



## UPCOMING PD OPPORTUNITIES WITH IRC

By the Illinois Reading Council

Fall is here and IRC is excited to share these upcoming professional learning opportunities with educators!

### [FALL 2021 IRC BOOK CLUBS](#)

Educators from all over the state will be reading, reflecting on, and responding to ***Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*** by Gholdy Muhammad and/or ***Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School*** by Carla Shalaby. Beginning October 24th, these seven-week online discussions will present an equity framework that restores excellence in literacy education or a paradigm-shifting look at the typical expectations for children at school. Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive 15 PD clock hours for each book club. Register by October 15, 2021 to participate in the book clubs. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$45, which includes IRC membership for one year.

### [OCTOBER 2021 IRC WORKSHOP SERIES](#)

IRC will be hosting three online workshops during October covering these relevant literacy topics.

- **October 13, 2021:** *4 Essential Studies: Beliefs and Practices to Reclaim Student Agency* with **Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle**
- **October 19, 2021:** *Reading for Independence: How Reading Will Save Kids and Tomorrow* with **Kylene Beers and Robert E. Probst**
- **October 27, 2021:** *What To Do When Kids Just Don't Get It: Prompting for Deeper Understanding During Guided Reading* with **Jan Richardson**

All workshops will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 pm online via Zoom Webinar. Registered participants can earn up to **6 PD clock hours** and will have the option to **watch the recorded workshops until November 30, 2021**. Registration for all 3 workshops is \$75 for members or \$120 for non-members which includes 1-year of IRC membership. There are also discounted registration rates for retired and preservice teachers. Schools can also register multiple participants using the [Group Registration Form](#).

## A SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL TRANSITION BACK TO SCHOOL

By Laura St. John

***"What we are ethically called to do is create a safe space in our schools and classrooms where all students can walk in and, for that day or hour, take off the crushing weight of their armor, hang it on a rack, and open their heart to truly be seen."***

***~ Brené Brown, Daring Classroom***

2021-2022 is shaping up to be a different and unexpected year, with much changed and even lost. We've all suffered a collective trauma, and so instead of being filled with excitement for this new school year, many of us are filled with fear. Including our students.

A favorite activity on the first day of Play In A Book, my drama based reading program in Chicago, has been *Secret Handshake* in which students work in pairs and come up with their own, often elaborate "secret handshakes." In years past, it has been a great way to introduce collaboration as students get to know one another in a safe and fun way. Handshake? Safe? This year, a handshake is not safe at all.

Like many things we've enjoyed with our students, this activity no longer works during COVID-19. This year, my students and instructors will greet each other from behind masks. When we find our seats on the carpet, it will be far apart. There will be no huddling together for story time and I'll only see their smiles through their eyes above their masks.

In this changing landscape, Play In A Book will begin by actively working with students to create a *safe space*. We'll acknowledge that we're all going through something very difficult, but we're going through it TOGETHER. So instead of doing our *Secret Handshake*, we'll start with an activity I picked up at a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) workshop hosted by [Better Cubed Minneapolis](#).

We'll offer students a piece of paper and ask them to draw a circle in the middle. A *big* circle. Inside the circle, they'll write their name or draw a picture of themselves. They'll be given time to reflect on the fears and concerns that they've brought into our space and write (or draw) those things outside the circle. Next they'll write or draw all the things they think we can do collectively to create a safe space, both physically and emotionally. I expect to see "wearing my mask" and "sanitizing my hands," but I also expect to see "saying kind words" and "offering help to someone who needs it."

We'll sit in our socially distanced circle and from behind our masks, we'll share our fears and concerns. We'll also share all the ways we can think of to keep each other safe both emotionally and physically. Through that conversation, I expect us to understand one another a little better, to start to truly know one another, and to end with a collective agreement on how we will interact in our space. Our *safe space*.

We're all going through something difficult and this experience offers us a unique opportunity to find common ground in our classrooms.

## COMMUNICATING FULLY IS THE OPPOSITE OF BEING TRAUMATIZED (VAN DER KOLK, 2014)

By Julie Hoffman, Ed.D.

