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The Illinois Reading Council Journal (IRCJ) is published quarterly and is distributed as a service to all members of the Illinois Reading Council. Membership in the Illinois Reading Council can be obtained through local and special interest reading councils in Illinois. For information, contact the Illinois Reading Council at 203 Landmark Drive, Suite B, Normal, IL 61761. IRC staff may also be reached by telephone at the toll-free number, (888) 454-1341, or at (309) 454-1341. Libraries and educational institutions can subscribe to IRCJ at an annual rate of $40.00; address inquiries to the Executive Director at the IRC office.

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Publication services for the IRCJ are provided by Denise Dooley, Graduate Assistant to Dr. Owens; Sandra K. Larimer, Copy Editor; and Shanee J. Sullivan, Layout/Design.

### About the Cover

The artwork in this issue was created by students who attend Safe Haven School (see covers and pages 58, 70 & 86). Safe Haven School provides a psychologically and physically safe, nurturing, therapeutic environment for students ages 5 to 21 who have severe to profound emotional disturbances, learning disabilities, autism, and/or other health impairments.

Safehavenschools.org

**Front cover artist – Sydney S., Grade 12, “Warrior”:** Growing up in California, I was exposed to many different types of art—music, dance, and performance art—but I was always drawn to mixed media art. My experiences living with chronic illnesses have always inspired my creative process. I have always felt that my feelings were better expressed working with my hands. I have worked at art studios learning and teaching different types of art to people of all ages. I dream of working side by side with people to share and exchange our experiences living with a creative mind.

**Back cover artist – Jarred P., Grade 10, “Randomness”:** I just love all kinds of art (wire, clay and colored pencils).

### MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Reading Council is to provide support and leadership to educators as they promote and teach lifelong literacy.

### VISION

The Illinois Reading Council advocates quality literacy opportunities for all learners and serves as a primary organization that provides educators at all levels access to research, materials, and methodologies to promote and teach lifelong literacy and learning. Support of an active, well-organized system of local and special interest councils and state committees provides a viable network for communication, exchange of information, and grassroots involvement of a diverse membership. The Illinois Reading Council’s publications, special projects, conferences, and workshops stimulate the personal and professional growth of educators.
Bill Teale, co-editor of the Illinois Reading Council Journal from 1998 to 2004, passed away suddenly on February 3, 2018, leaving to cherish his memory his wife Junko Yokota, his children Jeremy and Alyssa, and scores of other family members, colleagues, and friends. Many of you know his name as a recent past president of the International Literacy Association. Others know him from his pivotal work in emergent literacy or from one of his hundreds of books, chapters, articles, or presentations on literacy-related topics. Anyone who had the pleasure of meeting him personally immediately connected with his down to earth personality, warmth, and sense of humor. His contributions to our field are immeasurable. His contributions to the personal lives of those who knew him are also immeasurable. Everyone who knew Bill has a story of how he made a difference, how he touched their life, how he made them laugh, how he went beyond the call of duty, or how he taught them something. Everyone. Here are a few recollections of Illinois people who knew Bill.

Steven Layne, PhD, Professor of Literacy Education, Judson University
Former ILA Board of Directors Member
Author

I was grateful when Roxanne Owens asked me to contribute some thoughts regarding the iconic literacy ministry of my good friend, Bill Teale. For those of you who did not know Bill personally, I want to assure you of this: you would have loved him! I say this with great certainty, you see, because everyone did. And they should have.

My introduction to Bill Teale came, first, in print. During my doctoral studies, specifically the time focused on emergent literacy, I read enough Teale & Sulzby/Sulzby & Teale studies to wallpaper the White House. I remember thinking at that time, “My, this Bill Teale person is rather prolific . . . and brilliant. I noticed, too, that his editorship of the IRCJ continued the long-standing process of strengthening our amazing journal. But—I still hadn’t met him in person.

Joining the International Reading (now Literacy) Association Board of Directors from 2011 to 2014 brought us together at last! We spent loads of time together throughout those years. I watched Bill, and I learned from Bill, and I laughed—oh, my—did I ever laugh with Bill! He was always poised, well-spoken and never . . . never an alarmist. He was reasoned and never failed to choose his words carefully. I saw firsthand that the brilliant mind behind those studies I had read so long ago was always hard at work—doing his best for the entire literacy community.

As our time on the BOD at ILA came to an end, Bill and I met up frequently at conferences. In fact, just last year he phoned my hotel room: “Hey, there’s a festival downtown, Steve—we need to go!” I laughed, grabbed my jacket . . . and away we went. I look back now on nearly three hours spent just bebopp ing around the downtown festival and grabbing a bite to eat with this legendary man who had become my friend, and I am so very grateful . . . for his contributions, for his kindness, and for his heart for children, young adults, and teachers. Lucky me.

If you know anyone who is deserving of massive accolades but never seeks them out, someone who has spent an entire career giving and helping and doing for others, and someone who supports the professional development of teachers all over the world, then maybe it’s okay if you didn’t know Bill Teale personally. You obviously know someone who’s just like him. Lucky you.
The world of literacy lost a great man, and we personally lost a dear friend and colleague, when William H. (Bill) Teale passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, February 3. Over the span of his career, Bill devoted his heart and mind to the field of literacy. Professionally, he was a widely respected researcher and educator whose work had significant impact on educational policy and practice around the world. Among his many honors, he was named University Scholar at the University of Illinois, Fulbright Specialist, Fellow of the National Conference of Research on Language and Literacy, and had been elected to membership in the prestigious Reading Hall of Fame in 2003. He received the President’s Distinguished Achievement Award for Research at the University of Texas at San Antonio and is included in the Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers and Who’s Who in American Education. He served our professional organizations as President of the International Literacy Association (2016-2017) and on the Board of Directors of the Literacy Research Association. He served as editor of key professional journals in the field of language and literacy, and authored hundreds of contributions through articles, chapters, and books. I shared an office wall with Bill for about a decade and had the privilege of Bill—and his wife, Junko—being close friends as well as colleagues.

Years ago, on one of our many travel adventures together, Bill, Junko, my husband, Jim, and I were in New York City. We met my brother and sister-in-law for brunch and, afterwards, Junko said that she couldn't get over how much Bill and my brother, Ralph, resembled each other, a bit in looks and a lot in mannerisms. Maybe that was why I had felt such an instant connection to Bill that lasted over time. Over the past two years, after housing complications from our house fire, Bill and Junko opened their home to Jim and me. We had what I now understand to be a treasured gift of time together. We referred to each other as family . . . if one of us was away, which was often the case, we said part of our family was missing. We knew each other so well. Bill would bake chocolate chip cookies for me, but he knew he had to hide them and surprise me with them, doling them out over time, or I would just eat them all within a day or two. He'd give Jim and Junko one cookie each, but he always gave me two.

Our travels brought us many amazing memories but my favorite occurred on our 10-day tour of Iceland, what has turned out to be our last vacation together, last March. One of our stops was an iconic place for photographing a volcano and a huge multi-layered waterfall that fed into a fjord and then on to the North Sea. Bill, who always acted as Junko's “Sherpa,” had said he would guard Junko's camera backpack given the high winds on the bridge over the falls. But, when he saw her walking down an icy path, he went quickly to her side, as he always did, to make sure she wouldn't fall. Once he felt she was secure, he turned to take a photo of the falls before heading up to the bridge to retrieve her backpack. As he looked through the lens, to his horror, he saw her backpack flying through the air, bouncing down the waterfall, and disappearing into the fjord. Not knowing what he'd seen, I wondered why he was running up and down yelling “I'm sorry,” while also appearing to be looking for a way into the freezing fjord. Next, Junko, seeing her backpack floating in the water, started screaming, “Don't go in the water!” over and over. Knowing Bill so well, she realized that was exactly what he was thinking of doing to rescue her precious equipment. When I finally realized what was going on, I first started thinking that Junko was going to kill him but then, no, that Junko was about to get any camera equipment she had ever wanted as Bill would have done anything to insure Junko's happiness. As luck would have it, the backpack was pulled into an eddy by the one and only rock outcropping—if not for that, it was headed to the sea. Our guide, Páll, was very tall with a long reach, and he successfully retrieved it. Bill spent most of the afternoon in the back of the van, drying out Junko's gear and making sure it remained in working condition, looking quite contrite for a few hours . . . until he didn't, saying he knew all along everything was going to be fine. Bill never looked back, only ahead, and always positive.

The four of us—Bill, Junko, Jim, and Taffy—worked together, traveled together, lived together, and laughed together. His passing leaves such a hole in our lives. I will very much miss my colleague, my travel companion, my self-selected brother, and my friend. But his spirit will be with me forever.
REMEMBERING BILL TEALE

Timothy Shanahan, PhD, Distinguished Emeritus Faculty, University of Illinois at Chicago
Former President, International Reading Association (now ILA)

One summer day in 105 degree heat, Bill and I ducked into the bar of the Menger Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, a place of some historical importance. That saloon is famous because Teddy Roosevelt supposedly rode his horse into it one day and fired a gun off to get everyone’s attention because he was trying to recruit Rough Riders for the war with Spain. In fact, there is even a bullet hole over the bar that the waitress kindly showed us. Bill and I, with a beer under our belts and certain of our CSI knowledge, loudly shared our opinion that old Teddy must have been riding quite a short horse for the bullet hole to have entered the wall on the angle of that hole. You didn't have to be an expert on early literacy to recognize that Texans don’t appreciate having their colorful history doubted; at least that was true of the boisterous group along the bar that day. Bill and I came very close to making our own history by being kicked out of the bar at the Menger Hotel that day.

Emily Brown Hoffman, Assistant Professor, Ball State University
Colleen Whittingham, Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Kristine Schutz, Assistant Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago

Bill was a renowned scholar with significant contributions to the fields of emergent literacy and early literacy instruction; yet, it is Bill’s investment in people, in relationships, and in interactions that are most worthy of our admiration. You see, in everything he did, Bill was a teacher. He was our favorite teacher. And the thing about favorite teachers is that, most often, the lessons that shape their students’ learning stretch far beyond the walls of classrooms. Bill taught and modeled teaching in ways that made impactful differences in each of our lives. By sharing a few of the lessons we’ve learned from Bill, we revisit some of the ways he taught us and countless others not only about literacy, but about the world. As we share some of these lessons, we think you will see your favorite teacher reflected in him, too.

Be Open to New Possibilities.

Bill’s early work on emergent literacy spurred new ways of thinking about how young children continually engage in the process of learning to read and write from their earliest years. The concept represented a significant shift from the dominant belief that children needed to master certain “pre-reading” skills before they were “ready” to learn to read. In Bill’s research and writing, he resisted seeing the world through old lenses; this openness enabled him to see children’s meaning-making, reading, and writing in novel ways. His innovative thinking fundamentally reshaped how we think about the teaching and learning of early literacy.

Bill taught us to be open to new possibilities. As teachers in an ever-evolving world, we need to be open to new ways of engaging in teaching and learning—something Bill was dedicated to throughout his career. Each year brings a unique group of children, with different experiences and strengths, into our worlds. Although talk about “best practice” is common, a key lesson we learned from Bill is to remember that best practices are ones responsive to the children we teach. In each moment of teaching, existing practices transform to new ones as we tailor instruction to respond to the experiences and identities of our learners and teach them how their literacies can amplify their voices from their local communities and our country. We must be open to new possibilities so every year we can discover new and better ways of connecting with and supporting learners.
Listen Better. Speak Less.

In the past couple of weeks, we’ve heard many stories from people who interacted with Bill over the course of his career and life. To a person, he was a genuine and focused listener. He was curious about people’s stories and thinking. This genuine inquiry was evident in his scholarship, teaching, and service to the field. In recent years, Bill often “took stock” of the early literacy research landscape, modeling the importance of listening to insights from the past, synthesizing contributions from the present, and making a plan to address the needs of the future. Bill took a similar approach to listening to people. He asked thoughtful questions, took time to listen to the answers, and reflectively built his own ideas from conversations with others. He always told people how much he had learned from talking with them, listening first and speaking later.

Bill taught us to listen better and speak less. We strive to emulate this practice in our classrooms. So often the urgency and accountability of the context in which we teach sideline authentic opportunities for stopping and listening closely to children’s ideas. We must challenge ourselves to be better listeners. And this requires saying less. While creating space to foreground children’s thinking and stories might feel challenging given the pressure of accountability and evaluation, we need to make it happen. For when we do, our students reveal amazing insights and understandings about texts and their understandings of the world. Their brilliance and sense-making are gifts that we will prioritize.

Walk Softly and Carry a Big Stack of Books.

Bill often said, “Let’s talk about books.” Walking into Bill’s office, we are surrounded by books—on shelves, in boxes, piled on his desk, and on his library stool. We see new books, old books, board books, picture books, graphic novels, “good” books, and “bad” books (for examples, of course). Bill had favorite books to share with colleagues and take to his classes, as well as books yet to be read. He could talk about books in so many different ways—too many to capture here. He was a patron of high-quality, diverse children’s and young adult literature in homes, classrooms, libraries, and communities worldwide, and he never missed an opportunity to share such texts with others.

Bill taught us to walk softly and carry a big stack of books. Books matter. Talking about text matters, and the voices and lives represented in those texts matter. He taught us an unwavering pursuit and commitment to ensure books are the cornerstone of our classrooms and communities. We will fill our shelves (and tables and bags and stools!) with texts that represent our students’ lives and the world outside the classroom walls. We will have deep conversations about literature and the meaning behind and lessons learned from pictures and words. And we will pursue ways to get high-quality, interesting books into the hands of our students, their families, and their communities to bring us all together.

Learn Together, Laugh Together.

Bill served as a champion and advocate for literacy because, as he said, literacy “not only gives us the skills . . . but it also makes us human.” Both learning and laughter were commonplace at any gathering, meeting, or professional development Bill coordinated. Whether passing Bill in the hallway or huddled around his desk solving a problem that had surfaced in our work together, we walked away with both new knowledge and a smile. Bill learned about others’ interests, ideas, and lived experiences. And then he built bridges; connecting people with texts or other people that would not only complement their own views on literacy, teaching, learning, and life, but also push and extend their collective thinking. One of Bill’s more recent ventures was a focus on literacy leadership through collaboration—bringing together principals, literacy coaches, and teachers to talk about the importance of fostering school contexts that support strong literacy environments and instruction.
Bill taught us to learn together and laugh together. After all, we do our best thinking and learning together. Within our own schools, we will create and pursue opportunities for educators with similar and different roles to come together within and surrounding practice to engage in sincere partnerships that center around authentic, joyful teaching and learning. In the same vein, we will create collaborative structures for children in our classrooms, helping students develop 21st-century literacies in respectful consort with each other instead of in isolation. Bill taught us the importance and benefits of learning together, and while we’re at it, have some fun.

