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Letter From the Editor

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Dear *Reading Horizon* Readers,

A new season and a new start to a school semester/year are fully upon us. And our first volume and issue of a new print season is now in your hands, or on your screen. However, it is our task to see that the last issue of this volume is totally on-line keeping with the promise of an on-line journal.

While new beginnings can be an exciting time for the many initiatives that we as educators deal with annually, it can also be fraught with trepidation and a sense of what we are losing when we give up an old medium. In his publication, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times*, Andrew Piper elegantly and eloquently traces the historic journey of the reading and handling of books as well as the reading and interfacing with digital print. Not choosing one over the other, Piper describes the “graspability” of books as well as the historic and inspirational experiences of what one does when handling, holding, tracing with one’s finger as in bookmarking, and carrying a book. The screen does not offer that feature, but is never viewed as less than Book.

All this is to say that personally, I will miss holding a book, a journal, a hands-on non-electronic device. In transitioning to an on-line publication, I will miss the visual and tactile pleasures afforded me in holding a book.

This issue of *Reading Horizons* has much to offer in-hand as well as on-screen with the following three articles. Husband’s article addresses the issue of underachieving African American boys in early childhood and elementary grades using a multi-contextual approach. Husband’s article brings new light to the issues relevant to younger African American males which adds to the growing literature on the pre-adolescent and adolescent African American males. While recognizing that not all African American boys fall into the category of underachieving readers, Husband details factors that impact young boys in general and African American boys in particular with the emphasis on change in curriculum, teachers and schools.





Next, Hu, Chen, and Li present their examination of Five Chinese first-graders who experienced growth in both bilingual and biliteracy development through the use of English/Chinese picture books. Viewed through the lenses of a reader-response and socio-cultural perspective, Hu, Chen, and Li provide insight and practical teaching to an ELL group of early learners.

In the third article, McArthur moves us to the adolescent reader and the challenges of reading in and learning from differing content disciplines and their content-specific writing styles. Presenting a meta-linguistic protocol, McArthur suggests a think-aloud process for secondary pre-service teachers to use to examine language, vocabulary, and thinking as used in differing disciplines.

As always, Young and Ward, in keeping with this debut volume and issue, offer up great books published with first-time authors who debut their books for our reading pleasures. Beginning with the youngest of subjects in *When my Baby Dreams*, we are then taken to the world of adolescents and their challenges. A wonderful picture book of the blues takes us through the escapades committed by a blue blob of a monster who personifies the blues as he (or it) gives anyone the blues. Next we go to the Florida swamps with a troubled family and characters that etch a place in our hearts, then a dystopian world that will thrill middle-grade readers. Our first-time authors introduce us to adolescents who are viewed as outside the popular and normal population of adolescents, who are dying, who have been date-raped, who suffer racial discrimination, who want desperately to be accepted as American given an Egyptian-Muslim heritage, and who want to survive after suicide attempts. In other words, we read of and empathize with adolescents who just want to be who they are even if they don't know who they are.

What great reading is in store for early grade and YA readers.

Enjoy and look for us coming on a screen near you soon!

Karen F. Thomas
Interim Editor, *Reading Horizons*