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Letter From the Editor: The Next Chapter

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readers,” Ms. Beaton captured the bigger image. Literacy is much more than understanding phonics, syntax, or things that can be measured on a multiple choice quiz; it’s about self-reflection, application, and absorption of cultural and social experiences. “Even if the standards are on the right track, people freak out because control is being taken out of the hands of the teachers. Teachers know what’s best,” Ms. Beaton commented. “But as long as you can get your students to read, write, speak, and think everyday, you’re on the right track.”

Every educator has their own ideas of what a successful literacy program consists of, and this simple idea of being able to read and write becomes complicated through politics, econom-

ics, culture, class, social status, and community. Even with the purest intentions, due to these complications, our education system can fumble the foundations of a student’s

literacy. Yet understanding this fallibility, teachers such as our Grand Valley Alumni can consistently work on improving reading and writing within the classroom. There seems to be common connections among the alumnus ideas on what educators should work towards in order to create effective literacy practices. Literacy is a dynamic concept, constantly changing with every school semester, and the teachers and curriculum alike will

change along with it. And some day, we’ll look back at 2015 and ask ourselves, “what were we thinking?”

“Common Core is effective in theory, yet there’s still too much focus on testing. It’s difficult to see literacy depth in a test.”



LETTER FROM
THE EDITOR

The Next Chapter

The COE has had a year of success and transition. For *Colleagues*, this has meant new ideas from leadership and a move to a longer length format. This issue reflects the combined efforts of faculty, staff, and students that came together to examine literacy education.

After working with our dedicated faculty, I can tell you that their energy and commitment to children and teachers has not wavered. With all that is swirling about in the education realm, I hope you see reflected in these pages the efforts and thoughts that have gone into the COE’s work in literacy education.

By now, a lot of you have seen the report from The Education Trust—Midwest and the bleak prediction, without change, it has for Michigan (<https://midwest.edtrust.org/michiganachieves/>). In particular, the news of the reading skills of Michigan youth is very troubling. This information reinforces the need for research-based approaches to

solve the problem. The COE’s faculty, staff, students, and alumni are creating and implementing dynamic and sound strategies to turn the tide.

The past couple of years has seen the college adopt innovative approaches that directly assist in the field. We have a vibrant team that is committed to responding to needs in the field. While this *Colleagues* is a snapshot of the efforts and thoughts of the COE, I encourage readers to communicate directly with the authors and consider partnering with the COE. As always, you can call the COE’s Center for Educational Partnerships as a first contact at 616-331-6240 for any inquiry into possible collaborations.

The College of Education and the *Colleagues* magazine will continue to provide thought provoking information and direct assistance to the profession. This coming year we will introduce you to our new dean, Dr. Barry Kanpol, and present another informative issue.

If you are interested in writing a piece, please email me at pelonc@gvsu.edu with your proposal.

Clayton Pelon
Editor-in-Chief