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Developing Interest and English Language Arts Skills: New Insights from the Detroit Billboard Project



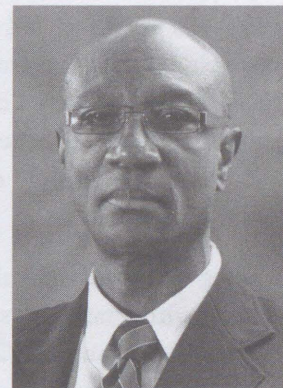
by Danielle DeFauw,
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Through the Detroit Billboard Project, eleventh- and twelfth-grade boys, enrolled in a secondary school in Detroit, Michigan, designed billboards to share community-service messages. To meet important social studies standards (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013), students (a) discussed challenges facing Detroit per their experiences, (b) explored the genre of persuasion by focusing on propaganda, (c) learned artistic techniques to influence the local community, (d) designed billboard messages to influence change, and (e) competed democratically to have a billboard message displayed in the city center (Taylor & Iroha, 2015).

In this qualitative study, to build upon Taylor and Iroha's (2015) action-research findings for social studies, we examine how the Detroit Billboard Project also influenced high school students' interest and English language arts development. We assess the implications of the Detroit Billboard Project for English language arts. Particularly, we explore the impact of the project on students' views of how persuasive writing impacts an authentic audience, which includes their community and themselves. In this article, we provide background highlighting (a) persuasive and argument writing, (b) authentic literacy tasks and audience, (c) billboards as persuasive texts, and (d) situational interest development. In addition, the implications for teaching are addressed as ELA teachers, independently or collaboratively with social studies teachers, may use the Detroit Billboard Project, a persuasive writing task, to propel students into argument writing.

Background

Students' engagement in persuasive writing not only meets national standards (National Council of Teachers of English & International Reading Association, 2012) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), but also supports students' critical thinking development (Hillocks, 2011). Students must use their critical thinking skills to differentiate persuasive and argument writing. Writers make claims to convince an audience of a position in both genres, but, unlike argument writing, persuasive writing does not require proof of those claims (Monahan, 2013). Even without evidence, persuasive writing can influence a target audience's behavior and ideas using specific argument techniques (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012). Students learn to critically evaluate and use such techniques through authentic literacy tasks, which allow students to write for authentic audiences for real-world purposes (Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2006; Hanley, 2013).

Authentic literacy tasks foster students' construction of knowledge through focused inquiry; students strive for deeper understanding of content, which has value and meaning outside of school (Newmann, Secada, &

Wehlage, 1995). When students are provided opportunities to participate in authentic tasks, they are motivated to develop personal purposes for completing the tasks (Duke et al., 2012). Effective persuasive writing tasks, like the Detroit Billboard Project, allow students to propose a reason for the writing, communicate with a real audience, and use the features of the genre to solicit real reactions from an audience (Lindblom, 2004). Audience plays a crucial role in authentic literacy tasks; students benefit from authentic audiences with whom they wish to communicate real messages (Duke et al., 2012).

Writing billboards for real-world audiences is a persuasive writing task that students may find motivating (Barney & Hoiland, 2012), especially if they value the purpose, audience, and outcome of the task (Lindblom, 2004). Students read billboards within their environmental print. Students must develop a critical awareness of how billboards promote varying emotions depending upon their content, presentation, and location (Calderwood & Wellington, 2013). Through writing billboard messages, students who value the task will write for an audience to elicit strong emotion. They will learn how to use traditional rhetorical appeals to influence an audience's behavior or ideas (Duke et al., 2012). Maloch and Bomer (2013) suggested that educators "open the textual world in their classrooms in a wider array of text types, making sure to offer texts that...argue in a range of ways" (p. 209). Similarly, the National Council of Teachers of English (2013) has identified the need for students to "create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts" (n.p.). As a type of multimodal text, billboards require students to utilize visual images and words to understand and express meaning (Serafini, 2011).