Our Favorite Teacher

Bill’s life work left an indelible mark on the fields of early literacy teaching and learning, children’s literature, higher education . . . and on us. He is our favorite teacher for so many reasons. He not only taught us so much about early literacy pedagogy, he taught us to be open, to listen, to create a world around books, and to connect with each other to build something better. These lessons from Bill were threaded through the curriculum that was his life. He lived and breathed these ideas every day, in every interaction. They represent who he was in class, in his office, in schools, on the phone, and out at dinner.

The lessons we learned from Bill will continue to guide us, in and outside the walls of our classrooms. We are committed to teaching for a better world, and through the lessons we have learned from Bill, hope we, too, can someday become someone’s favorite teacher.


Roxanne Farwick Owens, PhD, Editor, Illinois Reading Council Journal
Chair, Teacher Education, DePaul University

What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but is woven into the lives of others.
—Pericles

When I heard the news of Bill’s sudden death, I felt shock, loss, and deep sadness. Bill was my dissertation chairperson over 20 years ago, and I was fortunate to call him my mentor and friend. We had lunch every few weeks and would laugh so hard we’d annoy the patrons at the other tables. I still find it hard to believe that this giant in the literacy field took the time to have lunch with me—but that was Bill. Yes, he traveled the world and interacted with internationally known scholars and award-winning authors, but he also took the time to maintain contact with those (like me) who were definitely not famous. Bill was the consummate mentor to doctoral students, emerging scholars, and anyone who sought his advice. He patiently nurtured the seed of a good idea until it grew into a great idea.

In the musical Wicked, Elphaba sings the lyrics, “So much of me is made of what I learned from you, you’ll be with me, like a handprint on my heart.” I think I speak for all of Bill’s mentees when I say that he will continue to be with us. We will remember his commitment to literacy, his adventurous spirit, his sage advice, and most of all, his wonderful laugh. Thank you, Bill, for being with us then, now, always.
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What is literacy coaching? This seems like a simple question yet there are no simple answers. Many researchers have pointed out that the job descriptions and expectations for literacy coaches vary greatly between and across contexts (see Table 1) and that there is often much confusion and disagreement about how coaches should spend their time (Bean, Swan, & Knaub, 2003; Walpole & Blamey, 2008). It seems that the more educators and researchers try to confine literacy coaching into a clearly defined list of roles and responsibilities, the more its complexities are exposed. Consider the following questions:

- What does it mean for literacy coaching to be successful?
- Does it mean that all of the teachers are implementing a particular strategy or method in the same way?
- Does it mean that teachers examine their practices to explore why they make instructional decisions and how they might change?
- Or does it mean working together to more deeply understand what students know and can do and how to move them forward in their learning or support them in using literacy in authentic ways?
- Is the end goal for all students to meet standards according to a state assessment?
- Is the goal for teachers to support each other in professional learning communities and to reflect deeply on their practice?

Can different schools have different goals? While we do not claim to have simple answers to these complex questions, we believe the promise of literacy coaching, as a school-embedded structure for ongoing professional development, is worth working through the challenges. Our individual experiences as teachers and literacy coaches and our collaborative research have resulted in an understanding of coaching as contextually situated, meaning that there are no universal answers to questions about what coaching is and how it should be implemented. There is no clear and explicit “how to” list for coaching that will render it successful in all contexts. Rather, coaching must be developed in alignment with the culture of a setting and address the needs of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Possible Expectations for Literacy Coaches</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Build relationships with teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide instructional resources for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>workshops/sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan with teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate/Observe instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect with teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program/School Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect and review assessment data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate grade-level meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order, organize, and distribute instructional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatively assess teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan school schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small group literacy intervention with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-on-one intervention with students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with other specialists (special</td>
</tr>
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<td>education, school psychology)</td>
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<td>Substitute teach</td>
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the community as defined by the community. Therefore, we propose that an essential first step toward successful literacy coaching is defining coaching goals and a vision of student learning through shared inquiry.

Since the work of teaching and coaching is influenced by discourses beyond individual professional learning interactions (Heineke, 2013; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013), shared inquiry into the prominent discourses of a school community can enhance communication. Our goal in this conceptual piece is to bridge theory and practice in literacy coaching by exploring some ways that discourses, implicit in our professional contexts, influence coaching interactions and to consider how uncovering these discourses through shared inquiry can lead to productive coaching conversations—conversations that prompt thinking and action toward the development of student-centered instruction. To accomplish our goal, we will explain how we conceive of discourses as voices swirling around in professional spaces that teachers and coaches implicitly invoke as they enact situated identities during coaching interactions. We include an analysis of a coaching vignette, constructed from data collected for a study on literacy coaching (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013), to illustrate how we have come to understand discourses as mediating factors in coaching interactions, and we describe, by reimagining the interaction, how making implicit discourses explicit can lead to more meaningful professional interactions. Finally, we propose practical suggestions for developing a culture of shared inquiry where the important work of examining the implicit voices that influence professional interactions can begin.

Professional Learning and Literacy Coaching

For some time, educational researchers have recognized integrated learning opportunities for educators as a necessary component of effective professional development (Joyce & Showers, 1983; Robb, 2000). Literacy coaching has become a favored model for embedding such professional learning in school contexts (Bean et al., 2015; International Reading Association, 2010) because it occurs within day-to-day interactions in schools, often addresses teachers’ immediate concerns, and supports complex understandings of practice (Collet, 2012; Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). Moreover, it promotes teacher reflection and “knowledge-building partnerships” (Robb, 2000, p. 52), which allow for deeper thinking and professional growth (Burkins & Ritchie, 2007; Joyce & Showers, 1983).

Despite the promise of literacy coaching, recent research highlights a range of issues that may arise within the complexities of practical contexts (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; McLean, Mallozzi, Hu, & Dailey, 2010). Commonly documented issues include lack of time to work with teachers in the classroom (Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole, 2009; Duessen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; Mraz, Algozzine, & Watson, 2008) and unclear roles and expectations for coaches (Bean et al., 2003; Walpole & Blamey, 2008). Researchers have also brought forth issues related to power, positioning, and identities in coaching interactions (Hibbert, Heydon, & Rich, 2008; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Rainville & Jones, 2009); the emotional aspects of coaching (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990; Hunt, 2016); and conflicting policy and reform demands (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen, & Palma, 2004).

Voices that Influence Teaching and Learning

The work that educators do in schools, including the decisions made and the language used to communicate, is influenced by multiple voices from both within and outside of the physical space of the school (McLean et al., 2010). Theoretically, such voices have been recognized as big D discourses (Gee, 1996), “ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking,
believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles” (p. viii). Gee argues that discourses are “products of social histories” (p. viii) and that as members of many discourse communities, we access various, and sometimes conflicting, discourses as we enact our “ever-multiple identities” (p. ix).

We understand that the social identities educators enact are complex as they represent an inextricable blend of discourses or voices—a phenomenon Bakhtin and Holquist (1981) refer to as heteroglossia. In a practical sense, however, we find value in analyzing language to elicit dominant discourses that influence professional interactions between educators, and we argue that fostering an awareness of these often implicit voices can enhance communication between colleagues.

In educational contexts, teachers take up social languages that reflect their interpretation of the situation in which they find themselves (MacPhee, 2013). For example, one teacher’s decision to incorporate more open-ended questions during read-alouds may be influenced in part by the voice of the author of a professional text that was read days or weeks before the teacher incorporated the questioning strategy in the classroom. Another teacher who plans to reflect with the principal on how a recent lesson engaged students in “close reading” is likely influenced by the voice of national standards that has saturated the broader educational community in recent years. Still another teacher, who is focused on completing assessments to group students for guided reading, may be to a large extent drawing on the voice of program mandates of a school or school district. While it may be easy to see in these examples how multiple voices can influence teachers’ work, this phenomenon becomes more complex during professional interactions. When teachers who are engaged in professional dialogue draw on different implicit voices, their interactions can be constrained.

**Communicating from Different Social Languages**

While discourses are always at play, educators often move through days, weeks, and years without recognizing their presence or being aware of the extent to which one or more discourses are present during a given interaction. For instance, suppose the teacher who had recently read a professional text about questioning strategies decided to incorporate open-ended questions into read-aloud conversations. The conversation among students moves to a new level but takes longer than planned, encroaching on the teacher’s scheduled time for guided reading groups. Now, imagine that a literacy coach who is supporting the recently mandated implementation of guided reading enters the room to observe the teacher working with a guided reading group but leaves abruptly upon realizing that the teacher has not started guided reading.

Later, when the teacher and the literacy coach meet to reflect, the teacher, influenced by the discourse of the professional text, enters the conversation excited to share how students demonstrated their understanding of the read-aloud text through an extended conversation. The literacy coach, who is operating from a mandated practices discourse (of which the teacher is in direct violation), only wants to discuss why the teacher was not teaching guided reading at the designated time and how guided reading will support students in becoming more proficient readers. The conversation is cordial; however, both the teacher and the literacy coach leave frustrated, without discussing what was learned about using open-ended questions to guide conversations or how that might impact instruction during guided reading groups. While both participants in the interaction may have shared the goal of supporting readers in developing effective reading strategies, the discourses at play during the reflective conversation got in the way of meaningful dialogue about that shared goal.
With regard to literacy coaching, we believe that too often coaching conversations drift along the surface, focusing on procedures, methods, and programs without delving into the depths to support teachers, coaches, and administrators in reflecting on their beliefs about learning and teaching, and their purposes for instruction (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012b). Participants end up talking at each other rather than developing a shared vision for learning in their schools—both the students’ learning and their own professional learning (Hunt, 2018). Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) refer to this sort of surface-level interaction as “contrived collegiality” in which educators “meet and work to implement the curricula and instructional strategies developed by others” (p. 227) rather than engaging in collaboratively defining a vision for teaching and learning. Contrived collegiality has been further described as “making nice” (Evans, 2001, p. 106) during coaching interactions (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013). This is a phenomenon in which coaches and teachers enter a coaching interaction with individual agendas and, in the interest of appearing to have a collaborative relationship, never actually connect with each other in meaningful ways. In the next section, we examine this phenomenon in a professional conversation between Kim and Heather.

**Exploring Discourses in a Coaching Conversation**

The following vignette describes a brief coaching conversation between a teacher and a coach. The vignette is derived from an interaction between Kim, a 2nd-grade teacher, and Heather, her literacy coach. This interaction was video-recorded as part of a larger study focusing on how teachers and literacy coaches position themselves and each other in relation to discourses within their learning community (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013). Within their school district, prominent discourses included *Discourse of Mandated Practices*, *Coaching as Collaboration*, and *Literacy Coach as Expert*. These discourses were identified through constant comparative analysis of the entire dataset from the larger study, which included semi-structured interviews, weekly participant observations, and video-recorded coaching interactions. This vignette was chosen as a “telling case” (Mitchell, 1984, p. 240) because it includes multiple discourses and illustrates how prominent voices of teaching and learning within the school community influenced learning, teaching, and professional interactions in one suburban elementary school district in the Midwest.

In what follows, we share the vignette and discuss how prominent discourses of teaching and learning influenced the interaction, highlighting how these implicit voices constrained the conversation in ways that diminished opportunities for deeper professional learning. Finally, we argue that recognizing and discussing such influential discourses can open up possibilities for more dialogic conversations and for developing a shared vision for teaching and learning.

**Vignette – Kim and Heather**

Kim, a 2nd-grade teacher with 16 years of experience, and Heather, a literacy coach, were both committed to continually improving their practice, and they highly valued collaboration and inquiry within professional learning. They were close colleagues and friends who often chatted over lunch or after school. Heather considered these impromptu interactions opportunities for coaching conversations as Kim often sought Heather’s advice about the implementation of reading and writing workshop methods and strategies. In one such impromptu interaction, Kim initiated a discussion about her frustrations with the share time of her reading workshop. She was concerned that, day after day, students reported using the same simple reading strategies. She wanted to push her students to share how they were using more complex
strategies that had been introduced in recent mini-lessons.

In response to Kim’s inquiry, Heather suggested that the students would be more likely to share new strategies from the mini-lessons if Kim conferred with them on a regular basis. As such, she shifted the topic of conversation from Kim’s feelings about how share time was going to procedures for documenting reading conferences. In response, Kim agreed that she should spend more time conferring. However, she also told stories about what happens in her classroom to explain why she did not always confer with every student. For example, she explained,

*I love what I’m doing over here at the guided reading table. I know that it’s worthwhile and beneficial, so I get anxious about getting my next group in. I need to get better at giving the guided reading group independent time so that I can go out and confer with students who are reading independently at their desks.*

Later in the conversation, she stated,

*I find myself going to the same kids. I tend to focus on the struggling readers or the ones who are a little off task instead of the higher readers. I need to be more purposeful in my note taking and making sure I’m picking everybody.*

Heather responded to each of Kim’s stories with instructions and examples about how to document conferences. For instance, she suggested that teachers need to use a system in order to be “purposeful and intentional” about conferring. She shared,

*I think it is important to think through how many conferences you are doing. Teachers do that all different ways. Some teachers decide to do a certain number of conferences a day. I’ve seen other teachers do guided reading groups on Monday through Thursday, and then they spend all day Friday conferring.*

She asked Kim, “Do you have a class grid or tracking sheet that you could do?” Kim responded in a timid and apologetic tone, “I do. It just might not get used every day.”

Kim and Heather ended their conversation by making plans to follow up on their discussion. Heather committed to coming into Kim’s classroom several times over the next few weeks to confer with students and to observe Kim’s share time. Kim committed to documenting her conferences more consistently and meeting with Heather to discuss her documented observations of students’ application of reading strategies. Several months later, they had not implemented these plans or returned to the conversation about documenting conferences and improving share time.

