

Message from the Editors

Greetings,

As you settle in to read this issue, you will notice a change in format. Since this is an online journal, we have changed the article format from two columns to one column to avoid having to scroll up and down on the same page as you read. This should improve your reading experience as you read the six featured articles in this issue.

Three articles focus on the power of literature to build bridges of empathy and understanding. Sara Elley shares her experiences as a first year teacher examining bibliotherapy as a means to develop better social and emotional skills. Thoughtful choices of children's literature and role-playing enabled her third grade students to work and learn together cooperatively. Children's literature can help students, teachers, and parents better understand dyslexia, too. Jodi Pilgrim shows us how a popular fiction series character, Hank Zipzer, can give us insights into the struggles and strengths of dyslexic students. Best selling novel *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien supported Matthew McConn's eleventh grade students' as they developed understandings about themselves, Viet Nam, and war in general using this unique collection of short writings. Through teacher modeling and the use of dialectical journal entries, high school students learned to craft essays that analyzed a character from the novel and made connections from their own lives to human nature.

The next two articles highlight constructive changes developed through K-12 schools and university partnerships. A team of researchers from Texas Wesleyan University share the positive gains for both 1st-4th graders and preservice teachers as they partnered with a large urban district to improve literacy through implementing a guided reading tutoring program. Kimberly Welsh responded to a principal's request to support her primary teachers in "healing an ailing reading program". You will see amazing changes to the literacy environment as a result of this partnership.

Finally, this issue closes with an examination of the term "close reading". This was on the agenda for the TALE Executive Board's task force's comparison of the TEKS and CCSS. The journal reviewers recommended Doreen Saccomano's "How Close is Close Reading" to give our Texas readers some insight on understanding the Common Core State Standard's emphasis on close reading.

We encourage you to participate in our Question the Author (QtA) sessions on Facebook. Our last issue's chat generated the biggest Facebook interaction so far! We will schedule a few for late spring- after the TALE conference- since there will be a Facebook state-wide reading discussions for Donalyn Miller's *Reading Wild* and Stephen Layne's *Igniting a Passion for Reading* starting soon!

We close with thanks to our 2014 webmaster, Frances Gonzalez-Garcia, for assisting with our web-based format!! Frances did a fabulous job this year keeping our membership up-to-date with all activities and publications. We wish her well, as she moves on to other endeavors. We would also like to thank our authors, reviewers, and our editorial assistant, Mahmoud Abdi Tabari. The next submission deadline is January 31st. You'll find submission guidelines on the last page of this issue. Please encourage your colleagues to share their best practices and research with our readers. <http://www.texasreaders.org/journal.html>.

Best wishes,

Sheri Vasinda, Susan Szabo, Leslie Haas, & Debra Lee