As a persuasive writing task, the Detroit Billboard Project supports interest development (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Interest development has four phases including triggered and maintained situational interest and emerging and well-developed individual interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). First, teachers can trigger situational interest, which means they can catch students' interest (Mitchell, 1993). The Detroit Billboard Project triggered students' interest in the genre of

persuasive writing through an authentic task: students competed to have their message published on a public billboard. Students were interested in the writing task, and they speculated whether or not they would win. In effect, they played a competitive game while improving their writing. Dewey (1910/1991) stated, "To be playful and serious at the same time is possible, and it defines the ideal mental condition" (p. 218).

Next, teachers can maintain or hold situational interest (Mitchell, 1993). Maintained interest can be dichotomized into maintained-feeling and maintained-value; teachers hold students' attention through instructional support that has personal meaning for students to impact their learning through affective means or cognitive connections (Linnenbrink-Garcia, Patall, & Messersmith, 2013). The Detroit Billboard Project maintained students' interest in persuasive writing as students identified issues in the community they wished to address. The Detroit Billboard Project provided a purpose, audience, and real-world outcome for persuasive writing (Bruning & Horn, 2000). Evoked through participation in a relevant project, positive feelings have the potential to propel students deeper into the writing process; students should transition from persuasive writing into argument writing as highlighted in this article's implications section.

Methodology

At a public secondary school in Detroit, 62 students in social studies classes participated in the Detroit Billboard Project during the 2013-2014 school year. The majority of the students, all males, were African American (over 98%). After designing billboards with public-service messages, 47 high school students (n=47) voluntarily completed anonymous surveys for a study that was designed to explore arts integration in the social studies, democratic education, and service learning. The findings were published in the *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* (Taylor & Iroha, 2015); the students' awareness of community issues increased, and they valued the opportunity to express their views of community matters. The students reported that the project was motivational. They wanted to write the messages for publication on the billboard and within their community. They cared about the meanings

inherent in their messages. They wanted to share their voices with an audience. In light of the applicability of the Detroit Billboard Project to instruction in English language arts, in a separate and subsequent analysis, the students' survey comments and drawings were examined from a literacy perspective. The insights that were gained from the analysis are presented in this article.

To explore the students' perceptions, we used the in-vivo coding method, which entails using participants' exact wording as specific codes (Saldaña, 2013). "Coding with... [adolescents'] actual words enhances and deepens an adult's understanding of their cultures and worldviews" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). Simultaneously, descriptive coding was used to label data with a word or a phrase per our discretion in conjunction with writing analytic memos. We used pattern coding in the second coding cycle to establish natural themes of the in-vivo and descriptive codes that pertain to literacy and interest development. We independently revisited the data several times. The similarity index of the codes was 89%. To illustrate the English language arts themes that we identified, we share, in the findings section of this article, poetic reconstructions using the students' own words in italics followed by connections to developing interest. Poetic reconstructions are used to create an "arts-based interpretation of the data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 94). We also provide an analysis of the multimodal aspects of the students' billboard designs (Serafini, 2011).

Findings

Theme I: Voice

Through the Detroit Billboard Project, the students' voices were validated as they addressed community issues of both personal and collective concern. On the surveys, multiple students asserted the value of their input. They felt that, as *the future of the world* and *the next generation*, what they had to say should matter to a wide audience. *We are trying to get people to listen to our message*, asserted one student. *The community needs to hear our opinions*, commented another. The Detroit Billboard Project allowed students to "speak through the billboards" (Barney & Hoiland, 2012, p. 40) to an authentic audience. As one student stated, *I had an*

audience in mind that would listen to me. Comprised of words of multiple students, the following poem is an artistic reconstruction:

Voice

Students' voices aren't always heard.

We are the future of the world,

the next generation,

trying to get people to listen.

Listen to me.

Let people hear my voice,

a smart mind with a lot to speak.

Adults don't give us a chance to talk

and say how we feel

as if we're always going to say

something ignorant.

The community needs to hear

our opinions.

I had an audience in mind

that would listen to me.

Providing an authentic audience and purpose for the task supported students' incentive to write (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Troia, Harbaugh, Shankland, Wolbers, & Lawrence, 2013) by triggering situational interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). The trigger was informing students they would write short persuasive statements, or billboard messages, on relevant issues. Situational interest was maintained as the students valued (Linnenbrink-Garcia et al., 2013) the opportunity to communicate their views about salient, community matters and potentially have their billboard message voted the best to appear in the city center.