**Analysis – Discourses at Play**

We noticed several influential voices that came together in interesting ways within Kim and Heather’s interaction and influenced what each of them contributed to the conversation. For instance, it seems that a *Discourse of Mandated Practices* constrained the interaction, resulting in missed opportunities for dialogue and reflection. Although they were both committed to workshop practices and had the same goal of improving students’ use of reading strategies, they drew on different sources of knowledge for making instructional decisions. They both drew on knowledge of particular workshop structures, such as documenting reading conferences and conducting share time, but Kim also contributed her practical knowledge of her classroom, schedule, and students. She attempted to work through *why* her students were not applying concepts from her mini-lessons, and she was thinking about how she might change her instruction to meet the specific needs of her students within her unique classroom schedule.

Heather focused on mandated practices or the “right” way to organize conferences within a reading workshop. Heather suggested more universal practices, such as the tracking sheet, as a solution for the problem even though Kim
indicated that she already had one and it was not helping her. It is often beneficial to focus on particular practices during literacy coaching interactions as Heather did (Heineke, 2013), but it is also important to focus on why and how those practices are relevant to local contexts and the mission and vision of the school (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990; Matusov, 2011). Given Heather’s experience and expertise, it is likely that her suggestion was based in an understanding of why the practice of documenting conferences is good for students, and it might have been a good instructional decision for this circumstance. However, she did not share her thinking about the goals and intent of the strategy, in part because coaches in their district were expected to ensure fidelity in the implementation of workshop practices.

Two other discourses we noticed in the conversation were Coaching as Collaboration and Literacy Coach as Expert. Kim and Heather both wanted to be collaborative professionals. The conversation had a friendly, collaborative tone, and they both smiled and nodded frequently as they talked with each other. Heather presented her ideas as suggestions and used small conversational moves such as beginning her recommendations with “I think,” which communicated a collaborative spirit. Similarly, Kim replied to each of Heather’s suggestions with “Yeah” and “Right,” positioning herself as compliant with mandated best practices and accepting of Heather’s explanations. Such collaborative moves are important for maintaining collegial dialogue. However, it seems that they were “making nice” (Evans, 2001, p. 106), engaging in collaborative conversational moves while holding on to their individual ideas and beliefs about how best to move forward. By the end of their interaction, they seemed to reach consensus about next steps, but they did not ultimately follow through on those goals.

Although Heather wanted to be seen as a collaborative equal, she also took on an expert tone, which positioned Kim as less expert. For example, when Heather instructed Kim about how to be more “purposeful and intentional,” she unintentionally cast Kim in a negative light, implying that her instructional decisions lacked purpose and intention. In response, Kim explained her instructional decisions and talked about how she could do better. Within an expert discourse, Heather knew the “right” way to do reading workshop, and Kim needed to answer to the coach. While coaches and other literacy leaders have valuable expertise to share (Gibson, 2006; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011), it is also important to consider the wide range of expertise that teachers bring to professional learning conversations.

Despite best intentions for collaboration and inquiry, Heather and Kim focused on the “right way” to do reading workshop and did not follow up on the goals they set. It is important to note that we are not arguing that Heather and Kim’s interaction was inappropriate or bad. Rather, we argue that the prominent voices within the district concerning teaching and learning influenced their in-the-moment decisions about how to respond to each other. Several researchers have highlighted how discourses such as the Literacy Coach as Expert (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011; Hibbert et al., 2008; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; MacPhee & Jewett, 2017) often influence interactions between coaches and teachers. As Crafton and Kaiser (2011) explained, “In working with teachers, it matters if an outside expert is called a ‘coach’ rather than a ‘colleague’ or ‘learning partner’” (p. 108).

Reimagining the Interaction Between Kim and Heather

Conceptualizing literacy coaching as examining discourses within a culture of shared inquiry allows educators to create professional spaces in which issues of power and positioning that often get in the way of meaningful professional interactions (Hunt, 2018; Rainville & Jones,
CREATING A CULTURE OF SHARED INQUIRY FOR LITERACY COACHING

2008) can become part of the coaching interaction. Suppose Kim and Heather had come to their interaction from a space of shared knowledge about learning, teaching, and coaching that developed during ongoing professional development meetings where faculty regularly explored discourses surrounding learning and teaching that guide their daily work. Consider how the interaction might have been different if the Discourse of Mandated Practices had been openly acknowledged in the learning community. Might Heather have been more able to “hear” Kim’s concern about her students’ responses during strategy share? Might Kim have connected her learning goal for students with the shared community goal of exploring the practice of conferring, potentially recognizing it as a practice that could be used to scaffold students’ participation in strategy share? Maybe the focus could have stayed on student learning goals and supportive instructional strategies instead of shifting to the “right” way to document reading conferences. Imagine how shared knowledge of the voices guiding the interaction might have paved the way to ongoing collaboration and deeper learning for both Kim and Heather. Consider the following interaction:

Kim: I’ve noticed that during my strategy share time after independent reading, students are continuing to name simple reading strategies instead of discussing the more complex strategies we’ve been practicing during mini-lessons. Do you have any thoughts about how I might stretch my students into more in-depth discussions of reading strategies during share time?

Heather: As you know, we have a school-wide focus on conferring right now. It may be that you can support individual students in developing language to articulate the complex strategies you observe them using when you confer with them. Then you can invite them to try out that language during strategy share time. Do you mind talking a bit about your individual conferences?

Kim: Sure. Let me grab my notes.

Here, Heather openly acknowledges the Discourse of Mandated Practices by recognizing that there is a schoolwide focus on conferring. She follows up with an explanation of how Kim might use reading conferences to reach her goal of supporting students with accessing and articulating their complex reading strategies during strategy share. While this reimagined interaction does not seem much different from the actual interaction, Heather’s recognition of the schoolwide focus, and her explicit explanation about how conferring might be used to address Kim’s concern, allows Kim and Heather to negotiate meaning without shifting away from their professional goals and shared vision for student learning. Additionally, acknowledging the Discourse of Mandated Practices opens the dialogue for Kim to respond without feeling like a novice, noncompliant teacher.

As the interaction continues, imagine that Heather positions herself as a learner when Kim acknowledges that her conference notes, as written, do not support her instructional goal. In this exchange, the discourse of Literacy Coach as Expert could be disrupted as Heather enacts her identity as a reflective practitioner—a professional goal established among faculty through shared inquiry:

Kim: Looking at my notes, I notice that they mostly include the title of the text each student is reading, the level of the text, and a comment about the reader’s fluency. I guess that’s what we’ve focused on in our most recent PD, but it’s not enough to support my students’ talk about their strategic processing. How can I shift the focus of my conferences to better support my students in thinking metacognitively about their reading?

Heather: That’s an interesting observation, Kim. I agree that you’ll have to dig deeper
during your one-on-one time with students. Maybe you could focus on an area of the text where the student seems to solve a problem and pose questions like “What did you do here?,” “Can you be more specific?,” or “How did that help you?”

Kim: These are great questions, Heather. Give me a second to write them down. I’d like to have them with me during the rest of my conferences this week.

Heather: (waits for Kim to finish writing) For students who struggle, you could tell them what you noticed them do to solve the problem . . . as sort of a scaffold as they learn to talk in more depth about their reading.

Kim: This is great, Heather! I’m going to try this out for the next few days. Do you think you can come back on Friday so we can talk about how it’s going?

Heather: Sure. And in the meantime, I’m going to rethink our next professional development on conferring. You’ve helped me see that maybe it’s not meeting everyone’s needs. See you Friday!

In this reimagined interaction, Kim recognizes that the conference notes she has taken are not helpful. They do not provide what she needs to support her students’ metacognitive thinking about their reading. Heather takes this in as she moves forward to support Kim with her goal by agreeing and offering a focus for her conferences and some guiding questions. Kim is quite satisfied that she can move forward with her goal and improve her one-on-one conferences with students. The interaction ends with Heather acknowledging that the schoolwide professional development on conferring may not be meeting everyone’s needs. Both participants leave the interaction with new ways of thinking and new actions to take toward improving instruction and professional communication in the school.

Developing a Culture of Shared Inquiry

Research on school culture and professional learning communities suggests that educational spaces in which professionals work together to create a positive climate where educators can collaborate, inquire, and reflect on learning and teaching is connected to positive learning outcomes for both teachers and students (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). The work of establishing a culture of shared inquiry in which powerful literacy coaching interactions can occur embodies such characteristics and can be accomplished in settings where educators perceive learning and teaching as socially constructed processes (Vygotsky, 1978) as opposed to sets of discrete behaviors to be acquired and implemented correctly. When learning and teaching are perceived as the latter, there is little space for inquiry and, therefore, efforts to establish a culture of shared inquiry are likely to fail.

With this in mind, beginning the work of creating a culture of shared inquiry through which educators can explore the discourses that influence school and classroom literacy practices might begin with open conversations about community members’ perceptions of learning and teaching (see Figure 1). Such conversations can be initiated with a review of displays on the school walls and/or an examination of curriculum and assessment programs used in the school. Each of these activities might be framed with questions such as “What beliefs about learning and teaching are reflected in the materials/displays in our space?,” “What messages do these materials/displays send to students, families, and educators?,” and “What do we believe about learning and teaching?” An inquiry like this one might result in a list of shared beliefs that can serve as a tool to support decision making in a school.

Following the development of shared beliefs about learning and teaching, it is important to recognize the knowledge and expertise that exists among educators in a school. Finding ways to value the knowledge and expertise that all participants bring to professional learning interactions
is an important step in developing a culture of shared inquiry. As members of a community recognize, and are recognized for, the strengths they bring to the community, relationships will grow, creating solid ground for deeper inquiry into literacy practices and discourses.

Additionally, by making the collective knowledge and expertise in a school community public, collaborative coaching can occur in powerful ways with or without a designated “coach” position (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012a), thereby promoting a culture of distributed leadership in which “leadership is a fluid practice whereby teachers and administrators engage in leading and following, depending on the situation” (Bradley-Levine, 2011, p. 248). Structures for distributed leadership are gaining attention as more and more researchers find that issues of power and positioning can exist when teachers are placed in an authoritative hierarchy in which one person’s knowledge and expertise is valued more than the other’s (Bradley-Levine, 2011; Hatch, White, & Fiagenbaum, 2005).

Because the development of knowledge and expertise is a continuous process, to sustain a culture of shared inquiry and distributed leadership, it is important to develop structures and devote time for ongoing recognition of educators’ growing knowledge and expertise. This can be accomplished in a school community by

- identifying, promoting, and supporting a variety of professional development opportunities that match the shared beliefs of the community.
- taking time during the school day to share new ways of thinking that result from professional learning.
- observing and discussing teaching practices as they relate to new learning.

Making Discourses Explicit Within a Culture of Shared Inquiry

Recognizing and examining discourses to support productive coaching interactions is complex work which, we argue, can be accomplished most effectively in a culture of shared inquiry. It requires educators to do more than “make nice” (Evans, 2001, p. 106) during coaching interactions. It requires us to step outside of our day-to-day activities to ask “What are the histories, beliefs, and/or mandates guiding this space?,” “What are our goals for this time?,” and “How can we set aside/draw on/create new discourses that will support us in meeting our goals?”

We named several specific discourses in our analysis of the interaction between Kim and Heather. These are simply our names for the guiding voices we noticed in an analysis of the participants’ language, and they may be recognized by others as something else. You may also notice different discourses based on your own experiences within your context. Furthermore, prominent discourses may influence your work in different ways than they did for Kim and Heather. The key is to identify the particular voices that circulate within your own professional learning setting to bring tacit discursive conflicts to the surface to be analyzed and acted upon in ways that can make future interactions more consistent with a shared vision for teaching and learning.
Research suggests that implicit discourses are present, and to some degree, influence literacy coaching interactions (Hunt, 2018). Therefore, exposing such discourses can help teaching partners, small groups of teachers, or entire school communities to develop and stay on a path toward a shared vision and to engage regularly in productive conversations about learning and teaching despite the many guiding voices that influence teaching and learning in today’s educational climate.

**Conclusion**

Creating a culture of shared inquiry in which a community of educators negotiates shared beliefs about teaching and learning and values one another’s knowledge and expertise makes the work of analyzing discourses possible. When educators are guided by shared understandings, disruptive discourses are easier to identify and act on, leading to more productive coaching interactions.

Recognizing and analyzing discourses can happen before, during, or after professional interactions. It can happen with whole communities or between close colleagues. Making this process part of a school culture will lead to more meaningful interactions. Meaningful interactions in which educators talk to instead of at each other are a crucial part of productive coaching. Such interactions promote professional learning opportunities that address concerns that matter to teachers as opposed to top-down initiatives and may support the development of complex understandings over time (Collet, 2012; Crafton & Kaiser, 2011).

**References**


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Text-to-Web: Adding Digital Connections into the Mix

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Editor's Note

As we prepared the Summer IRCJ issue with this manuscript as one of the featured articles, accusations regarding Sherman Alexie’s behaviors toward women came to light. The authors and I realized that teachers are increasingly finding themselves in a position of using books in the classroom by authors whose personal lives may be in the news for various reasons, not all of them particularly admirable. Rather than revising the article to use another novel, the authors and I decided to publish the original article with an additional “Resources for Tackling Tough Issues in Classrooms” sidebar (p. 25) and an “Epilogue” (p. 31).

–Roxanne F. Owens, PhD

Introduction

Like Gutenberg’s printing press, the Digital Age has revolutionized the world. Hallmarked by Web 2.0 tools designed for smartphones and tablets (Boulos, Maramba, & Wheeler, 2006; Ioannou, Brown, & Artino, 2015; Sigalov & Nachmias, 2017), the methods used to locate information, collaborate with colleagues, and spread ideas have changed in unprecedented ways. In essence, Web 2.0 technologies have redefined communication. Text messages, e-mails, websites, and social media posts have all but made letter writing, reading newspapers, and sending faxes obsolete. Emoticons, hashtags, and fonts (e.g., boldface, italics, all capital letters, and colored text) have become new forms of nonverbal communication for Post-Millennials, or the iGeneration, who are now progressing through school (Kuhagen, 2013; Turner, 2015).