If you are in education, or any field where human beings are involved, you have probably heard the terms *trauma-sensitive*, *trauma-informed*, and maybe even *healing-centered*. As we learn more about how to best respond to our students who are healing from trauma, we may come across a multitude of suggestions and yet still have questions. Every day we are learning more about what trauma can do to the mind and nervous system, how to respond to these changes, and what we can do to make a difference. The good news is that healing is a real and feasible option! When it comes to healing, the power of connection is critical (Harris, 2018; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017; van der Kolk, 2014). Your students want, and need, to connect with you. In addition to the training and tips you are compiling in your repertoire of healing-centered practices, I also offer ALT: Ask, Listen, and Trust.

**ASK.** When it comes to what might work best for a child, we need to ask. What works or worked for Travis last year might not be the same thing that Tarana needs this school year. Have some options to offer the students and ask, “Which of these new practices would you like to try?” or even “What can I do next time to help?” Trauma didn’t ask, so we must.

**LISTEN.** When a child offers you some insight toward their healing, know and understand that they are giving you a gift. Listen. Take in what Seiko has to say about her own healing. Nod with compassion when Dakota tells you how he feels and how he might be struggling. Listen before there is an issue. When Jamie says, “I can’t do this” it is okay to ask for more information. “What is difficult about this, Jamie?” or “Can you tell me more about that?” Trauma wasn’t listening, so we must.

**TRUST.** Children will tell the truth when they feel safe. Each human, on some level, knows what will work toward their healing. If nothing else, they know what will not work. We need to trust that. We need to trust our students. The healing journey belongs to them. The survival story belongs to them. Trauma didn’t believe them, so we must.

**QUICK TIP:** Make use of sticky notes for a quick conversation with your students. This is a quick way to check in and let a student know that you see them, and that you care. Here are some examples of “Sticky Note Conversations” that I have had with students.

**Teacher:** Are you feeling okay?

**Student:** I’m okay. Just tired.

**Teacher:** Okay. Just wanted to check in.

**Teacher:** Just checking in.

**Student:** I’m mad.

**Teacher:** Want to talk?

**Student:** No.

**Teacher:** Are you feeling okay?

**Student:** I am sad.

**Teacher:** Do you want to talk?

**Student:** Yes. Can I stay after class?

## References

Harris, N. B. (2018). *The deepest well: Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Perry, B. D., & Szalavitz, M. (2017). *The boy who was raised as a dog and other stories from a psychiatrist’s notebook: What traumatized children can teach us about loss, love, and healing*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. New York, NY, US: Viking.

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## FAMILY LITERACY BOOKSHELF

By Barb Ashton, IRC Family Literacy Committee Chair

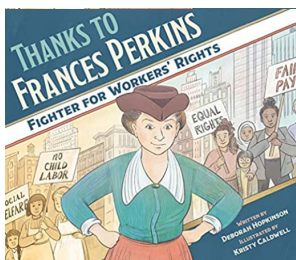
Autumn has arrived and the leaves soon will be changing colors. The crisper air and farmers busy harvesting their crops are sure signs that it is October. This month we’re reminded about fire prevention, school safety, bullying prevention, and family history month. Columbus Day or Indigenous People Day and Halloween are also part of October’s calendar of events.



Escaping or fleeing from the Great Chicago Fire is told in a wonderful book, **Fiery Night: A Boy, His Goat, and the Great Chicago Fire** by Sally M. Walker. Based on a true story, the tale begins when Justin and his family are awakened around midnight by a policeman and neighbors pounding on their door. Although they (the Butterfield family) try to save their home, they soon realize their home has caught fire. While gathering some of their belongings and putting them into a wheelbarrow, Justin is determined to bring Willie, his frightened pet goat, with them. The Butterfields join other families searching for safety in hopes of reaching Lake Michigan. As the smoke and flames increase the family is forced to leave their belongings and keep walking towards the lake. Refusing to leave Willie

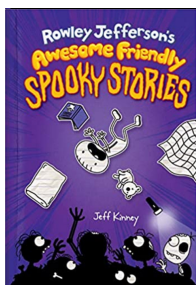
behind, Justin struggles to bring Willie with him. After the fire ends, the Butterfields stay with friends who lived in a part of the city that wasn’t destroyed. While there Justin writes to a friend about his experiences

and includes a picture of his family fleeing the fire. *Fiery Night* is a well told story enhanced by the beautiful and dramatic illustrations that help to depict the emotions and experiences the Butterfields and other families endured during the fire. The back of the book contains additional resources and photos from the fire along with Justin's drawing which is housed at the Chicago Historical Society.