Theme II: Informed Views

During the Detroit Billboard Project, the students expressed their informed views of community issues in discussions and through designs. The messages they

wrote (e.g., *Be Strong and Stay in School, We Need to Come Together to Put Our City Back Together, Keep the D Spotless, Crime is Senseless, Invest in Your Dreams: Grind Now, Shine Later*) derived from their direct observations and aspirations. The following constructed poem interweaves the comments and reflections of multiple students' informed views:

Informed Views

Push people to understand.

All high school students have good opinions.

Teens have a mind.

We know what it's like

to live in the community,

to live in poverty -

the struggle

through the city

directly relates to issues

we face.

Youth

see more on the streets,

and need to be encouraged.

Youth

can address the issues.

Encouraging students to share their knowledge of their communities and their concerns about local issues through billboard messages honors their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives. Forging connections to identity and lived experiences in writing is engaging (Renninger, 2009). Authentic writing opportunities bridge emotional and cognitive understandings (Hidi & Renninger, 2006); thus, students' situational interest development is triggered and maintained through the instructional task, topic, and content (Hidi, 2006). Situational interest "has the potential to shape students' engagement in the classroom" (Linnenbrink-Garcia).

Connecting students' contextual interests with instructional content motivates students' learning (Hidi, 2006).

Theme III: Persuasion

A powerful message and cool design can get people to listen, wrote a student on his survey. The participants in the Detroit Billboard Project learned to persuade others through textual and visual design. They gained knowledge of how "to strike the right balance" in their messages to influence their target audience's reasoning and emotion (Welch, 2013, p. 30). The students used their communicative techniques to make their messages accessible to a wide audience (Serafini, 2011). *I learned that sometimes designing can speak more than actually verbally talking*, wrote one student. The following constructed poem fuses the reflections of multiple students on the power of persuasion:

Persuasion

A powerful message

catches the attention,

influences,

helps make a change.

Words

can make an impact,

make people think and

accomplish their dreams.

Get the word out.

The students' situational interest was evident in their comments in writing and during discussions. Part of the trigger for situational interest was showing the students concrete examples (Tapola, Jaakkola, & Niemivirta, 2014) of persuasive billboard messages that made the initial writing task manageable (Renninger, 2009). The authentic context maintained their interest as students re-engaged with the content in an enjoyable way as they continued to craft their multimodal texts (Lipstein & Renninger, 2007).

Multimodal Texts

Multimodal texts utilize varied communication features (e.g., designs, images, and words) to present ideas and information (Serafini, 2011). Using Serafini's (2011) suggestions, we analyzed the students' billboard messages for visual and textual elements. For example, in Figure 1, *Never Give Up*, the student centered and framed the text within a colorful hourglass visual design. One way an audience may interpret this billboard message is to choose sooner rather than later to "never give up" as time slips by. Figure 2 uses visual symbols of nature (e.g., butterfly, bird, and flowers) with the textual message, *Keep the 'D' Spotless*. Finally, Figure 3 utilizes numeric symbols, imagery, and text to convey a message about rebuilding Detroit. The student substituted the name of the city with its area code: 313. He drew a restored building that had been put back together like the pieces of a puzzle. Next to an image of a bird perched on a leafy limb, he handwrote, "Put the city back together."