For teachers, the challenge becomes identifying and implementing methods that integrate these new communicative practices into their instruction. The web literacy research has focused on the ability to read, write, and actively participate using technological resources (Buckingham, 2015; Lawrence, 2017) and Web-based applications and interactive software products (Bauer & Mohseni Ahooei, 2018; Lysenko & Abrami, 2014). Within the current political context, research is emerging on how to support user understanding of fact-based sources and the evaluation of digital resources for accuracy (Bråten & Braasch, 2017; Eagleton & Dobler, 2012; McVerry, Belshaw, & Ian O’Byrne, 2015; Pilgrim & Bledsoe, 2015). With schools and districts purchasing devices for their students and teachers to use in the classroom, there is little chance that education is going to devolve and return to being a paper-based field. In response, the literacy community can support this digitalization of education by providing frameworks that integrate technology into the reading and writing processes. Similar to how Mishra and Koehler (2006, 2009) advanced Shulman’s (1986, 1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework with technology that resulted in the now widely adopted Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, the time is ripe for the literacy community to follow suit and demonstrate how technology advances its previously established structures.

As such, this article’s purpose is to introduce a different kind of connection that readers can make with a text as an extension to Rosenblatt’s (1978, 1985) seminal transaction theory of reading. To frame this discussion, the researchers will
first provide an overview of Rosenblatt’s theory and its three established types of text connections. Next, they will introduce text-to-web as a fourth type of connection that students can make while reading, followed by a vignette that offers ideas for how teachers can blend this new type of connection into their instruction. The article concludes with ideas for future research in this area.

**Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory of Reading**

Rosenblatt’s (1968) transactional theory of reading describes how a reader and a text come together to make new meaning. This theory positions reading as an active process during which readers bring personal knowledge and experience to the page as they make meaning from text. Readers actively manipulate text meaning by bringing their own experiences into the reading process, which Rosenblatt described as a “continuously reciprocal influence of reader and text in the making of meaning” (p. xvi). This new-to-known transaction connects texts with the reader’s existing knowledge and previous experiences to create meaning, and this continuous interplay between what is new and known to the reader results in increased metacognition and deeper comprehension (Cai, 2008; Connell, 2000).

Schema theory builds on constructs from psychology and cognitive sciences and blends them together with Rosenblatt’s work (Behrman, 2006; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). In psychology and the cognitive sciences, *schema* refers to the patterns that are created to categorize thoughts in the human brain (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Mandler, 2014). In reading comprehension, schema theory describes the taking in of new information and combining it with the reader’s background knowledge and experiences (Vacca et al., 2014; Xie, 2005). This connection between new material and the reader’s schema is a crucial aspect of the comprehension process (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Dole, Nokes, & Drits, 2009). When a reader accesses prior knowledge, that information travels through the brain’s pathways and into short-term memory storage. The more attention paid to an event results in the memory trace being solidified, allowing for stronger pathways to form. Readers naturally attend more carefully to familiar information, comparing the new information with existing knowledge and chunking it together. The chunked information allows for easier storage in the reader’s long-term memory and, in turn, easier retrieval (Pardo, 2004; Schallert & Martin, 2003).

Practitioners have adopted strategies that tap into cognitive processing as a way to teach the construction of meaning and increase comprehension in their classrooms (Goudvis & Harvey, 2000; Tovani, 2000). Successful readers use a variety of cognitive strategies to support text comprehension such as activating background knowledge, asking questions, drawing inferences, determining the importance of information, constructing mental images, rereading difficult passages, making predictions, and summarizing (Tovani, 2000), and these strategies have implications for how readers may connect with a text. In all, researchers (Duke & Pearson, 2008; Ellers & Pinkley, 2006; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Guthrie et al., 2004; Pressley, 2002; Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2005) have identified three main ways readers connect with texts: (1) Text-to-Self, (2) Text-to-Text, and (3) Text-to-World.

**Connections and Comprehension**

**Text-to-Self**

Text-to-self connections are personal connections that readers make between their background knowledge and the text. Making personal connections helps readers gain deeper understanding of the material as they can connect the words on the page with their schema on the topic (Block, Gambrell, & Pressley, 2003; Brown, Palincsar, & Armbruster, 1984).
Personal connections allow readers to create a visual image of what is happening in the text based on their personal experience. Reading without making personal connections makes it more difficult for the brain to compare the information to existing knowledge and transfer it into long-term memory. When readers make personal connections, they recall other information that links to the new information on the page. Personal connections help readers engage with texts in ways that support increased comprehension by entering the information into their long-term memory.

Readers often come across new information as they engage with texts. Chances are that if readers are engaging in a text for the first time, they need a variety of strategies to support their understanding (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Duke & Pearson, 2008). For example, in the Pacific Northwest, Sherman Alexie’s (2007) *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is commonly read in freshman English (Portland Public Schools, 2009). Readers who have never spent time on a reservation or lived with extended family may have a difficult time visualizing the events in the text and connecting to the important details of Junior’s lived experience. However, freshmen may have experienced times when they did not fit in with a group, been bullied, or have felt marginalized in some way. Having even a small connection on a personal level with Junior’s feelings of alienation allows readers to connect with the protagonist in a deeper way and make sense of the novel.

**Text-to-Text**

Text-to-text connections support readers in identifying themes, settings, and experiences that cut across texts. In fact, these connections have been recognized by the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA Center & CCSSO], 2010). In the English-Literacy standards, making connections between texts is an important component of understanding an author’s purpose. In addition, the standards also require text connections between different types of documents and texts beyond the traditional English classroom. In a Social Studies context, students are expected to integrate information from diverse sources to demonstrate understanding of texts and events. If students cannot successfully create connections between texts, they will have a difficult time meeting these standards.

In classrooms, students are asked to notice common organizational patterns between texts, to connect information gained from an article with a textbook, and to compare authors’ purposes between two different selections. Additionally, there is an assortment of other ways students can integrate the information they gain from a variety of texts. When readers come across new information, they go through the comparison process in their thinking, adding additional layers to their understanding.

Returning to *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* example, freshman year of high school may not be the first experience students have had grappling with the themes explored in the novel. Students may have read other texts that share those themes in elementary and middle school. For example, *Hoot* (Hiaasen, 2002) is a regular “America’s Battle of the Books” title since 2005, making it a highly read text with children in every state reading the novel and competing to demonstrate comprehension (America's Battle of the Books, 2014). The text focuses on themes of bullying and school strife as the protagonist Roy struggles to fit into a new school. Passive readers tend to read texts in isolation, but active readers will connect the text they are reading to other materials they have read. Students who have read *Hoot* and connected with Roy’s struggles in his new community may make a connection to Junior’s struggles as he changes schools. As readers come into classrooms with
a variety of reading experiences, teachers would be wise to talk with them about the novels and texts they have read, which may make comprehension of new texts easier by accessing previous textual experiences.

**Text-to-World**

Text-to-world connections are made when readers bring their lived experiences and understandings of the world into a text as they read. All experiences, whether they come from firsthand interactions or from watching television, make up our interpretations of the world and how it works. Effective readers use their knowledge of the world to successfully navigate the interrelatedness of information, using connections to expand their thinking. All students have experiences, opinions, and thoughts on multiple subjects that they can access to make meaning. In classrooms, educators structure learning opportunities that build connections between their students’ lives and the course content to create hooks that new concepts and textual information can link. In the larger educational frame, bringing individual learners’ understanding of the world into the classroom context is an aspect of culturally responsive pedagogy that increases both engagement and achievement (Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000). In the context of reading, prior knowledge is activated to expand the understanding of a topic.

Reading *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* may be the first time some students have read a story with a Native American protagonist. Throughout the novel, Junior navigates systems and structures that have historically subjugated Native American communities, both on his reservation and in the wealthier community of Reardan, where he chooses to attend school. The tensions between the worlds where Junior lives and where he attends school may be foreign to many adolescent readers, and many students may be unfamiliar with the history of tribal lands, the creation of reservations, and the scarcity of resources in tribal communities. However, in 2016 and 2017, there was press coverage of the protests by the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies over the Keystone XL Pipeline in North Dakota. Making connections between articles on current issues that demonstrate conflict between tribal communities and the surrounding areas brings additional context and deepened understanding of the simmering tensions in Junior’s worlds, which may connect readers to the larger community.

**Connections in a Digital Age**

As technologies change, new literacies emerge that are determined by societal forces (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2017). This demand for new literacies happens outside of the school walls, with students engaging with technology as a regular part of their daily lives (Kinzer & Leu, 2016). When considering how adolescents actively connect with the world, educators need to understand the ways in which teens are already being engaged. Not only did *Time for Kids* (www.timeforkids.com), *NewsELA* (https://newsela.com), and other online educational sites provide resources about the Keystone XL Pipeline controversy, but there were also numerous Instagram pages, Twitter handles, and Tumblr logs (among several other social media platforms) that provided information about the protests and the pipeline. At the click of a link, students could experience real-time events and reactions to those events in ways never experienced in classrooms before. In addition, each time students follow a link, the content they encounter in these spaces has been changed by the interactions with others. Whereas one moment the Instagram page might show peaceful protesters, hours later that same feed could show protesters being sprayed with fire hoses, and then the reactions and comments from a multitude of perspectives. The way users of these online communities interact with information is a unique Web-based experience that represents a different type of text connection.
Text-to-Web

Text-to-web connections build on the interactive transactions readers have with texts (Heller, 2006; Ness, 2011) by adding a digital component. Whereas the other connections are based on experiences in the tangible, physical world, text-to-web connections are anchored in the interactive experiences that can only take place online. Just as readers can connect with various types of physical texts (e.g., short stories, images, videos, and articles), their digital experiences cannot be confined to only one or a few select types of texts. Rather, text-to-web connections lend themselves to the ways readers interact with online versions of traditional texts and also texts that only exist digitally (e.g., websites, social media, and real-time maps). The difference between the more traditional text connections and text-to-web connections is it extends transaction to interaction. In this context, interaction means that readers transact with a text by contributing to the community-based understanding of it. Depending on the technology, these interactions may look different, but common characteristics include the following:

- Commenting on social media platforms about popular, trending topics
- Clicking a “thumbs up” button to indicate agreement with a post
- Providing a ranking about a product as an expression of their opinion about it

These experiences are taking place frequently online, and they have changed the way digital texts are being read.

Websites are the Internet’s hallmark. When the first website was launched by Tim Berners-Lee (1990), it not only introduced a new platform but also a new type of text. Although it was still a static text that readers could not modify, it previewed the way websites would change how digital texts would be read. Unlike printed texts that are typically read from beginning to end, websites often include links that allow readers to navigate to other websites, access videos that add a multimedia element, and communicate with an online community of readers. Each of these elements represent a way that readers can interact with a website’s text, which is unique and does not exist in a paper-based text. As Handsfield, Dean, and Cielocha (2009) explain, those attributes are how readers “actively construct meaning [when interacting with a website] rather than passively receive the words or meaning on the screen” (p. 40). Since Handsfield et al. published their work, Web 2.0 tools and online communities have grown significantly, and the construction of meaning from digital texts can be further developed.

Action Steps

Here are steps classroom teachers can use to apply text-to-web ideas into classroom practice:

1. Get to know your adolescent students and the technology they access and use on a daily basis.
2. Explore the sites and tools yourself to deepen understanding of what is available, potential online hazards, and ways the tools can be accessed in tandem with content.
3. Choose materials (texts, units of study, etc.) that adolescents find interesting and relevant and that connect to the larger world.
4. Provide time for students to explore the topic using tools from their everyday experiences. Depending on your students’ independence with technology, provide a menu of tools and sites for them to use.
5. Give students an organizer to use to manage the connected information they find online.
6. Have students use a class website to share ideas, get feedback, and interact with their classmates.
7. Offer prompts that promote students discussing their online behavior to build your sense of familiarity with the technologies they are already using.
When readers interact with websites, they are not just constructing meaning by the information presented to them as lettered text, videos, images, and links to other websites. They are building understanding through the exchange of ideas and perspectives centered on a digital text. This exchange allows readers to access multiple viewpoints related to the text, which informs their understanding of it, and also to share their ideas related to it. In this way, readers are not just transacting with the text in isolation; rather, they are interacting with it by engaging a community about the text. Readers gain knowledge from these interactions, and the following vignette will highlight ways that teachers can integrate those exchanges into their instruction.

A Vignette of Ms. Bell: Text-to-Web in the Classroom

In just the last five years, Ms. Bell has noticed a distinct shift in her students that centers on their relationship and use of technology. From her perspective as a middle school English teacher, Ms. Bell has anecdotally noticed how her students changed their view of technology from being a form of entertainment into an extension of their selfhood, and she saw the latter as being lived experiences. With a goal of deepening her students' engagement with text in the upcoming unit, Ms. Bell saw technology as an opportunity to improve her instruction. Instead of having students mainly use technology to access information or complete assignments, she wanted to increase their awareness of what they were doing online and how that could improve their learning. With these goals, Ms. Bell began planning how she was going to facilitate the reading of Alexie’s (2007) novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, in the next unit.

Similar to previous years when she taught the novel, Ms. Bell wanted a pre-reading activity that activated her students’ schema about experiences they had in common with the novel’s protagonist, Junior. In past years, Ms. Bell used examples like making purchases at the grocery store, remembering scenes from other texts they read, and recalling childhood memories. This year, however, she wanted to capitalize on the online activities her students were having so they could connect authentically with the text.

Based on a survey her students completed earlier in the school year and then by talking with them and observing their behavior, Ms. Bell knew several of her students avidly were using social media websites, like Instagram and Facebook, and they were invested in carefully crafting their online identities. She also knew they read reviews and articles about almost everything—restaurants, clothes, movies, songs, colleges, sports teams, politicians, and products—and they were comfortable making online purchases using gift cards for iTunes, GooglePlay, and GameStop.

As she planned, Ms. Bell was aware that each of those actions represented a specific experience that was unique of the previous ways she had students connect with the novel, and she knew that those online experiences are rich in reading, writing, and digital literacy. Ms. Bell realized that the online experiences her students were having represented a part of their life and identity. With that in mind, Ms. Bell decided she was going to be purposeful in having students relate the experiences that Junior had in the novel to her students’ experiences online.

