? Consider the following questions:

Do we personally identify as readers and writers? How? Why or why not?

How do we integrate reading and writing across all content areas as educators?

How can we tap into our students' creativity as writers?

How can we celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion of all students through reading and writing?

How can we share opportunities to read and write with others in community with our colleagues and students in person and virtually?

We are seeking proposals that offer strategies or resources for educators to develop reading and writing opportunities for youth as a way to encourage deeper understanding, self-discovery and identity work, and increasing academic skills. We look forward to seeing you in Grand Rapids!

[Call for Proposals](#)



BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE MICHIGAN READING ASSOCIATION SPRING CONFERENCE



Explore effective literacy practices with educators from hundreds of other schools across Michigan and beyond

Share the great work you and your colleagues are doing in your classrooms through discussion or a proposal acceptance



Vetted sessions are grounded in approaches to evidence-based practices and Science of Reading, and research-based strategies align to Michigan's Essential Practices in Literacy Instruction



Reconnect to your love of education and come away with a fresh perspective to grow students' literacy success

Get inspired to try new ideas in your school



Learn from keynote speakers and sessions that align with MDE's Equity in Literacy guidance



A single registration fee gives participants access to their choice of more than a dozen powerful learning sessions, plus access to authors and exhibitors

An in-state event keeps travel costs low (SCECHs available)

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