Figure 1

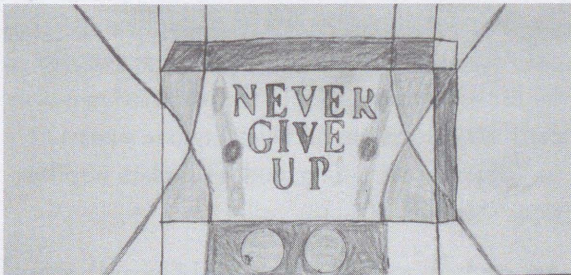


Figure 2

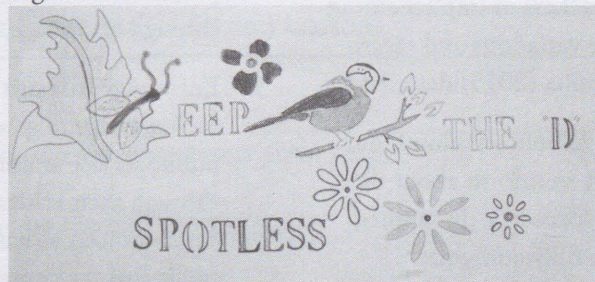


Figure 3



Figure 1. *Never Give Up*. Colored pencil on paper, 2014

Figure 2. *Keep The "D" Spotless*. Colored pencil on paper, 2014

Figure 3. *Detroit. 313 Is A Good City*. Colored pencil on paper, 2014

The students, like billboard designers, purposefully chose images to portray meanings. For teachers interested in teaching with billboards, www.readwritethink.org provides three useful lessons to support 6th through 12th grade students' critical analyses and the development of billboards through (a) glance theory using PowerPoint slides (Schrader, 2016), (b) inspirational messages created for an audience of their choice (Simon, 2016), and (c) consumerism awareness (International Literacy Association, 2016b). Schrader (2016) provides seven detailed resources (e.g., Eight Lessons in Slide Design PowerPoint Presentation, Learning Slide

Design from Billboards Guided Reading Questions / Teacher's Guide) to make the task simpler for teaching

students how to analyze and create billboard messages. See Table 1.

Table 1
Readwritethink.org Billboard Design Lessons

Title	Author	Grades
<i>You want me to buy what? Exploring ads.</i>	ILA	6 - 8
<i>Creating better presentation slides through glance media and billboard design</i>	Schrader	9 - 12
<i>Beguiling billboards: Finding inspiration along the road</i>	Simon	6 - 12

Note. Links to the above lessons are provided in the reference list. ILA is an acronym for International Literacy Association.

Implementing the Billboard Project in an English Language Arts Classroom

This interdisciplinary billboard project aligns with the CCSS (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) such as taking informed action to influence others and integrating knowledge and ideas to evaluate media to address a problem. The following steps will support English language arts teachers in implementing a billboard project. The steps are variations and extensions of the project Taylor and Iroha (2015) described.

1. Conduct a Google search to contact a local, outdoor, advertising company to inform about the project. Request donated space or a discounted rate. To have a real-world, fully authentic application, a public installation is vital. Ask the company for dimensions to cut the paper appropriately so the company may digitize a student's artwork for an actual billboard.
2. Review and select images of billboards with a variety of purposes to have students evaluate their messages as well as the techniques of design and persuasion.

3. Facilitate students' viewing and studying of national and international billboards through discussion points recorded on a graphic organizer. Use a three-column chart for students to (a) list what they notice in the billboard messages per their discussions and viewing (see steps 4 & 5), (b) predict meaning, and (c) explain implications (Serafini, 2011).
4. Ask students to discuss how the billboard's artist persuades an audience to act or feel a certain way through art, image, and words.
5. Encourage students to discuss the purpose for each message (e.g., commercial advertisement, public service announcement, soft propaganda) through their critical evaluation of the artist's color choices, visual and textual content, the positioning of the content in relation to the viewer, and the use of visual symbols (Serafini, 2011).
6. Invite students to brainstorm, reflect upon, free-write about, and discuss community issues they would like to see displayed on a billboard.
7. Encourage students to create billboard designs of a community issue of their choice, attending to the multimodal techniques they have learned

to catch the attention of the public through their design. Billboards and political posters provide illustrations of persuasive communication that students may use as mentor texts prior to writing.

8. Encourage students to share their billboard messages with one another. Involve students in the selection of the winning billboard(s) for digitization and/or public display. Exhibit all students' drawings within the school.

Persuasive to Argument Writing

To expand this project further, challenge students to use the persuasive messages on their billboards as starting points for argument writing. In light of the triggered and maintained situational interest the billboard project inspires, the students will be motivated to think critically when establishing the bases of arguments as they continue to re-engage with their topic (Renninger, 2009). Through their exploration of their billboard topics, they should examine data or evidence to use in substantiating their claims and reasoning their arguments (Hillocks, 2011; Monahan, 2013). This transfer

of motivation and learning from persuasive writing to argument writing can be used to support students in meeting the first CCSS for writing: "Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, n.p.).