While reviewing old lesson plans and notes, Ms. Bell remembered that drawing cartoons is essential to Junior. Quickly, Ms. Bell found the quote in the novel’s first chapter when Junior explains why he draws cartoons: “I draw because I want to talk to the world. And I want the world to pay attention to me” (Alexie, 2007, p. 6). As she read, Ms. Bell brainstormed ways her students were engaging in conversation with the world. Whereas Junior talks to the world through pictures, Ms. Bell thought of her students posting their experiences, opinions, and ideas on social media as a form of talking to the world. As she thought more, Ms. Bell recalled a small group of her students who
actively wrote, read, and shared their own pieces of fan fiction. (Fan Fiction is a genre where fans of a book, movie, or television series write additional chapters, scenes, or episodes that continue the creator’s narrative. These works typically use the same characters, settings, and themes from the original works, and there are website communities devoted to writing, sharing, and reviewing works of fan fiction.) Ms. Bell wondered if her students’ use of social media and fan fiction websites represented opportunities for them to connect with Junior. To be intentional in her students making this connection, Ms. Bell wrote a journal prompt that students would respond to as a pre-reading activity to be completed the day they read Chapter One. Her prompt read,

In 90-110 words, respond to one of the following:

1. How do you talk to the world?
2. What are some ways you communicate or hope to communicate with a larger audience?
3. What do you create that you think many people could celebrate?

Ms. Bell saw these prompts as being relevant to her students because they could potentially respond to them using their online activities. When they posted on social media or wrote a piece of fan fiction, they were outwardly communicating with the world. Plus, there was always a chance their post or writing would go viral, Ms. Bell thought, so it has the potential to reach a large audience. If that does in fact happen, she continued, that would be a way of celebrating the work. With that prompt in place, Ms. Bell then looked for another opportunity to directly use technology to deepen student engagement with the text.

In the novel, a conflict between Junior and his best friend, Rowdy, develops over Junior’s choice to transfer schools. As the tension continues to mount, the two characters exchange messages online. Junior explains the scenario:

Today at school, I was really missing Rowdy, so I walked over to the computer lab, took a digital photo of my smiling face, and emailed it to him. A few minutes later, he emailed me a digital photo of his bare ass. I don’t know when he snapped that pic. (Alexie, 2007, p. 130)

Ms. Bell identified this scene as a key moment in the rising actions that she wanted to highlight, and she felt it was an ideal opportunity to purposefully integrate text-to-web connections because the scene revolves around the two characters using e-mail to communicate. Furthermore, it is an important scene in the novel because of the emotions embedded in it, which Ms. Bell hoped her students would be able to articulate.

To create the activity, Ms. Bell planned to use the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Lyman, 1981) with guided prompts aligned to the “In Your Head” quadrant of the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) framework (Raphael & Au, 2005). TPS is a cooperative learning strategy in which students first develop a response to a prompt individually before partnering with a classmate to share and refine both their answers. The TPS concludes with a whole-class discussion or activities in which each pair of students offers their ideas. QAR is a framework comprised of two categories, and each category includes two question types. The first category is “In the Book,” and its question types are Right There and Think & Search. A Right There question can be answered with a specific detail, fact, word, or phrase found directly in one part of the text. A Think & Search question is answered with multiple details, facts, words, or phrases scattered throughout the text. The second category is “In My Head,” and its question types include Author & You and On My Own. An Author & You question requires readers to combine their background knowledge about the topic with the information from the text to respond; whereas, On My Own questions require readers to state their own opinions and ideas in
response. In her activity, Ms. Bell decided that her students were going to combine their own experiences with communicating online with the novel’s plot to complete a TPS.

To structure the activity, Ms. Bell displayed four questions as part of an organizer on the projector screen for her class (see Table 1). She then instructed her students where to access the organizer on their class website so they would have a copy of it to complete.

Next, Ms. Bell instructed her students to respond to the organizer by finding a quote from the novel and recording it under the “Text-Based Evidence” column. Then, in the “Your Experience” column, students were to write a short example of something that happened to them that connected back to the prompt. Ms. Bell saw this activity as another way students would be able to bring their experiences that they have had online and with technology into the reading of the novel. With these two activities in place, Ms. Bell decided that she was ready to capitalize on her students’ digital experiences, but she also began brainstorming ideas for extension projects for after the reading of the novel.

With the vastness of the Web and an understanding of her students’ interests, Ms. Bell could use those components to extend her students’ understanding of the novel. For example, with 567 American Indian tribes formally recognized by the U.S. government and a wealth

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Text-Based Evidence</th>
<th>Your Experience</th>
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<td>How do you think Junior felt when he e-mailed Rowdy after not speaking to him for some time? Have you ever tried to rekindle a relationship with someone you have not spoken to for over a month using online tools?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you think Rowdy felt when he received Junior’s e-mail? Have you ever received a message from someone who wanted to rekindle a relationship?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Based on your understanding of Junior and Rowdy’s relationship, what do you think Junior was trying to say without words by sending Rowdy that picture?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on your understanding of Junior and Rowdy’s relationship, what do you think Rowdy was trying to say without words by sending Junior that picture?</td>
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of information about reservation life easily accessible online, Ms. Bell’s students could use the Web to understand the tensions in Junior’s life like never before. Just following the #spokaneindianreservation Instagram feed or accessing the Reclaim Native American Tumblr blog would provide a wealth of information students could incorporate into presentations, research projects, and debates. The interaction students would have among themselves and their fellow readers in these communities were the experiences Ms. Bell wanted her students to learn from as she brainstormed possibilities for extension activities. In addition, Ms. Bell wanted these online interactions—these text-to-web connections—to reflect the responsiveness of idea-sharing in an online world. Posting to one of the online sources that students found would be one requirement of the project work. It was important to Ms. Bell that her students position themselves as participants in the conversation by asking questions and sharing connections. Students could then check back into the online community to learn from active participants and other cultural informants. With these fresh ideas in mind, Ms. Bell began scanning the essay prompt she used previously when teaching Alexie’s novel and was excited as she thought about all the possibilities she could use to revise it!

**Final Thoughts**

This work is incomplete. With teens already interacting with digital texts, it is no longer a question as to whether text-to-web connections should be utilized in the classroom; rather, it is an issue of how teachers can blend them in their instruction. TPACK positions are at the forefront when choosing electronic resources that support content understanding. In the vignette, the researchers used Ms. Bell to demonstrate general strategies that can be applied across the curriculum. By accessing students’ previous digital experiences, Ms. Bell used them to facilitate how her students connected with the novel in ways that utilize the TPACK emphasis on blending content knowledge with pedagogical approaches. Teachers in other content areas can follow similar methods. For example, in an algebra course, students who need support can go to online forums and access the examples, guidance, and models needed to be successful. In a world language class, students can design and share electronic flashcards with classmates to develop their language proficiency. In both examples, students are not only transacting with the text, but they are interacting with a literate community. The math student is engaging the community to develop understanding of the concept, and the world language student is building fluency through an exchange with classmates. Though this article focused on text-to-web connections made using the Internet, there are implications for bringing connections made from the gaming community into the classroom.

Text-to-web connections represent an opportunity. With students already making these connections in their academic and personal lives, teachers can capitalize on them to deepen comprehension and content knowledge. In this article, the researchers first operationalized their conceptualization of text-to-web connections before

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**For Further Exploration**

- *Inklewriter* ([www.inklestudios.com/inklewriter](http://www.inklestudios.com/inklewriter)) is a website for creative writing that lets students write choose-your-own-adventure style stories and share them in a community of readers.
- *FanFiction* ([https://www.fanfiction.net](http://https://www.fanfiction.net)) is a forum for sharing pieces of writing that build on popular television shows, movies, books, and more!
- Check out Raine and Anderson’s (2017) *The Internet of Things Connectivity Binge: What Are the Implications*. 

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putting forward example strategies teachers can use in their practice. It is the hope of the researchers that teachers and the researcher community alike will build on these new types of connections, and they offered the video game example as a springboard. In closing, text-to-web connections formalize the interactive experiences students are already having online to promote student engagement with text. With new technologies being continually developed, adding these types of connections is a timely addition to Rosenblatt’s work.

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Epilogue

It happens. In the news is an event that cannot be ignored in the classroom—it could be a tragedy, a controversy, or some other impactful incident that a teacher needs to address with students. Consider the vignette of Ms. Bell. She is in the middle of teaching *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* when accusations surface about Sherman Alexie’s treatment of women. Soon the author himself comes out with a statement of apology to women who may have been hurt by his actions. Ms. Bell now has a predicament. Does she abandon the novel and ignore the topic? Or does she address the issue with her students? And, if she addresses the topic with her students, what is the best approach? It seems both impossible and unhelpful to ignore the issue—some students know about it and will bring it up in class. Plus, the topic is important and topical: Can we (should we) separate the novel from the author?

Teachers have to make this difficult decision, and if Ms. Bell decides to use this as a learning opportunity for her students, it will be important to first take a few things into consideration. The school and community context are critically important factors to consider when tackling controversial and sensitive issues. Ms. Bell will need to decide whether she has support from her administration to talk about the topic. If she does, the administration and school counselors can advise her on ways to discuss the issue and handle student questions. Ms. Bell could send a letter to parents of her students to inform them of the topic if the administration deems this necessary. In addition, Ms. Bell needs to decide whether the climate in her classroom will support conversations based on respect when discussing difficult topics. And, of course, consideration has to be made for students (and teachers) who have potentially been victims of similar trauma themselves (Cunningham, 2017).

With careful consideration, Ms. Bell can build on new and unexpected text-to-web learning experiences. She may not have initially planned for students to explore the #metoo movement in conjunction with the novel, to read Alexie’s words of apology, or to consider whether art and artist can be separated, but with thoughtful consideration and planning, Ms. Bell can support an additional and topical learning experience for her students.

About the Authors

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Round-Robin Reading: Learning from the Research and from the Stories of Readers

Sherry Sanden
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Leah, a young woman nearing the end of her teacher education program, seems almost transported back to childhood as she writes about a reading experience that has stuck in her memory:

I can remember like it was yesterday the amount of anxiety I would get when the teacher would announce that we would be reading aloud. I would get so anxious because I didn’t want to mess up or read too slow. Looking back, my anxiety probably played a role in me actually messing up or reading too slow when I was chosen to read out loud to the class. I also got extremely anxious when we would do those kinds of activities because I was afraid I might say a word wrong and get corrected. Getting corrected was something I dealt with a lot during my middle school years. It was such an embarrassing feeling to be corrected in front of your classmates by another student or even my teacher.

Even as an adult, Leah’s emotional reaction to this early experience is almost palpable. Leah’s story and many like it that preservice teachers have shared across the years fill me with dismay, even though I was not personally responsible for any of their early reading experiences. My strong emotional response stems from the awareness that children who encounter reading in this anxiety-laden way often learn to associate it with fear and embarrassment, and unfortunately, it is almost always teachers who create these stress-filled situations. As a teacher educator, reading such stories makes me want to ensure that preservice and inservice teachers better understand the pedagogical and emotional harm of these kinds of oral reading performances, which even many adults still recall with dread.

Scholarship over the past decades has conveyed a message about the limited effectiveness of round-robin reading compared to other literacy practices. For example, Leinhardt, Zigmond, and Cooley (1981) concluded from their findings that students’ classroom time was far better spent reading silently than aloud. Eldredge, Reutzel, and Hollingsworth (1996), comparing students in elementary classrooms using whole-group read-alouds versus classrooms using round-robin reading, found that students who experienced round-robin reading scored lower on several measures of reading growth, including vocabulary acquisition, word analysis, word recognition, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Allington (1983) noted that hearing their own classmates’ developing (and often poor) oral reading, such as that frequently experienced in round-robin reading events, fails to provide students with the positive models of fluent reading that would support their reading growth. Ivey (1999) explained that for the middle-grade participants in her study, whole-class reading experiences failed to meet the needs of the students for individual reading choice and texts addressing diverse ability levels. Rasinsky and Hoffman (2003) suggested that whole-class oral reading forces a heavy focus on word pronunciation at the expense of text comprehension.

Literacy scholars have also documented the potential for emotional harm inherent in round-robin reading-type activities. For example, Mueller (2001) described the painful impressions of reading that were inspired by the round-robin reading
experiences of the at-risk adolescent students in her study, often resulting in persistently negative views of reading in any form. It is these kinds of descriptions that have most struck me in the stories of early literacy encounters shared by my pre-service teachers, too many of whom label themselves, even now, as reluctant readers. The purpose of this article is to revisit the classroom practice of round-robin reading, integrating research with students’ own experiences. I remain hopeful that the stories of these now-adult storytellers, set beside the accumulated research on round-robin reading and similar oral reading practices, will inspire those who still use them to take a second look at alternatives in their own classrooms in support of their current literacy learners.

Round-Robin Reading as Classroom Practice

In The Literacy Dictionary, Harris and Hodges (1995) defined round-robin reading as “the outmoded practice of calling on students to read orally one after another” (p. 222). Variations of the practice include popcorn reading, in which students are chosen to read more randomly as they pop up like popcorn; combat reading, in which students call on one another in an attempt to catch their classmates off task; and popsicle reading, in which the order that students read is based upon when their names, written on popsicle sticks, are drawn from a container (Ash, Kuhn, & Walpole, 2008).

Ash, Kuhn, and Walpole (2003) pointed out that teachers who might be reluctant to admit to their use of round-robin reading because of its negative connotations may use one of its alternative methods are less damaging than the original.

In spite of being declared an “outmoded practice” by Harris and Hodges in 1995 (p. 222), round-robin reading continues to be utilized in language arts and content area classrooms (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003), and teachers continue to believe in its use (Kuhn, 2014), especially with struggling readers and children from lower-income families (Duke, 2000; Gamse, Jacob, Horst, Boulay, & Unlu, 2008). Findings from numerous studies evidence teachers’ continued reliance on various forms of whole-group reading in which students take turns reading aloud. In two surveys conducted by Ash, Kuhn, and Walpole (2003, 2008), nearly 60% of elementary and middle school teachers admitted to regularly using some form of round-robin reading. Ash and colleagues (2008) found that more than half of the 80 teachers they surveyed indicated that they used some form of round-robin reading, and nine of the 27 reading specialists reported that their teachers used round-robin reading practices. Wolsey, Lapp, and Dow (2010) reported that 36% of primary teachers and 39% of upper-elementary teachers they surveyed reported relying on whole-class oral turn-taking as one of their most common read-aloud approaches.