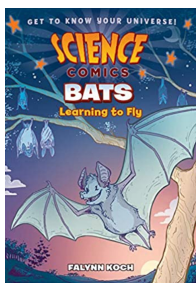


We've been hearing on TV, social media, newspapers, and other news outlets about civil rights, human rights, women's rights, voting rights, etc. Keeping with that theme, the book ***Thanks to Frances Perkins: Fighter for Worker's Rights*** by Deborah Hopkinson is a biographical overview of Frances Perkins who worked to bring about a major change for American workers and the workplace. Frances obtained a college degree and later a master's degree at a time when women weren't expected to go to college. As a young lady working in New York Frances witnessed the tragic fire at the Triangle Waist Company that employed immigrants and teenage girls.

Due to poor working conditions and being locked in while working, 146 people lost their lives. While attending a memorial service for the victims Frances met Rose Schneiderman who urged workers to join together for better working conditions. Impressed by Rose's ideas Frances became an activist for better working conditions and labor justice. Frances was appointed by the Governor of New York as a social director to improve workers conditions. Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President and named Frances to be his Secretary of Labor – the first woman to hold that position. During her tenure Frances worked to create unemployment insurance, minimum wage and various other programs highlighted by the development of the Social Security System which eventually became law in 1935. The muted colors and illustrations provide the reader a glimpse into this time period in America. *Thanks to Frances Perkins* is a timely book about a woman who cracked the "glass ceiling" and the contributions she made to improve the lives of Americans. The back of the book provides additional information, websites, and resources about Frances Perkins. An extensive Teacher's Guide is available from the publisher. *The Only Woman in the Photo* is another book to pair with this book.



Halloween is fast approaching. So, crawl into bed, get under the covers with your favorite flashlight, and get into the Halloween spirit by reading ***Rowley Jefferson's Awesome Friendly Spooky Stories*** by Jeff Kinney. Rowley is back again and this time he writes and draws 14 spooky stories. Each of his stories involves a Halloween character such as Zombies, demons, skeletons, Frankenstein, werewolves, and vampires. While his short stories include comical humor they also end with a moral or lesson to learn. Although this book is not that scary it is a fun read, especially for beginning chapter book readers as well as independent readers who are fans of Jeff Kinney's books.



Bats are often associated with Halloween décor, stories, movies, etc. To learn more about bats read ***Science Comics: Bats: Learning to Fly*** by Falynn Koch, part of a new *Comic Science* Series. Bats are one of nature's misunderstood nocturnal mammals. The reader follows Little Brown bat who gets lost while hunting for insects. Seeing several bugs surrounding a group of humans on a nighttime hike in the desert, he is injured when one of the humans panics. The park ranger takes the bat to the wild animal hospital for rehabilitation. He is befriended by Old Gray, a gray bat who's severely injured and can't be returned to the wild. Old Gray shows Little Brown around the cage and introduces him to the various types of bats. Little Brown also learns about where they come from, their eating habits, and where they like to

"hang out." Parallel to the story is factual information about bats such as their anatomy, echolocation, where they roost, why they hang upside down, and how they help the environment. Using the graphic novel format readers of all ages can learn factual scientific information in an engaging format. The illustrations are a combination of cartoon and biological artwork with an occasional speech bubble that compliments the written factual information. The back of the book provides further information and reading about bats, a glossary, career and volunteering information, and info on building bat boxes. *Bats: Learning to Fly* is a great educational book for all libraries, classrooms, and science labs.