Teachers may use lessons and study guides developed by readwritethink.org contributors to support students' understanding of persuasive and argument writing, including the differences between the two tasks. Students benefit from lessons focused on persuasive writing techniques (Gardner, 2016; Henry, 2016; International Literacy Association, 2016a) followed by comparing persuasive and argument writing (Filkins, 2016; Wickline, 2016). Filkins (2016) and Wickline (2016) link to a valuable printable guide: *What is the difference between persuasive and argument writing?* Wickline (2016) provides steps and resources for students to create electronic info-graphic images after completion of an argument essay. See Table 2.

Table 2
Readwritethink.org Strategy Guides and Lessons

Title	Author	Grades
<i>Developing evidence-based arguments from texts</i>	Filkins	6 - 12
<i>Developing persuasive writing strategies</i>	Gardner	6 - 12
<i>Persuasive essay: Environmental issues</i>	Henry	6 - 8
<i>Persuasive writing</i>	ILA	K - 5
<i>Picture this: Combining infographics and argumentative writing</i>	Wickline	7 - 10

Note. Links to the above lessons are provided in the reference list. ILA is an acronym for International Literacy Association.

Alternative Implications

Although creating authentic billboards is ideal, there may be many reasons why such an outlet is not possible. Projects fall along a spectrum of varying degrees of authenticity (Kohnen, 2013). Creating billboard-like signs on posters and postcards or through Power-Point slide designs (Schrader, 2016) and info-graphics (Wickline, 2016) meets the writing goal of persuading an audience through a simple message. Such outlets remove the competitive component of only one student's message being published on a billboard.

The students who participated in the Detroit Billboard Project competed positively and used a democratic process to choose the winning billboard message. All students' work was displayed at the school or within the community. Competition can increase many students' motivation to perform (Lepper, Keavney, & Drake, 1996). On the other hand, competitiveness does have the potential to create friction among members of a writing community since only one person wins the prize (Crooks, 1988).

Finally, we recommend using poetic reconstruction as we did in the findings section. This task provides additional options to trigger and maintain students' interest in persuasive writing, which should be used to transition into argument writing. We suggest the following steps for poetic reconstruction:

1. Students freewrite for 5 to 10 minutes to the prompt: What challenges does our community experience?
2. Small groups share their writing and discuss community challenges.
3. As they discuss, a recorder writes key words and phrases deemed important in a bulleted list or a graphic organizer.
4. Collaboratively or individually, students reconstruct the words from the list or graphic organizer and their freewrites into poems. The poems used in the findings section provide mentor texts students may emulate.

5. Students share their poems with others orally.
6. Additionally, students may create a Wordle (www.wordle.net) using the accumulated words.
7. Post final products in the school or publish a student anthology.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

An authentic writing opportunity for triggering and maintaining situational interest, the Detroit Billboard Project validated students' voices and engaged them in writing persuasive messages. Like all genres, persuasive text is "learned not through genre study or genre-of-the-month but through projects, large and small, that employ one or more genres for real purposes" (Duke et al., 2012, p. 11). Students were interested in learning persuasive writing techniques inherent in billboard propaganda to influence change. The Detroit Billboard Project provided a real purpose to write persuasive text, which consisted of a single message.

Persuasive writing for an authentic audience and purpose increased student engagement and interest in the project. Students learned about a *powerful tool [that] catches the attention of others*, as one student stated. When students value an authentic purpose, audience, and outcome for writing, they are motivated to perform (Lindblom, 2004). Through their motivated performance, students gained understanding of the art of persuasion.

The students learned that billboards do more than support consumerism through their exploration of the genre. Billboards have "the potential to shape society's social construction of phenomenon" (Calderwood & Wellington, 2013, p. 2). The students' messages derived from their observations and identification of community issues based on their experiences (Epstein, 2010). The project was reflective of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009), because, when writing persuasive messages, the students drew on their own knowledge, which also triggered and maintained situational interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). The billboards were designed to get people to *take [the messages] to mind*.

The billboard project is well suited to English language arts instruction because it triggers and maintains situational interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006) while honing persuasive writing skills that should lead into argument writing skills. By coupling persuasive and argument writing assignments on compelling topics of importance to students, English language arts educators promote students' mastery of multimodal communication and rhetorical techniques.