Ash, Kuhn, and Walpole (2008) found that teachers’ most commonly reported goals for round-robin reading were assessment of students’ reading and opportunities to improve their fluency. Other reasons included establishing a common knowledge base, providing reading practice, improving students’ comprehension, and acquiescing to students’ own requests for round-robin reading. Wolsey et al. (2010) speculated that classroom management and a desire to keep students on task has resulted in teachers’ continued reliance on round-robin reading. Despite its disfavor in the literacy scholarship, it is clear that many teachers continue to utilize whole-group oral reading, believing it to meet a variety of literacy goals.

Readers’ Stories of Struggle

Findings indicating that round-robin reading remains a much-used classroom literacy practice are mirrored in the stories shared by pre-service teachers with whom I work in a teacher preparation program at a large university in the Midwest. Each semester, pre-service teachers are
asked to create digital timelines relaying events across their literacy histories and to write reflections on how those events, viewed holistically, shaped the literate individuals they are today. I pulled from a larger study’s (MacPhee & Sanden, 2016) data from students whose narratives referred to round-robin reading experiences to better understand, from these future teachers’ perspectives, the affective influence of round-robin reading on their literate lives.

Of the 10 preservice teacher participants who discussed their experiences with various forms of round-robin reading, seven expressed negative feelings about their round-robin reading experiences, and three were neutral in their explanations. No participants shared positive portrayals of round-robin reading. Especially troubling were the strong emotions expressed in the stories about ways that round-robin reading negatively influenced their relationships with literacy. Some readers explained how their experiences made them develop a dislike for literacy activities in that context, while others stated that the negative associations spread to other school and non-school literacy activities. A few participants explained how the negative connotations of round-robin reading have colored their literacy perspectives even into their adult lives. The results of these experiences echo past scholarship questioning the use of round-robin reading as a support for students’ literacy growth.

I relied on a narrative inquiry methodology to explore the ordinary experiences (Dewey, 1934) of these former young readers; the findings demonstrate the pall cast by round-robin reading on these readers’ current literacy perspectives. Clandinin (2013) defines narrative inquiry as “an approach to the study of human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding” (p. 17). In the sections below, I honor the experiences of these young readers by integrating their stories into existing scholarship that calls into question the use of round-robin reading as a promising strategy for literacy instruction.

Outcomes of Round-Robin Reading

There is a surprising paucity of current research on the use of round-robin reading, especially considering its prevalence in classrooms. However, literacy scholars over past decades have repeatedly outlined concerns over its inclusion in reading instruction. Opitz and Rasinski (2008), for example, list several potential negative outcomes of round-robin reading for young readers, including (1) an inauthentic view of reading, (2) non-productive reading habits like subvocalization and a failure to self-monitor, (3) discipline problems, (4) decreased opportunities for eyes on text, (5) anxiety and embarrassment, and (6) difficulties with reading comprehension. Fair and Combs (2011) explain that for adolescents, round-robin reading hinders comprehension, fluency, and independent reading skills. Frager (2010) laments the failure of round-robin reading to allow the kind of recursive behaviors that are essential for close and careful reading that support interpretive meaning-making. Below, I link scholarship that details how round-robin reading and similar classroom oral reading practices create academic and affective impediments to students’ literacy learning with readers’ stories (all names in the article are pseudonyms) that provide additional insight into how round-robin reading reinforced feelings of self-doubt over reading abilities, prompted disincentives to pursue reading experiences, and inhibited reading proficiency in these readers.

Self-Doubt

Published accounts of round-robin reading frequently mention its negative affective impact on readers. Mueller (2001) explains that, especially for adolescent readers, being forced to read aloud in front of peers can be humiliating. Similar embarrassment often occurs for students of any age who struggle with reading overall or who struggle only in the public performance of round-robin reading events (Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2006). In the stories shared with me by preservice
teachers, by far the most common emotions expressed were anxiety and embarrassment over being forced into the position of publicly displaying developing reading skills. Participants repeatedly explained how they were made to face the inward shame of their real or imagined literacy inadequacy. Brittany, for example, discussed loving bedtime stories and other literacy events shared by her parents, so she entered school with positive feelings about books and reading. However, she stated, “When I was in elementary and early middle school, I feel that my experiences with reading were truly diminished by the type of teachers I had.” She explained that in 6th grade,

I hated reading more and more each day because of how Mr. Packert would call random students to read out loud. I was embarrassed to read in front of my peers because I was a slow reader, could not pronounce words correctly, and [was] extremely nervous. I spent more time panicking in his classroom than I did learning. Because of my horrible experience, I was more turned off to reading than ever. I became frightened to read out loud and scared I was going to be made fun of.

Later in her story, she stated, “Reading out loud was and still is my biggest fear! Due to my horrible experiences in reading, I will never feel comfortable reading out loud. I have no confidence whatsoever in my reading ability.” Experiences like these, shared by several of the study participants, created feelings of anxiety and self-doubt at some of the most impressionable times in young learners’ literacy lives. These negative perceptions of reading sometimes lasted long past the immediate events and even colored participants’ current views of their literacy abilities.

**Decrease in Motivation**

Accompanying feelings of self-doubt was the tendency for the preservice teachers’ round-robin reading experiences to diminish their overall motivation to engage in reading activities. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) explain that factors external to students, such as the school atmosphere and activities, can play a powerful role in students’ motivation. One preservice teacher, Carla, discussed her appreciation for books and the solid sense of reading efficacy she brought to school, based on a strong literate culture at home. However, she stated bluntly, “When I entered into school, my views on reading quickly changed. My love for books was destroyed in schools.” She described public read-aloud experiences that spotlighted her struggles and made her question her reading abilities: “I was a straight A student. I had a supportive family that loved and praised me for getting good grades. I couldn’t understand why reading was so difficult and tedious to me.” Carla shared a reading experience that has stuck with her all these years:

When I was in 3rd grade, my class was separated into reading groups. I was a smart kid in most academic subjects, so I was put in a top reading group; however, my reading aloud skills were subpar. I have a very distinct memory of a horrible experience in this reading group. My classmates were my friends and were good at reading. When it became my turn to read, I felt like I was worse than everyone else in the room. I was always nervous. I stumbled over every sentence, trying to read it as fast as my classmates. The teacher stopped me every time I made a mistake. After making too many mistakes, she started to yell at me, telling me that I can’t make any more mistakes. I was almost in tears. I hated the book. I hated my reading teacher.

Allington (2013) explains that the interruptive nature of round-robin reading, similar to what Carla experienced, all too commonly results in readers who become much more hesitant in their reading, creating even more barriers between them and reading success. Allington (2009) explains that struggling readers tend to experience more round-robin reading, further fostering
the dysfluency that is a common component of their reading challenges. A vicious cycle results in children like Carla repeatedly experiencing reading failure, which is pointed out with the teacher (and often peers) filling in missed words, leading to greater humiliation and hesitancy to engage in future reading events.

**Reduced Proficiency**

Beyond the affective impact round-robin reading appears to have on readers’ perspectives about reading, scholars have described numerous negative outcomes for students’ academic literacy growth. Mueller (2001), for example, stated that “round-robin reading can probably be considered one of the most harmful components of group learning” (p. 27). Opitz and Rasinski (1998) agree, saying that round-robin reading “more often prohibits rather than facilitates the ability to read” (p. 8). Eldridge et al. (1996) compared the reading achievement of 2nd graders who were subjected across the first half of their school year to two different forms of oral reading instruction. Some students experienced Shared Book Experience (SBE) in which teachers conducted a whole-group read-aloud followed by partner and independent reading; while other students participated in round-robin reading in which teachers conducted oral reading in the typical turn-taking style, following by peer and independent reading. Analysis of test scores revealed that at the conclusion of the study, children who experienced SBE outperformed children who experienced round-robin reading on all measures of reading growth—vocabulary acquisition, word analysis, word recognition, reading fluency, and reading comprehension—with quite large treatment effects.

Fair and Combs (2011) explain that reading behaviors inherent in a classroom oral reading performance are often contrary to reading growth. The authors point out that natural reading occurs “in ‘fits and starts,’ skimming, backtracking, re-reading, thinking, and moving on” (p. 226). In a round-robin reading event, however, “While trying to follow the reader, one cannot stop and re-read confusing passages, think about the implications of complex text, or savor an especially descriptive or well-turned phrase” (p. 226). Eye movement research (e.g., Miller & ODonnell, 2013) has also demonstrated the non-linear behavior that accompanies authentic reading, and that is not reinforced by a requirement to read aloud word for word or to follow along as a classmate does so.

Preservice teachers’ stories similarly demonstrated negative effects of being required to read or follow along in round-robin reading situations that failed to support their reading proficiency. Jennifer told numerous stories across her literacy history of authentic experiences she had with books and of the meaningful connections she made with them, stating, “Reading and writing is a part of my every day, from the moment I wake up until the moment I go to sleep.” However, even for this strong reader, round-robin reading events tended to diminish her ability in the moment. Jennifer stated,

> I did not like reading within my classrooms at all throughout middle school, mainly because when my class would read the textbook or some other materials in class, the teacher would randomly call on a student to continue reading. This put me on the spot, and I would just get embarrassed to read in front of my entire class. Then, I would need to follow along with my finger and sometimes stutter on words because I was so nervous.

She relayed a similar experience in high school in which the teacher required students to read Shakespeare in a manner that did not support her comprehension of its content:

> [Hamlet] was a struggle for me to read; and when we read [it] in class, we were forced to take turns reading it out loud. I never wanted to read because I did not understand what I was reading, and I felt like I couldn’t relate to the readings.
The stories that Jennifer and others tell reinforce findings indicating that round-robin reading may fail to support, and indeed may inhibit, the very reading behaviors needed to advance students’ developing reading abilities.

**Readers’ Attempts to Regain Agency**

Characteristic of round-robin reading is a minimizing of readers’ control of the experience, disallowing previewing, rereading, or other personalized strategic options for involvement with the text. Round-robin reading forces potentially tentative readers into the position of a public performance without an opportunity to opt out, and it requires successful readers to backtrack in an attempt to match the reading levels of their less proficient peers. In spite of the inherent disempowering capacity of round-robin reading, however, some glimmers of hope shone through the stories preservice teachers shared. Their accounts occasionally reflected their attempts to regain some sort of control over their reading experience, through clandestine action in the moment or in plans for agentic action in the future, that demonstrated their attempts to regain the power that round-robin reading stripped from them.

**Preview Strategies**

In stories told by experienced round-robin readers, they apparently relied on strategies that allowed them to avoid a cold read of materials that might challenge their abilities and create an embarrassing situation in front of their peers. These readers instinctively understood what we know from research: having the opportunity to become familiar with a reading passage leads to improved fluency and accuracy (Dahl, 1979; Samuels, 1979), as well as increased comprehension (Stayer & Allington, 1991). A common story among participants was how they skimmed ahead during reading episodes, previewing the text to ensure that they were prepared for the sections they might be required to read. Lily and her friends even worked in tandem to spare each other the possibility of reading difficult passages during episodes of popcorn reading. She explained,

*Popcorn was the reading activity I dreaded the most, and I never got how it was beneficial to students. I was clearly not the best at reading aloud in 3rd grade, and I always knew reading and comprehension were my worst subjects in school, even though I did enjoy reading. I did not enjoy reading aloud, however, because I was always embarrassed when I messed up a word or couldn’t even pronounce a word, and so the teacher had to always correct me when that happened. So, in my effort to avoid getting the worst paragraph in the reading, my friends and I would always read ahead, instead of following along, to find the paragraphs that were the shortest and easiest to read. By doing that, we were prepared to volunteer if necessary or we knew when to choose each other to read in order to get our turn over with.*

Lily’s story reflects a common tendency for students to read ahead during round-robin reading. Rather than following along with the reading, these readers developed strategies for previewing sections, skimming for unknown words, and silently rehearsing in an attempt to control the well-delivered oral performance that was expected.

Attempts by these readers to circumvent the one-shot experience with text typical of round-robin reading appears to be more in keeping with reading experiences that will support meaning making. Rapp and van den Broek (2005) describe reading as a “recursive interaction” (p. 278) between process and product, emphasizing the disruptions to understanding that may exist when readers move through text without engaging with it. Indeed, the highly prioritized act of close reading necessitates “the recursive aspect of reading” (Berthoff, 1999, p. 677) to fully interpret connected text. Frager
(2010) points out that in silent reading, readers have the opportunity to revisit an unclear section of the text or a passage that rereading would support understanding moving forward. Oral reading in a group setting, on the other hand, denies readers this option in favor of only moving forward. It appears that these students, in straying from their teachers’ intentions for round-robin reading, may actually have created for themselves opportunities to increase the kinds of engagement that prompt more fluid and comprehensible reading.

**Reconciling Round-Robin Reading and Proficiency**

Readers who feared that they would struggle with the text were not the only ones for whom round-robin reading events posed challenges. Preservice teachers who labeled themselves proficient readers still sometimes found round-robin reading counterproductive to their literacy involvement. Students’ stories explained how they participated in the mandated activity while covertly accommodating their more advanced skills. Lisa explained,

*Since I read faster than most kids in school, when others would read aloud and we were supposed to follow along, I would begin to tune them out and just read ahead on my own. But if I had to read, if it was my turn to read aloud, I would just go back to that section they left off on and read aloud a passage I already read.*

Other students chose to utilize their reading skills in more obvious ways that were not always welcomed by their peers, as exemplified by Kelsey’s story:

*One thing that my 4th-grade teacher really supported was group reading, regardless of the subject. Whether we were studying social studies or language arts, she loved to number our class off and sit us in circles around the room to take turns reading. The biggest problem that I had with group reading at the time was that I knew that I was ahead in reading compared to other students. Because of this, I often found myself correcting the other classmates I read with and helping them with words that they struggled with. I truly thought I was being helpful! I continued this until someone corrected me in a group reading, and I realized how embarrassing it felt.*

During these group read-aloud sessions, students whose reading abilities outpaced those of their classmates accommodated their skills by either working around the activity or attempting to jump in to support their less-advanced classmates. Neither option appeared to strengthen literacy growth or motivation to participate in reading activities for these advanced readers, and the tendency for them to jump in to correct less-skilled readers might be even more harmful to their peers (Allington, 2009).