## October Reminders

**October is National Family History Month and National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month**

**October 3-9: Fire Prevention Week**

**October 5: World Teacher Day**

**October 10: Columbus Day**

**October 11: Indigenous People Day**

**October 14: Illinois Great Apple Crunch Day** – Visit the [Illinois Farm to School](#) for a guide of activities.  
**October 16: National Dictionary Day**  
**October 17-23: Safe Schools Week and National SAVE Day**  
**October 20: National Day of Writing**  
**October 24: United Nations Day**  
**October 23-31: Red Ribbon Week**  
**October 31: Halloween**

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## LITERACY LINKS

By the IRC Educational Media Committee

Take a moment to review some of the Literacy Links provided by the IRC Educational Media Committee to help Illinois educators in today's classrooms.

### Interactive Resources

[CoSketch.com](#)

This online resource has a multi-user online whiteboard designed to give you the ability to quickly visualize and share your ideas as images. Anything you paint will show up for all other users in the room in real time shared with a common web address. There is even a chat option for easy communication between users.

### Video Resources

[SchoolTube](#)

This amazing resource is like YouTube for schools. It has videos organized in channels that include authors reading books aloud, music videos for educational use and many more. You can also create an account and upload videos for sharing with students, parents and the community.

### Web 2.0 Resources

[Trading Card Creator](#)

This digital resource offers free access to a web tool that creates trading cards that can then be downloaded to print or shared digitally. Asking students to create trading cards is a great way to increase engagement and allow students to demonstrate understanding of nearly any topic. Lesson ideas are included for a variety of grade levels.

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## UPCOMING PD EVENTS

By the Illinois Reading Council

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **October 4, 2021: Western Illinois Reading Council** will host the Science of Reading Book Clubs: Uncovering the Logic of English and Choosing and Using Decodable Texts from 4:30 to 5:30 pm at the Galesburg 205 Board Office, 932 Harrison Street, Galesburg, Illinois.
- **October 6, 2021: IRC Webinar** on *When the World Hands you a Curriculum* with Sara K. Ahmed from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **October 12, 2021: MID-State Reading Council** will host The Well-Balanced Teacher Book Study at 4:30 pm at Gill Street Bar & Grill, 3002 Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **October 13, 2021: Illinois Reading Council** will host the IRC Workshop Series on 4 Essential Studies: Beliefs and Practices to Reclaim Student Agency with Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle from 6:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **October 19, 2021: Illinois Reading Council** will host the IRC Workshop Series on Reading for Independence: How Reading Will Save Kids and Tomorrow with Kylene Beers and Robert E.



Probst from 6:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.

- **October 20, 2021: Central Illinois Reading Council** will host the monthly CIRC Book Chats on alternating professional books and literature topics from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom.
- **October 24, 2021: IRC Book Club** will read, reflect on, and respond to *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy* by Gholdy Muhammad and/or *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School* by Carla Shalaby. These seven-week online discussions will present an equity framework that restores excellence in literacy education or a paradigm-shifting look at the typical expectations for children at school. Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive 15 PD clock hours for each book club.
- **October 26, 2021: National Road Reading Council** will host Teaching Strategies for Kids in Trauma at 6:00 pm at the Effingham Public Library, 200 N. 3rd Street, Effingham, Illinois.
- **October 26, 2021: South Eastern Reading Council** will host Things That Go Zoom in the Night at 6:00 pm via Zoom.
- **October 27, 2021: Illinois Reading Council** will host the IRC Workshop Series on What To Do When Kids Just Don't Get It: Prompting for Deeper Understanding During Guided Reading with Jan Richardson from 6:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **October 27, 2021: Suburban Council of the IRA (SCIRA)** will host the Fall Conference on Vocabulary Naturally – Building Word Wizards at Home and School with Camille Blachowicz and Char Cobb from 6:00 to 7:30 pm via Zoom.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

## QUICK LINKS

[Visit the IRC Website](#)

[Full IRC Events Calendar](#)

[Latest on the IRC Conference](#)

[Available IRC Awards and Grants](#)

[Bring IRC PD to your School District](#)

[Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program](#)

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