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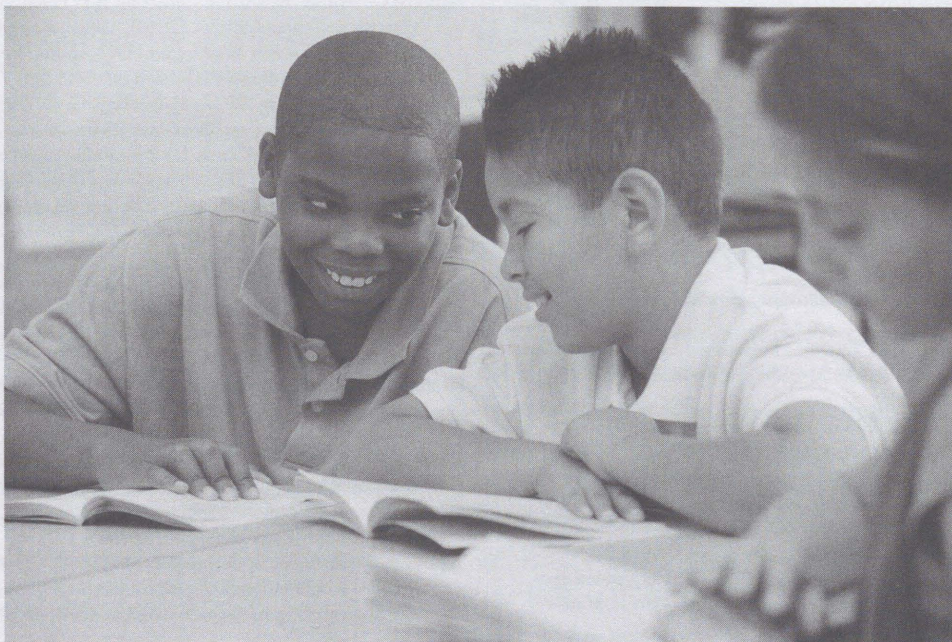
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Author Biographies

Danielle L. DeFauw, assistant professor of education, teaches reading and language arts at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Her research focuses on teacher-writers' authentic writing instruction.
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Julie Anne Taylor, professor of education, teaches social studies methods and multicultural education at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Her research focuses on arts integration.
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Okezie Iroha is a full-time social studies teacher at the Douglass Academy for Young Men in Detroit. He is the head of the social studies department.
okezie.iroha@detroitk12.org



Michigan Reading Association's Research to Practice Institute presents

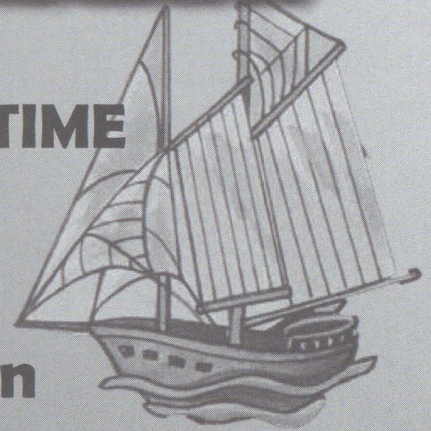
Navigating the Possibilities

TEACHING LITERACY IN THE TIME OF COMMON CORE



featuring

Professor Tim Shanahan



March 10, 2017 • Devos Place • Grand Rapids, MI

Registration with continental breakfast at 8AM.

Lunch included with State Superintendent,

Brian Whiston, giving remarks.

Institute day from 9AM - 3PM

with poster reception following.

Sponsored by

CMU
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UNIVERSITY

College of
Education &
Human Services

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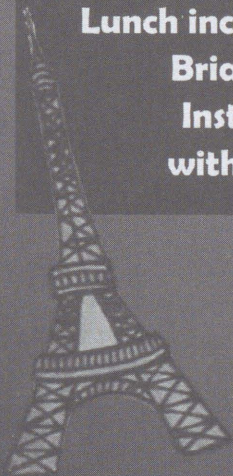
The
Literacy Center