**Plans for Future Teaching**

Participants who expressed the most angst over past round-robin reading experiences were sometimes the most vocal about how they will avoid round-robin reading in their future classrooms. They clearly intend to regain a sense of agency they were not afforded over those reading experiences by controlling literacy instruction with their own students. For example, Carla, who painted a dark picture of the school literacy experiences in her past, held on to the hope that she might use her strong feelings to benefit her students, stating, “This depiction of literacy in schools is something I want to change as a teacher so that no one has an experience like mine again.” Brittany stated in her narrative, “I hate to read, and I will probably always hate reading because of how teachers made me feel.” However, she plans to ensure that her literacy instruction does not have the same impact on her students:

*I will never put down a child by making them read out loud or belittle their writing capabilities. Teachers need to realize that their ways truly do touch the lives of their students*
both negatively and positively. It is our job to make sure all negativity is taken out.

The stories of Carla and Brittany represent other students who may have lost out on their ability to control their literacy experience when forced into the public performance of round-robin reading but who have intentional plans to control the type of literacy experiences they provide in their future classrooms. This optimism reflects the goals of preservice teachers studied by Monroe, Gali, Swope, and Perreira (2007): their novice teachers vowed to avoid round-robin reading practices in their own classrooms after considering it in an examination of research-based practices in their teacher preparation program. Those researchers reported that while the new teachers resorted to using round-robin reading on occasion, they remained committed to eliminating the practice.

**Teachers’ Perspectives**

A review of scholarship surrounding round-robin reading demonstrates that while it is roundly discredited by researchers, the practice continues to be used by teachers for a variety of reasons. Ash and Kuhn (2006) listed four goals that teachers name to justify their use of round-robin reading: (1) reading evaluation, (2) fluency practice, (3) improvement of comprehension, and (4) motivation and engagement with text. Fair and Combs (2011) concur, discussing several reasons that middle-level and secondary teachers resorted to round-robin reading in their classrooms. Some used classroom time to read content-area texts aloud with students out of frustration over the students’ lack of comprehension in the more complex instructional texts used at the upper levels. Some also believed that students would not read the books at all if not required to read them aloud in class. Other teachers claimed that students enjoy round-robin reading, signing up or begging to take a turn to do it. Rasinski and Hoffman (2003) explained that behavioral concerns often made round-robin reading an appealing choice since it provides easy control over a whole group of students who must pay attention to be ready for their turn to read. Also, the practice requires little advance preparation on the part of busy teachers.

In examining the perspectives of teachers and literacy coaches who utilize round-robin reading, Ash et al. (2008) discovered that some erroneously believed that round-robin reading was a research-supported practice, while others admitted to little understanding of the pros and cons of round-robin reading. However, the highest percentage of educators in their study acknowledged that they understood the scholarly disfavor with which round-robin reading was viewed but continued to employ it as an instructional practice. Ash et al. speculated that one reason these teachers disregarded the research on round-robin reading was their belief that it was a positive experience for their own classes overall. Interestingly, however, when the teachers were asked to consider individual students, many identified some of the same drawbacks of round-robin reading that have been named in past research findings.

**Practical Implications**

Unwillingness to discontinue a long-entrenched routine in spite of overwhelming scholarly condemnation points to the need to discover more compelling reasons for teachers to discontinue the use of round-robin reading in favor of other reading activities. Perhaps considering former students’ stories about round-robin reading and its negative influence on their literacy perspectives might compel teachers to take action to pursue more promising options. While these stories represent only a tiny subset of adults, they may well reflect an untold number of readers who have been subjected to round-robin reading in classrooms over the past decades. Anecdotally, these findings are corroborated for me each semester as students discuss the outcomes of this beginning assignment. The topic of round-robin reading never fails to elicit horror stories of fear, humiliation,
and discouragement from those willing to share aloud, and nods from around the room confirm that many of my students hold similar perspectives. These young adults, who presumably have not been forced into public reading experiences for years, still often retain feelings of animosity that have caused them to forego reading permanently.

According to a 2014 Pew Research Center poll, almost one quarter of adult respondents reported that they had not read any books in the past year. In fact, the number of non-book readers has tripled since 1978. Perhaps even more troubling than a general population of adults as non-readers are the number of teacher education students who confess to disliking reading. In a study designed to investigate the level of reading engagement among preservice teachers, Applegate and Applegate (2004) classified more than half of their study participants enrolled in a teacher education program as unenthusiastic about reading, and only 25% of the participants claimed an enjoyment of reading. These numbers are especially grim when the potential impact on their own students’ literacy futures are taken into account, what Applegate and Applegate labeled “the Peter Effect” (p. 556). The Peter Effect characterizes “those teachers who are charged with conveying to their students an enthusiasm for

Table 1. Alternatives to Round-Robin Reading (RRR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your goal for RRR is . . .</th>
<th>Consider this . . .</th>
<th>An alternative . . .</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Allington &amp; McGill-Franzen (2010) contend that RRR is much more an assessment of how well students can read aloud in front of a group of their peers than an assessment of their authentic reading ability. And what conclusions can reasonably be drawn about a student’s reading abilities if RRR results in a stressful assessment situation?</td>
<td>Running records &amp; miscue analysis: As students read independently, listen to each read aloud for a few minutes. Take some notes about their miscues and reading strategies and perhaps even discuss with them what they are reading. This will provide much more reliable information about how students act as readers than will the stressful public performance of RRR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluency practice</td>
<td>Good modeling supports the growth of fluent reading, but in a classroom with students of uneven reading ability, all being expected to read aloud from the same text, it is inevitable that students will spend too much time listening to others model reading that is even less fluent than their own.</td>
<td>Reader’s Theatre: If oral reading is desired, provide practice with Reader’s Theatre. Avoid the negative aspects of RRR by using engaging scripts and assigning parts according to reading levels. Provide students time to rehearse, silently or with a partner, and encourage expressive reading. Create scripts from students’ favorite books, or find free scripts at <a href="http://www.aaronshep.com">www.aaronshep.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Assuming that students reading aloud, one after another, will better allow them to understand the material than having them read independently does not appear to be the case. Students are often too nervous, bored, or distracted to truly listen and understand what others are reading.</td>
<td>Interactive reading: Provide highlighters, sticky notes, graphic organizers, etc., and model for students how adults read for understanding: making notes in the margins, highlighting key words, marking places of confusion, noting connections, drawing images, etc. Encourage them to view a piece of silent reading not as something they can slide their eyes along and be done but, rather, as something with which they must interact to gain understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing common content</td>
<td>Many teachers engage in whole-group read-alouds of textbooks because so many students can’t access them independently. A common example is using class sets of social studies or science textbooks, which are often written at levels beyond the reach of many of the learners.</td>
<td>Trade books matched to readers’ needs: Scrap the class sets and substitute trade books matched to learners’ differing needs that students can access independently and then share. A bonus is that students will be reading from several texts, providing multiple sources of information around a common topic.</td>
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reading that they do not have” (p. 556). Those authors wondered how difficult it might be for future teachers who are unenthusiastic readers to share a motivation for reading with their own students. The current findings appear to implicate round-robin reading in many of these preservice teachers developing an aversion rather than a love of reading. How successful will they be in creating motivated readers in their own classrooms?

While it would be imprudent to make the leap that round-robin reading is creating a nation of non-readers, it is evident that for participants in the current study, round-robin reading created disincentives for engaged reading, often even beyond their childhood years; these findings are confirmed in other round-robin reading research. In keeping with a theoretical perspective relying on narrative to inspire a call to action on behalf of the storytellers, perhaps inservice teachers can use these stories as the impetus to re-imagine their literacy instruction through experiences that are motivating and empowering rather than discouraging and diminishing for their young readers. (See Table 1 for some round-robin reading alternatives.)

The one ray of hope shining through these stories is the indication that at least some of these former round-robin readers are intent on using their negative experiences as a deterrent in planning for their own literacy instruction. Several recognized this practice as one that acted to negate rather than support their literacy learning. Like other future teachers, they have plans to pursue different reading options for their future students. Their intention to reclaim the literacy power that round-robin reading diminished is inspiring and provides hope that these preservice teachers may break the bonds that round-robin reading and its resultant effects have on many readers.

Relying on all preservice and inservice teachers to make these leaps on their own might be too much, though. A tendency toward the “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) that prompts teachers to enact what they experienced as students rather than what they learned in their teacher education programs, as well as a childhood of negative reading experiences, might well result in teachers who do not plan for thoughtful, motivating literacy instruction. This makes it imperative on teacher educators, literacy coaches, administrators, and others who support current and future teachers to provide experiences that purposefully prompt them to re-imagine the literacy they experienced and to consider practices that will support the literacy strength of their learners.

Measures to re-introduce the value and enjoyment of personal reading to educators might enable them (perhaps for the first time) to encounter joyful reading experiences. In these ways, future generations of children might avoid the round-robin reading experiences of their predecessors, allowing school literacy instruction to promote rather than deter a lifetime of reading.

References

of round robin reading. Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 25(1), 87-103. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573560802491257

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Finding Common Ground: Understanding Ourselves and the World Through Literature

Jung Kim and Deborah Augsburger

About This Column

With all that is going on in the world today, it is no longer enough to simply appreciate differences. We must learn how to understand one another, see each other’s humanity, and work toward greater justice. High-quality children’s and young adult literature can provide an important first step for helping youth to begin exploring these critical viewpoints, as well as to develop empathy and love for the world around them. It should be highly enjoyable and engaging, yet it can open doors to understanding, raise questions about the status quo, and begin conversations about how we move through and shape the world in which we live. To this end, this column will present literature that provides a variety of perspectives in exploring and valuing the world around us.

Alternatives to Standards

What is taught as “canon”—or even just the standard—these days is a perpetually shifting landscape. With the changing demographics of our country, increasing global connectedness, and the growing awareness of how voices have been marginalized or silenced for so long, there is a greater desire to include more varied and diverse authors in our curriculum. Hand in hand with this awareness comes the increased understanding of how certain established texts or authors can be problematic as well, whether in issues of representation in texts or in issues of personal character of the authors. With that said, this issue’s column offers up some more contemporary choices to teach instead of or in complement to more widely taught texts. In some cases, we are not refuting the quality or long-term value of many of these books but offering other options to prevent a singularity of voice; and for others, we are offering a replacement for texts that are problematic. Not every alternative is a perfect “swap out,” but we try to address similar themes or frames among texts.

Books for Preprimary/Primary Readers

The Snowy Day (Keats, 1962). The Snowy Day is well-deserving of its status as a classic picture book. It belongs in the canon and should continue to be read by generations of children.

Denos, Julia. Windows. Candlewick, 2017. Illustrated by E. B. Goodale. There is a tribute to The Snowy Day in the illustrations of this warm and welcoming story of a child walking through the neighborhood in the evening. As he walks his dog past windows of various sorts, the homes wake up with
the glow of lights, and neighbors prepare evening meals, gather with families and friends, and live their varied and beautiful lives.

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The Cat in the Hat (Seuss, 1957). Theodor Seuss Geisel is beloved as the father of the early reader; an award for books for young readers rightly bears his name. However cherished his iconic Cat is, the book represents mid-20th-century America, where things went awry the instant mother strayed from home; and the strange cat who visits looks rather like common depictions of a minstrel. Some of Seuss's other writings contained highly stereotyped and racist depictions of groups of people. Whether one reads Seuss critically or not, there is plenty of room for other voices in the early reader canon, even beyond Mo Willems' delightful Elephant and Piggie series.

Virján, Emma. What This Story Needs Is a Vroom and a Zoom. Harper, 2017. This book in the Pig in a Wig series follows Pig on her quest to win a trophy in an auto race. The repetitive, cumulative, rhyming text is reminiscent of Hop on Pop, but there is a real story told as Pig gets into a spin, has a flat, and is rescued by her pit crew. There are five books in the series so far, each using onomatopoeia and rhyme in the silly stories of Pig and her friends.

*****

The Giving Tree (Silverstein, 1964). Some readers adore this book for its message of generosity and unconditional love, while others see it as a tale of selfishness, sexism, and ungrateful greed, almost a metaphor for how humans destroy the natural world in pursuit of their own interests. There have even been parodies written—for example, The Taking Tree in which the boy is punished for his abuse of the tree. Instead of parody, how about selecting books that show children engaging in kindness and pro-social behavior?

Doerrfeld, Cori. The Rabbit Listened. Dial, 2018. Taylor built something new and special, but a terrible accident brought it all crashing down. One by one the animals offer advice, but Taylor isn't ready to talk, or shout, or laugh, pretend, fight, or anything else they suggest. Slowly and quietly, the rabbit offers an ear. Taylor is then able to express varied emotions and come up with a new plan. This story reminds us that sometimes well-meaning meddling is not what is needed. Sometimes we just need someone who will simply listen.

Byers, Grace. I Am Enough. Balzer & Bray, 2018. Illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo. “Like the sun, I’m here to shine.” This book is a positive affirmation of one’s own possibility and worth. Every page shows girls of varied skin tones, faces, frames, and abilities participating in activities and helping one another, whether they win or fall and have to get back up again. The text also reminds readers that we are not all meant to be alike, that sometimes we disagree, and that appearance does not dictate our worth.

*****

Love You Forever (Munsch, 1985). Robert Munsch’s singsong book is loved by those who remember how they felt when someone they loved read the refrain over and over to them. But a careful read of Munsch’s text shows that the mother never sang those words to her son when he was awake. Several critiques point out the troubled relationship and the odd sequence in which the mother breaks into her grown son’s room to rock him as he sleeps. There are many other books that can help parents convey their love to their children in perhaps more healthy ways when they are awake and aware.

Bradley, Jeanette. Love, Mama. Roaring Book Press, 2018. Penguins share the child rearing as one parent goes to sea to hunt for food and the other tends to the chick. When the absent
parent returns, the distinct calls of the family identify them to one another. This delightful picture book personifies this in the story of Kipling, a penguin chick whose mother has gone away on a long trip. Kipling misses his mother at dinner and bedtime and through the days as he awaits her return. Then, a box arrives with a gift from Mama that reminds Kipling how much she does love him. He makes her a similar gift, and we see her carrying it all the way back home to him. This book would especially resonate with children who have a parent serving in the military or living in a different home. Similarly, *Guess How Much I Love You* (McBratney, 1994) depicts the love between a father and a child who is trying to delay bedtime by finding different ways to tell Dad how much he is loved.

