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From the Editors

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From the Editors...

by Patricia A. Edwards and Tanya S. Wright

Dear *MRJ* Readers,



Nine is the number of magic.
Nine is the number of completion and fulfillment.
Nine is a symbol of wisdom and good leadership.



Patricia A. Edwards



Tanya S. Wright

Wow, can you believe that we have completed our ninth and final issue of *MRJ*? We want to reiterate one last time that it has been a privilege and honor for us to edit journal *MRJ*, a journal rich with history and mission. Publishing powerful articles for educators in the state of Michigan and elsewhere has been a magical experience for us. We are honored and proud to complete our editorial journey, and we feel fulfilled that we have done a great job. With our wisdom and good leadership to publish wonderful articles in *MRJ*, Dr. Richard Sawyer, Senior Manager of Publisher Partnerships, EBSCO Information Services (Ipswich, MA), nominated the *Michigan Reading Journal* for inclusion in one of their research databases that are used in college and university libraries. Library patrons typically use EBSCO's databases to run a keyword search similar to how you would use a commercial search engine (Google, Yahoo, etc). The results display a list of articles from many different publications. Along with each record is a live link that their publisher partners provide them to display back to their own websites. This is a great way to ensure our publication is gaining exposure and web traffic originating from those using an EBSCO database in a library. The MSU Editorial Team is extremely proud of this accomplishment. Additionally, at this time, our editorial team wants to introduce the new *MRJ* editors on the Reading, Language and Literacy faculty at Wayne State University: Dr. Kathryn "Kate" L. Roberts (Associate Professor) and Dr. Poonam Arya (Associate Professor). The MSU Editorial Team is confident that Kate and Poonam will continue the strong tradition we started when they begin in August 2017.

The school bell may stop ringing, but summer is a great time for reflection, scholarship, and a chance to give yourself a break from the daily cycle of planning and feedback that make the school year such a whirlwind. Teaching would not be possible without time devoted to reflection and rejuvenation. In the same way that crops need to be rotated so soil can be replenished, teachers need time away from the classroom to rediscover different parts of their identities so they can return to their classrooms and students with renewed joy, creative ideas, and reaffirmed visions of themselves as educators. Summer also allows you to relax and reflect on the previous year. While you are relaxing, we ask, "*What are you going to read this summer?*" We hope our ninth and final issue of *MRJ*, which includes some very exciting and informative articles, is on your summer reading list.

In this final issue, we have included two Bridging Research and Practice articles. The first article by Kristen White, a fourth-year doctoral student at MSU, discusses asset perspectives in working with neurodiverse

students. In the second article, Samina Hadi-Tabassum, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Northern Illinois University, describes how poetry can bridge the reader-writer through fiction and non-fiction. *Voices from Michigan and Beyond* continues to be well-received by our readers, and in this issue, we have tips from Pete Kohnen from Madison Heights. Pete shares with our readers how constructing visual aids increases students' science literacy. Teachers Joanne LeBlanc and Melissa Wing provide us with an insightful look at how they ramped up literacy in Genesee Country. Brandy Archer from the Michigan Department of Education announces that free professional development modules addressing the Essential Instructional Practices for Early Literacy for Prekindergarten and Kindergarten through Third Grade will soon be available. We are also excited that former State Representative Amanda Price, who wrote an article in one of our earlier issues of *MRJ*, has written another article in order to provide us with an update on the Governor's Literacy Commission.

For the popular *Critical Issues* section, we provide a discussion of community literacy by a group of outstanding researchers. Lesley Mandel Morrow, Past President of the International Literacy Association (2003-2004) and Professor of Literacy at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education, along with her coauthors, Susan Dougherty, Kenneth Kunz, and Maureen Hall, describe an after-school reading club at Rutgers University designed to motivate and enhance literacy for struggling readers. Jonda McNair, Professor of Literacy at Clemson University and Coeditor of *Language Arts*, shares book selection considerations within an African American family literacy program. Ten African American families with children in grades K-2 participated in the program, which took place at a local church in Anderson, South Carolina. At every workshop, each family selected 10-12 books, receiving 50 plus books in total over the course of the project. Dr. Marcelle Haddix, Dean's Associate Professor and Chair of Reading and Language Arts at Syracuse University, and Vice-President of the Literacy Research Association, reflects on "community" in literacy research and practice. In particular, she asks three critical questions: 1) Who defines community?; 2) What is the meaning of community literacy?; and 3) How do literacy scholars and teachers understand their role and position in relation to the people from "that community"? MSU Associate Professors, Dr. Dorinda J. Carter Andrews (Department of Teacher Education) and Dr. Georgina M. Montgomery (Department of History) discuss the origin of their social justice reading group and the form it has taken with the hope that other communities consider similar collaborations between their universities, public libraries, and broader community to create safe spaces for children, parents, and educators to explore culture, difference, and (in)equity through children's literature. We provide reviews of professional texts for teachers in a column titled *Must Read Texts*, which is edited by Dr. Kathy Highfield and Dr. Laura Pardo. We include a column edited by Dr. Laura Apol and four doctoral students (i.e., Lisa Domke, Ashley Johnson, Jeanne Loh, and Tracy Weippert) entitled, *For the Love of Literature*.

We encourage our readers to read updates and information about the journal by visiting the Michigan Reading Association's page, on Facebook, following @michiganreading on Twitter, and searching and following Michigan Reading on Pinterest. Also, we encourage you to attend the 2017 Summer Literature Conference at Shanty Creek Resort in Bellaire, Michigan, July 12-13. The theme of this year's conference is "Finding Treasures in Literacy." *Ahoy, matey! Are you looking to embark on a treasure hunt for classroom riches? Well, look no further than the Michigan Reading Association's Summer Literature Conference. Use your interests and passions to create your own unique learning path. Perhaps lunch with your favorite Michigan author will inspire you? Maybe you would rather reflect and think deeply with top literacy researchers or take a leisurely stroll sketching Shanty Creek's wildlife with award-winning illustrators. Possibly, you prefer hands-on learning sessions with educational practitioners. Whatever your learning path, set sail for Shanty Creek and reignite your love for the field of education.* For additional information, please contact Carol Paul at capaul0813@gmail.com or the Michigan Reading Association at www.michiganreading.org.

We would like to again thank our fantastic editorial team of Laura Hopkins and Kristen White. We also thank Kaitlin Glause who was our summer 2016 editorial assistant. These wonderful MSU doctoral students have been indispensable in supporting our work on this journal. We would also like to thank Laura Guzman, the Michigan Reading Association Administrative Coordinator, and Sean Kottke, the Michigan Reading Association President, as well as the MRA Board, for supporting our efforts. We want to thank our reviewers, including review board members and graduate student reviewers. A thank-you to Dr. Laura Pardo and Dr. Kathy Highfield for writing the professional books column. They have done an awesome job and we deeply appreciate all of their hard work. Finally, we want to thank Dr. Laura Apol and four doctoral students (i.e., Lisa Domke, Ashley Johnson, Jeanne Loh, and Tracy Weippert) for their phenomenal editorship of the *For the Love of Literature* column. Like Laura Pardo and Kathy Highfield, they too have done an awesome job, and we deeply appreciate all of their hard work. We are sad to say that the editors of the professional books and *For the Love of Literature* columns have written their final columns for *MRJ*. It has been an honor to work with these column editors for their professionalism, consistency and support over the past three years.

We hope that you enjoy our ninth and final issue of *MRJ* and that you will continue to tell your friends and colleagues about us. Happy reading!

Warmest Regards,

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Co-Editors, *Michigan Reading Journal*