**Mc
Graw
Hill**

Pre-conference Member \$150

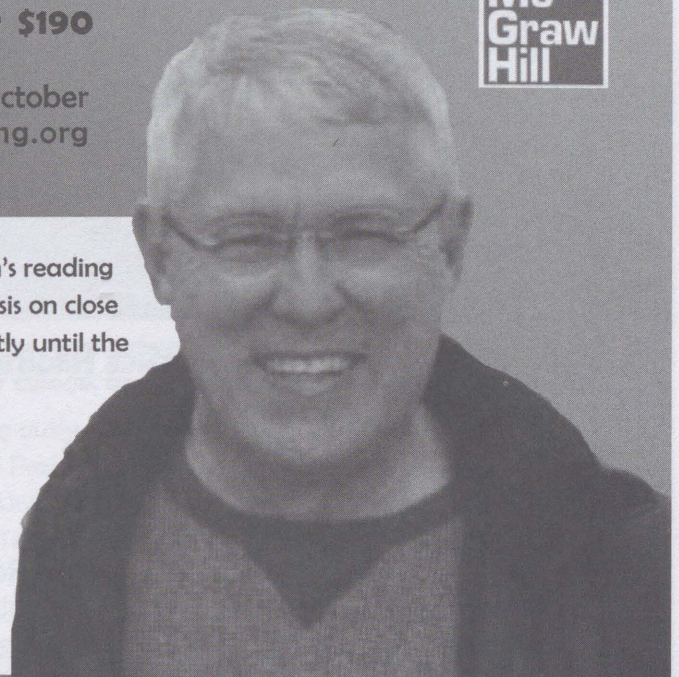
Pre-conference Non-member \$190

Registration opens late October
at michiganreading.org

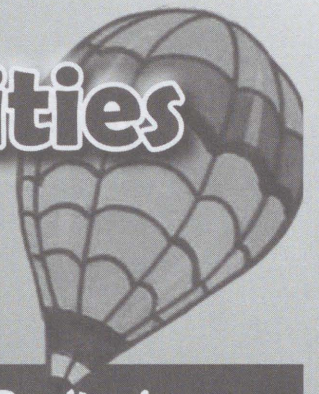


This presentation will explore two critical aspects of Michigan's reading standards: the text complexity requirements and the emphasis on close reading. Neither concept has received much attention recently until the adoption of the new standards, and there is apparent wide misunderstandings of these concepts among educators.

What does it mean to teach students to read texts of particular difficulty levels and to read text closely? This presentation will examine these issues and will provide practical demonstrations of how they need to be realized in Michigan classrooms.



Passport to Possibilities



Keynote Speakers



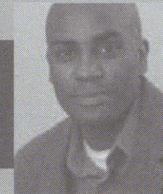
Peter Johnston
Saturday AM



Taylor Mali
Saturday PM



Lester Laminack
Sunday



Ernest Morrell
Monday



March 10-13, 2017 • Devos Place and Amway Grand Hotel • Grand Rapids

Saturday

Author & Illustrators Luncheon

Enjoy lunch in the company of Michigan authors and illustrators. This unique opportunity allows ticketed participants to dine with a published Michigan author in a relaxed and social atmosphere.

VIP Reception (ticketed event)

"Leaders don't create followers; they create more leaders" (Tom Peters). Mingle among MRA VIPs in a reception to honor and celebrate our Past Presidents and Award recipients. Our Past Presidents have dedicated time and service in paving the way to spotlight literacy issues throughout the state. Through their leadership, we are all uplifted and inspired. Our award honorees represent the day-to-day heroes who fight for the literacy needs within our classrooms. Michigan Reading Association wishes to invite all of you to gather in a show of appreciation for these champions of teachers and students. Your ticket includes a program booklet with appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages. A cash bar will be available.

Sunday

Author Luncheon with David Wiesner



Experience the imagination of David Wiesner, award winning picture-book author of Tuesday, The Three Pigs, and Flotsam. A three-time Caldecott Medal winner, David Wiesner has also illustrated more than twenty award-winning books for young readers. Join us in this exclusive ticket-only luncheon to peek into the dreamlike world of David Wiesner.

Kaleidoscope Luncheon

Featuring Janie Lynne Panagopoulos Celebrate student award-winning authors and illustrators at a special luncheon in their honor. Michigan students in grades K through 12th grade will be recognized for their contributions to the MRA publicized Kaleidoscope magazine. Join in this festive recognition of Michigan's student writers.

Don't miss...



