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From the Editor

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From the Editor

A few weeks ago I led my Secondary Content Literacy class through a Process Drama, an activity that involved them in imaginary, unscripted, and spontaneous problem solving (Schneider & Jackson, 2000). Each student assumed a different perspective (teacher, student, parent, or community member) to discuss and create an action plan to address a fictional school shooting from the book *Just One Flick of a Finger* (Lorbiecki, 1996). Listening to the groups talk about the event and how they felt and thought about it was fascinating as they had actively taken on the demeanor, voice, and thinking of their perspective. It was obvious that these were no longer undergraduate, pre-service education students at Western Michigan University rather they were concerned and frightened high school students, teachers, parents, and members of the community. When debriefing the Process Drama, they expressed how difficult it was to take on these different perspectives and yet at the same time, they were fascinated at how their own thinking changed as they looked at a school shooting through someone else's eyes.

Changing our perspective can be a challenge; there is comfort and certainty in knowing what we know, in seeing things as we've always seen them. Looking at something from another perspective can cause dissonance as that which was certain and secure becomes unsure and unclear. But isn't that often how change and growth happen? When reading a book, we frequently ask our students to "think about an event in another way," or ask "how do you think (some character) felt when that happened?" Certainly, a change in perspective can lead us to new insights and knowledge.

In this issue of *Reading Horizons*, the authors present us with the known and ask us to look at it through a different lens. Katherine Wiesendanger, Jeannine Perry, and Gretchen Braun researched Sustained Silent Reading, a common classroom practice that was called into question by the National Reading Panel (2000) report. The authors surveyed 90 practicing teachers asking how they experienced SSR in their classrooms. These educators shared their perspectives on the physical, teacher, student, and program factors that determined the success of this recreational reading program. Based on this information, the authors make recommendations for those who might want to improve an existing or implement an effective SSR program.

Kerry Holmes, Susan Rutledge, and Lane Roy Gauthier present the issue of how English Language Learners are frequently perceived in our classrooms. The authors maintain that the majority of ELL's spend their days in English speaking classrooms



with little acknowledgment of the language skills and strengths they can offer. Based on an asset model of instruction, their article describes the five stages of language acquisition and proposes effective learning strategies meant to support the literacy learning of this vibrant population.

Word Walls, frequently found in classrooms, can be valuable tools for teaching vocabulary and spelling. Joanne Jasmine and Pamela Schiesl propose that we think about them in another way – as useful tools for supporting reading fluency. This article, based on an action research project, found that leading a class of first grade students through a variety of word wall activities led to increased high-frequency word recognition and fluency.

Terrell Young and Barbara Ward present us with the joy of browsing bookshelves in our local libraries and bookstores as they highlight many of the newest titles for readers of all ages. Their suggestions include a mosquito dressed in a tuxedo, looking at the many sleeping creatures under the snow, and bigotry in 1899 rural Louisiana.

Perspective. What is yours? What might you notice if you assumed another's? How might your teaching or research change if you looked at it differently? As always, *Reading Horizons* is looking for new perspectives in literacy theory and practice and I encourage you to consider us when seeking a venue for your scholarly work.

Allison L. Baer, Editor
Reading Horizons
Kalamazoo, MI

Lorbiecki, M. (1996). *Just one flick of a finger*. New York: Dial.

Schneider, J.J., & Jackson, S.A.W. (2000). Process drama: A special space and place for writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 54, 38-51.

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

