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From the Editor

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From the Editor

Fifty years. Five decades. Half a century. Half a lifetime. However you look at it, fifty years is a long time. Fifty years of literacy research is what is contained in the archives of *Reading Horizons*. Hundreds of authors, studies, abstracts, methodologies, implications, and conclusions all centered around literacy – reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing. These fifty volumes contain a wealth of knowledge accumulated from around the world, voices of researchers and teachers all focused on understanding literacy theory and improving literacy practice. What a treasure.

This two hundredth issue of *Reading Horizons* continues this fine tradition of presenting literacy research and practice in an easily accessible format as we present three articles and another book review by our avid readers, Terry Young and Barbara Ward. This issue begins with a review of the last fifty years of research and practice in guided reading as Michael Ford and Michael Opitz define and analyze this vibrant, ever-changing reading strategy. A reprint of a chapter in the book *Guided Reading: Then and Now* (2008), the authors do an excellent job of discussing how guided reading evolved to become a common practice in classrooms around the world. As they discuss their own perspectives on guided reading, they remind us of some fundamental understandings that we need to remember. For example, *all* children have the ability to become literate and the fact that guided reading is but *one* component of an effective reading program.

Sara Helfrich and Rita Bean describe their study in what really matters in preparing pre-service teachers to be teachers of reading as they asked their students to identify which components of their education – coursework, field experience, or collaboration – had the most impact on their feelings of preparedness to teach reading. In a fascinating discussion on the importance of collaboration, the authors stress that the relationship between teacher candidate, collaborating teacher, and university supervisor must be made explicit as our pre-service teachers must know that they have support from many quarters. As has been seen over the past half-century (and well before that), teaching reading is a complex, time intensive process that, as Helfrich and Bean assert, demands that we prepare our future teachers through expert instruction and relevant hands-on experiences in classrooms.

Jane Kelley and Janine Darragh present us with a harsh reality that, unfortunately, has been with us for far more than fifty years – poverty. The authors analyzed 58 realistic fiction children's picture books that portray people living in poverty using



recent U.S. Census Bureau data. Living in a time of economic crisis makes this research all the more pertinent as our classrooms fill with children living in poverty who need support. This article maintains that support can come through reading relevant picture books that show correct portrayals of their lives. Ending with an extensive list of picture books, this article is an important resource for educators and researchers.

Barbara Ward and Terry Young keep us abreast of the latest in literature at all levels and, keeping in our tradition, they treat us to examples of Graphic Novels, demonstrating one of the ways that literature has changed over the past fifty years. From Spiegelman's (1987) *Maus* to Yang's (2008) *American Born Chinese*, the genre has evolved from Archie comic books to full-blown novels and non-fiction research, becoming a staple of reading for students of all ages. Readers will surely find something interesting to read and revel in the stunning visual images contained in these Graphic Novels.

Fifty years certainly may seem like a lifetime but when it comes to the field of reading, it is but a brief moment in time. Who knows what tomorrow might bring? Reading is ever-changing as new formats, genres, and topics are always just beyond the horizon. So here's to the next fifty years of *Reading Horizons* – may we read and learn more everyday and may our readers continue to wonder and ask questions that will lead to new understandings in our remarkable profession.

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**There is no more crucial or basic skill
in all of education than reading.**