Kate Messner



Ralph Fletcher



Jan Richardson



Jonathan Friesen



Three-hour
Sunday workshop
The Two Sisters



Antero Garcia



Pernille Ripp



Gary Schmidt



Devin Scillian



Kimberli Bindschattel



Mandy Beuehrens



Alison DeCamp



Janie Lynne
Panagopoulos



Frank Serafini

and more!

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Members

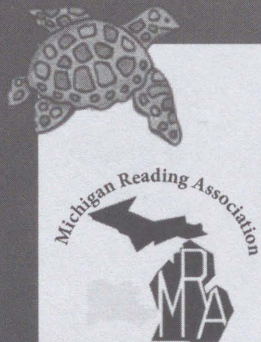
3 Day Registration - \$185
1 Day Registration - \$140
Membership Fee - \$35

Discounted retiree & student rates available at michiganreading.org.

Non-Members

3 Day Registration - \$265
1 Day Registration - \$190

Registration opens late October at michiganreading.org.



Michigan Reading Association's Digital Literacy Focus Institute presents

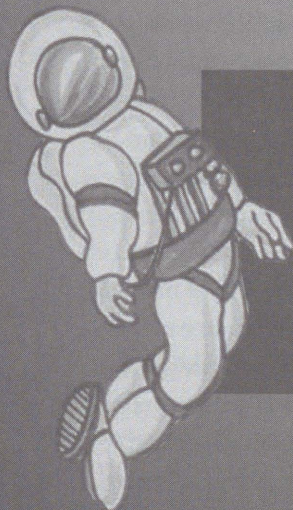
Digital Literacy Day

EVERY CHILD A SUPER READER:
7 STRENGTHS TO OPEN A WORLD
OF POSSIBLE

featuring

Dr. Ernest Morrell

March 13, 2017 • Amway Grand Plaza Hotel
Grand Rapids, MI



Don't miss our other Digital Literacy Day speakers!

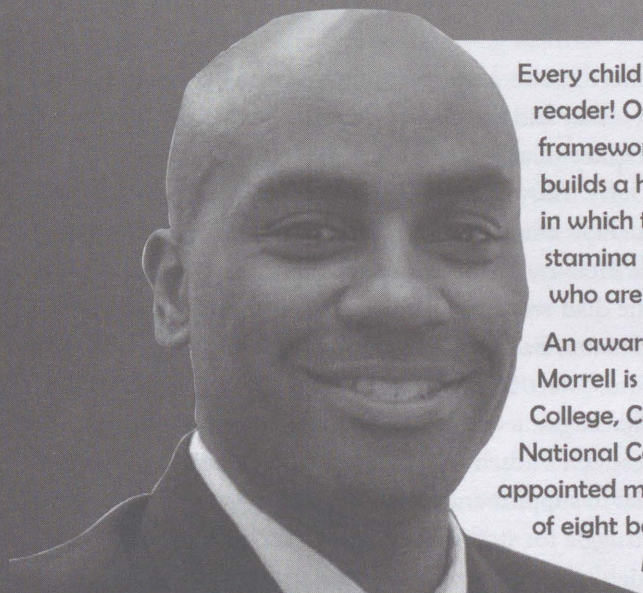
Troy Hicks
Amber White
Craig Steenstra
Heather Jensen
Amy Romanowski

Mark Raffler
Erica Hamilton
Sue Sharma
Mark Deschaine
Andrew Steinman

Lindy Scripps
Jeremy Hyler
Aram Kabodian
Janet Neyer
and more!

Digital Literacy Monday is included
with the 3 day registration fee of \$185
OR 1 day fee of \$150

Registration opens
late October at
michiganreading.org



Every child deserves the opportunity to become a 24/7/365 super reader! Our 7 *STRENGTHS MODEL*, built on a social-emotional framework that honors children's interests, cultures and stories, builds a hopeful, kind and literature-rich community of learners in which teachers can cultivate super readers who read with joy, stamina and purpose, who believe in themselves and others, and who are ready for college, career and civic engagement.

An award-winning author, teacher and researcher, Dr. Ernest Morrell is the Macy Professor of English Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He is also Past-President of the National Council of Teachers of English, a Fellow AERA, and an appointed member of ILA's Literacy Research Panel. He is the author of eight books, including *Every Child a Super Reader* and *New Directions in Teaching English*.