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From the Editor

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From the Editor

Change can be interesting. Many times, it is difficult, time consuming, and stressful. It can also be exciting and fulfilling. I remember, when I was a middle school teacher, the beginning of each school year anticipating new students with all the requisite challenges we would face together: the transition into a new year, facing the unknown together. So many possibilities, so many changes.

Life is fraught with change. Here in Michigan, we are experiencing the annual change of color as trees burst into flaming red, bright orange, and intense gold. Temperatures drop, flowers freeze, and leaves fall. As with the seasons, change is also inevitable. Many people have shared words of wisdom about it, from the profound as Mahatma Gandhi said, “You must be the change you want to see in the world,” to the more humorous, “Change is inevitable—except from a vending machine,” Robert C. Gallagher.

Reading Horizons is changing. Volume 49 brings with it a new design and an updated website. You will notice that the cover and the format of the journal has changed with the authors and articles listed on the cover to highlight the outstanding researchers featured in each issue. We’ve also moved some of the front matter to the back. I encourage you to check out the website <http://www.wmich.edu/coe/spls/clinic/readhorizons.htm> as you will see updated versions of the manuscript submission guidelines, our Editorial Advisory Board, and links to sample articles from Volume 48. Speaking of the advisory board, I want to welcome ten new members all of whom are a welcome change to the *Reading Horizons* family. Although changes are being made, the high quality of the writing and research will remain a constant.

In this issue, authors present the need for change as we think about literacy in its many forms. Ruanda Garth-McCullough challenges us to consider the importance of culturally bound prior knowledge when teaching reading. What is involved in comprehension? How can we improve the comprehension of our African American students? How often do we provide texts from other cultures? Dr. Garth-McCullough’s study of the influence of culturally bound texts on the reading comprehension of African American students asks us to change our thinking about the texts we read in our classrooms. Mary Jo Fresch tackles the issue of spelling in an oft ignored population—undergraduate pre-service education majors. Spelling is more frequently thought of as a topic for elementary students but how do adults think about their spelling



ability? Dr. Fresch researched the spelling patterns of this population and addresses the low self-efficacy many face when their spelling is poor.

Arlene Barry researched how literacy teaching has changed through the years. Her article takes us on a journey into the past as she describes the early hornbook and Primers that were used to teach the children of early colonists. From the earliest days when reading instruction included lessons in morality and Puritan thought to the “Reading Wars,” Dr. Barry traces the many changes that have affected literacy learning and teaching. Brandi Mathers asks us to reconsider the concept of fun in our literacy lessons. What do young students think of reading and writing? As Dr. Mathers’ discovered, many think it’s either fun or boring. She challenges us to rethink our understanding of the word “fun.” Is the concept of “fun” something we can include in our thinking or is it to be relegated to the playgrounds and Xboxes of the world? Can we consider the possibility of having “hard fun” in our classrooms? Are we open to changing our idea of fun while learning?

Terrell Young and Barbara Ward challenge us to rethink our very world as they present us with Green Books—texts that encourage us to care for the earth. From early elementary through high school, these books invite the reader to enjoy and appreciate our world while asking us to change the way we think and behave in order to preserve the beauty around us.

Change is indeed a challenge. The only certainty is that change will come so we might as well embrace it. Remember, as Price Pritchett once said, “Change always comes bearing gifts.” It is my hope that this, and future issues of *Reading Horizons*, will be seen as gifts to help you think about your own theory and practice and, ultimately encourage you to consider change.

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

