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[Editor's Note]

Allison L. Baer
Western Michigan University, allison.baer@wmich.edu

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Louise Rosenblatt once said, “research in reading, no matter what else it has demonstrated, has found the teacher to be a most important – perhaps the most important – factor in the educational process” (1938/1983, p. xi). Every day educators around the world enter classrooms filled with students, some eager and some not so eager, ready and willing to teach. We plan, assess, teach, listen, empathize, encourage, write, think, solve problems, and watch. Ideally, we are aware of our students’ learning, our teaching, and frequently find ourselves reflecting on what is happening in and around our classrooms. It is this awareness that often causes us to question. Why did my students react this way to this writing prompt? Why did they choose this book over that book? What was it about that question that spurred such in-depth discussion?

I distinctly remember the day, many years ago in my sixth grade language arts class when Courtney stood up to present her final project after reading the book *Mick Harte Was Here* (Park, 1996). She had made a model of the scene in which Phoebe was giving the eulogy at her brother Mick’s funeral. It was a simple model of a church with black walls, no windows, and a small Phoebe standing behind a podium. Her verbal presentation was adequate, not particularly interesting, and showed little understanding of the impact of Phoebe’s words. Not overly impressed and thinking that she might not have read the whole book, I later read her accompanying paper explaining why she created the model and how it related to the story. Courtney, who had never written more than a paragraph for any assignment, had written two pages explaining how she could relate to Phoebe as she, too, had spoken at her brother’s funeral when he was killed in a motorcycle accident. The black walls of the church mirrored the dark she felt in her heart as she wept for the loss of her brother. I was stunned. What had brought about this strong reaction that caused her to write so much and with that amount of thought and feeling? Yes, she had a strong personal connection with the text but her writing showed such improvement. She had read other books during the school year and had written countless pieces of many genres but this one was different. I started wondering: did the model help her better form her ideas and therefore affect her writing? It was this question that ultimately led to my dissertation almost ten years later.



Teachers are constantly questioning. In this issue you will meet four authors whose questions led them to research and write. Deanna Day wanted to know what would happen if literature circles were implemented in a middle school classroom of English language learners. Glenna, the classroom teacher, had serious doubts that her students would have in-depth discussions about books but, as you will see, everyone was pleasantly surprised. Margaret Moore-Hart, having an interest in technology and how its use can affect reading and writing, worked with two primary teachers providing support for both the teachers and young students in their language arts classes. This journey of discovery led to some creative writing and interesting insights from all involved. Terrance Stange and Susan Wyant asked if using poetry could not only enhance literacy learning but improve classroom behavior in a second grade classroom. The results are fascinating, as these young children not only became immersed in poetry but learned effective interpersonal skills. Our book reviewers, Barbara A. Ward and Terrell A. Young, ask teachers to think creatively about the resources they provide for their students. Instead of using textbooks, why not use text sets? The authors review multiple books in thematic text sets and encourage teachers to use them to increase student learning and engagement.

As you read these articles, think about your own teaching and learning. Whatever age your students, toddlers, adults, or any age in between, reflect on what happens in your classroom. What is it that makes you wonder? What are you going to do to satisfy your curiosity?

On another note, I would like to thank Dr. Karen Thomas, Director of the Dorothy McGinnis Reading Clinic at Western Michigan University, for her many years editing *Reading Horizons*. Karen's expertise has led this fine journal for seven years and she has decided to step down from the position of editor to pursue her own questions about literacy learning. Personally, I appreciate her friendship and mentoring and professionally, we all look forward to seeing what new answers Karen will find to her many questions.

Allison L. Baer, Editor
Reading Horizons
Kalamazoo, Michigan