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*Tikki Tikki Tembo* (Mosel, 1968). If only this tale hadn’t been presented as an ancient Chinese folktale or contained stereotyped images of Japanese people, art, and dress. It is not a Chinese folktale, so its use as such can be misleading and reinforce several stereotypes. In her essay “Rethinking Tikki Tikki Tembo,” Irene Rideout shares a thoughtful critique that draws from her own daughter’s experience with the unintended prejudice that came from the use of the book in school, offering alternative ways to introduce and use the book. Or, choose an alternate book such as the one below.

*Bridges, Shirin Yim. Ruby’s Wish*. Chronicle Books, 2002. Illustrated by Sophie Blackall. This is the true story of how the author’s grandmother, Ruby, fulfilled her desire to go to university. Ruby was born into a very large family in old China, where girls were not expected to have the same aspirations as boys. Ruby summoned the courage to ask for the same as her brothers. The illustrations are detailed and lovely, and include a photo of the real Ruby.

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*Books for Intermediate Readers*

*Nate the Great* (Sharmat, 1972) and *Cam Jansen* (Adler, 1980). Mysteries are popular with young readers. Here is a new voice to add to your collection.

Butler, Dori Hillestad. *King and Kayla and the Case of the Missing Dog Treats*. Peachtree Publishers, 2017. Illustrated by Nancy Meyers. Grades 1-2. Kayla’s dog King is a great detective. If only he could tell Kayla about the clues he finds. Nevertheless, they work together as Kayla investigates mysteries using her notebook. There are currently four books in the series.

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*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 1964). The classic fantasy has been criticized for its depiction of the Oompa Loompas as a primitive tribe “rescued” by Wonka to serve as slaves in his factory. But the idea of a high-stakes contest in a candy or toy factory still has appeal.

Feldman, Jody. *The Gollywhopper Games: Friend or Foe*. Greenwillow, 2016. Grades 3-6. *The Gollywhopper Games* was a hit when it was published in 2008, and now it is a series. In the first book, Gil enters the Golly Toy Company contest, but more is at stake than he imagines. The contest involves teamwork and presents challenges and puzzles that readers enjoy figuring out. The latest book in the series, *Do You Have What It Takes to Win?*, has Zane, who only wants to play football but has had too many concussions, enter the games at the urging of his parents and his friends the JZs. Will his concussed brain be able to figure out the challenges and will he find a different pastime that he will love as much as football?

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Where the Sidewalk Ends (Silverstein, 1974). At one time, Silverstein’s collections of poems were the most frequently stolen books from libraries (or so we heard). Humor and poetry—more please!

Harris, Chris. I’m Just Not Good at Rhyming: and Other Nonsense for Mischievous Kids and Immature Grown-ups. Little Brown, 2017. Grades 4-9. The poems, musings, and wacky illustrations in this book are laugh-out-loud silly but there are some poignant moments snuck in between the nuttiness. A stand to sell lemonade stands, the loser celebrating winning last place, feeling super tall at age 10, arguing with the teacher, and unfair riddles: the creativity in this book will inspire young comedians.

*****

Breadwinner Trilogy (Ellis, 2000-2003). The Breadwinner Trilogy has been a much-loved series. It is well-written and addresses important issues. However, with more calls for #ownvoices, perhaps it is time to include some other authors.

Kelkar, Supriya. Ahimsa. Tu Books, 2017. Grades 3-6. Like Parvana in The Breadwinner, Ahimsa’s Anjali is a strong female character. Unlike Parvana, whose family loses their belongings to bombing and conflict, Anjali’s family sacrifices their status for a cause. Both characters struggle through pivotal moments in their country’s history, however—Parvana through the Taliban’s rule in Afghanistan and Anjali during India’s fight for independence (and Mahatma Ghandi’s nonviolent resistance). Both books examine how larger state and international conflict issues shape and are shaped by individuals.

Kha, Hena. Amina’s Voice. Salaam Reads, 2017. Grades 3-7. Amina’s Voice takes place in contemporary Wisconsin, but it also addresses issues of conflict. Amina is a middle school student trying to grapple with her Muslim identity and the complexities of 6th grade. Dealing with a best friend who wants to change her name from Suejin to Susan and a visiting uncle who thinks music is haram (or forbidden), Amina tries to find her voice and her strength just as her mosque is vandalized. This lovely book tackles some ugly behavior in age-appropriate, heartfelt ways.

Books for Young Adult Readers

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Alexie, 2009). Any lover of YA literature who has heard the harassment allegations against (and partial admissions of) Sherman Alexie has been devastated. Regardless of how this issue may impact your text selection process, one can argue the importance of including a multiplicity of voices representing the Native American or First Nations experience rather than a single lone voice.

Dimaline, Cherie. The Marrow Thieves. DCB, 2017. Grades 8-12. A post-apocalyptic tale, this book is different from the memoir style of Absolutely True Diary. Set in a future where humanity has lost its ability to dream, the indigenous people of North America (the story is set in Canada) are being hunted for their bone marrow which holds a cure for that lost ability. Frenchie and his friends are attempting to flee “the recruiters,” who take them to schools (a nod to the historic residential schools) from which none return. While quite different in genre, this book still tackles complicated historic and contemporary issues, from environmental racism and destruction to colonialism and cultural survival.
Gansworth, Eric. *If I Ever Get Out of Here*. Arthur A. Levine Books. Grades 6-9. Like *Absolutely True Diary*, Gansworth’s Lewis Blake is a Native American kid growing up on the reservation and navigating that world along with the white world. As a “brainy” kid and the only Native American in his accelerated middle school classes, Lewis tries to keep to himself and stay under the radar. However, the arrival of a new kid, George, shows Lewis the joys and heartbreaks of friendship. As he tries to navigate the tensions of being poor and a member of the Onondaga Nation, while dodging a serious bully, Lewis must learn how to trust and believe in friendship and himself.


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Monster (Meyers, 2003). Walter Dean Meyers’ book is a rich and complicated look at truth and perspective. However, it often stands in as the book on the urban, male experience, and it may be time to expand that domain.

Reynolds, Jason. *Long Way Down*. Atheneum, 2017. Grades 7-10. It is without question that Jason Reynolds has become a powerhouse voice in contemporary YA literature. Teachers have used Walter Dean Meyers’ *Monster* to address issues of racism, bias in the criminal justice system, and the unreliable narrator; however, some students struggle with the complex multi-layered structure of the novel. While Meyers’ *Monster* examines a young man caught up in a crime, Reynolds’ *Long Way Down* drives deep into understanding the complicated—or perhaps overly simple—reasons for the ongoing “beefs” between youth living in communities plagued by violence. Written in accessible prose, Will takes an unforgettable elevator ride on his way to avenge his brother’s death. Also see *Ghost Boys* and *All American Boys* below.

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*House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). The beauty of Cisneros’ novella is undeniable; however, it continues to be upheld as the book on the Mexican American or Latin experience. The following are more contemporary books that provide a fresh update to this perspective.

Sanchez, Erika. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. Knopf Books, 2017. Grades 9-12. Erika Sanchez’s book has taken the literary world by storm, and—from an Illinois perspective—it also helps that she’s from Chicago, where the book takes place. Julia is a high school student whose older sister dies in an accident. The ripples of that death in her family are profound, particularly as Julia continues to be compared to and falls short of her “perfect” older sister Olga. Julia realizes, though, that Olga had a secret life and that perhaps no one really knew her. Through the process of unraveling Olga’s secrets, Julia must navigate her own identity and place within her family and what it means to pursue one’s dreams.

Williams, Ismee Amiel. *Water in May*. Harry N. Abrams, 2018. Grades 9-12. While Cisneros’ book can have a quiet beauty at times, Williams’ is a rollicking ride with a 15-year-old Dominican-American girl from New York who knows her mind and fiercely fights for what she wants. Peppered with colorful language, both in Spanish and English, Mari is not a perfect angel. She cuts school, fights with her abuela, and finds herself pregnant with a boyfriend who may or may not be dealing drugs. Regardless, this is a baby she desperately wants, a creature who will love her.
unconditionally and absolutely. When she finds out the fetus has a serious heart defect, Mari must navigate some serious decisions and learn how to create a family. Also see *The Education of Margot Sanchez* (Rivera, 2017).

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*To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960). Harper Lee’s classic book is taught often in schools—perhaps too often as some students complain about multiple readings of it over their 6th- through 12th-grade years. While it is a powerful book about race, there are many contemporary books that could address many of these themes and issues equally well.

**Rhodes, Jewell Parker.** *Ghost Boys*. Little, Brown, and Company, 2018. Grades 5-9. This book is heartbreaking. Told through a series of flashbacks, it follows a young boy who is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real one. After death, Jerome lingers and meets both the ghost of Emmett Till, who tries to help him make sense of his death, and Sarah, the live daughter of the police officer who shot him. Jerome also meets all the other “ghost boys” who were shot down as victims of violence and racism, whether intentionally as in Till’s case or “accidentally” as in Jerome’s case. Through his blossoming friendship with Sarah, Jerome learns how to try and make the world a little bit better and help heal all those who are impacted by unjust deaths.

**Reynolds, Jason, & Kiely, Brendan.** *All American Boys*. Atheneum, 2016. Grades 8-12. Reynolds and Kiely’s book follows how a local police assault on a black teen shakes up a community. Told through the alternating narrations of Rashad, the victim, and Quinn, a white classmate, the book closely follows on a micro level the lives of teenagers caught up in a larger national issue. The book does an amazing job showing the complexities of race, ally-ship, and social justice as “teen” issues in a very realistic, meaningful way.

**Applegate, Katherine.** *Wishtree*. Feiwel and Friends, 2017. Grades 4-9. In *Mockingbird*, Harper Lee used a tree as a means for communication between the Finch children and their mysterious neighbor. In *Wishtree*, a 200-year-old oak tree itself communicates in a desperate attempt to connect people and put an end to the hate and mistrust that have surfaced in its multi-ethnic neighborhood. When Samar ties a cloth with her wish for a friend to the tree, the tree enlists a crow and other animals to help. But as the tree reminds us, this isn’t a sweet fairy tale where humans talk to animals. Real life is messy and not everything ends perfectly, but it does get better. The chapters are short, but the vocabulary is rich, and the text is peppered with interesting information about the natural world as the tree itself serves as a very reliable narrator.


**About the Authors**

Jung Kim is an associate professor in the Department of Reading and Literacy at Lewis University and spends too much time shirking her household duties to hide out researching” YA literature. A former English teacher and literacy coach, she is interested in critical literacy, issues of equity, and coffee.

Deborah Augsburger is a professor and chair of the Department of Reading and Literacy at Lewis University. She serves as treasurer of the Will County Reading Council and has served as president of the College Instructors of Reading Professionals and as recording secretary for the Illinois Reading Council. Her specializations in the field of literacy are children’s literature, diagnostic assessment, and storytelling. You can reach her via e-mail at augsbude@lewisu.edu.
**Parent Involvement in Reading**

Laurie Elish-Piper

**About This Column**

Parents play a key role in their children’s literacy development and school success. To support educators in building positive working relationships with their students’ parents, this column offers practical suggestions to promote parent communication, involvement, and partnerships.

**Family Storytelling: Building Bridges for Learning and Life with All Families**

I remember being a young child and looking forward to my grandmother visiting from Florida once a year. She would tell me the most wonderful stories at bedtime. Some were about when she was a little girl, others were about my mom as a child, and some were stories she made up out of her own imagination. One story that stands out in my memory is about how my grandmother wanted a beautiful blue dress but her family was too poor to buy it for her. I begged for the same story night after night, and she gladly obliged. I loved hearing her elaborate descriptions of the dress and, even though I knew the story by heart, I hung on her every word. What I remember most about that story was the lesson—to be thankful for what we do have and not to want things that we do not need. That lesson came from her story and from the conversations we had about it when I would ask “Were you sad you were poor?” or “Were you jealous of your friend who had so many beautiful dresses?” I am fortunate to have learned many life lessons from the stories I heard from my parents and my grandparents, and I believe that, at least in part, my love for stories and reading was planted and reinforced by a steady diet of family storytelling.

One literacy activity that is often overlooked by educators but appeals to all families and offers many learning and life benefits is storytelling. In this column, I will share ideas for how families can engage with storytelling to build literacy skills, to strengthen connections between home and school, to teach life lessons, to support social-emotional development, and to celebrate family histories and cultural traditions.

**Why Storytelling?**

Storytelling supports children’s literacy learning by providing opportunities for them to practice speaking and listening skills, to develop expressive language, and to learn about story structure (Peck, 1989). In fact, storytelling aligns closely with the Common Core State Standards for speaking and listening. Beyond the clear academic benefits of storytelling, it also offers ways for families to connect, whether in English or another language, and to share information about their lives, experiences, values, and cultural backgrounds:

> Storytelling is the oldest form of teaching. It bonded the early human communities, giving children the answers to the biggest questions of creation, life, and the afterlife. Stories define us, shape us, control us, and make us. Not every...
human culture in the world is literate, but every single culture tells stories. (Friday, 2014, paragraph 3)

However, storytelling is often missing in the curriculum and in family involvement initiatives.

Wingate (2015) expressed concern that the art of storytelling is dying and that, as a result, family stories will be lost forever. She argues that families can easily make storytelling part of their daily lives and reap learning benefits as well as preserve precious family stories. In addition, storytelling offers social-emotional benefits for young people such as learning life lessons, understanding family traditions, building character, fostering self-esteem, and encouraging resilience (Muller, 2015). Clearly, storytelling offers numerous benefits, so how can teachers encourage and engage families in telling their own stories?

**Promoting Storytelling with Families**

If you begin using storytelling in your classroom, you can plant the seeds to connect with families. Begin by telling familiar stories such as folk tales, fairy tales, and fables. Use props, puppets, or digital images on a screen to guide your telling of the story. Stop at various points in the story and invite children to chime in with a word, repeated phrase, or other contribution to the story. Use storytelling aids such as props or pictures to help children begin to tell these stories themselves. Provide time during school for children to retell these stories to a partner. Then, you can encourage children to go home and tell the story they told in school to family members. When you introduce storytelling, be sure to share with families the academic and other benefits of storytelling so they understand that it is an important activity to engage in with their children.

Next, you can help children to prepare their own story to go home and tell their family members. Use simple storytelling tips such as beginning the story with “Once upon a time,” introducing an interesting character early in the story, adding a conflict or problem, including dialogue, and providing an interesting ending. Ask children to go home and tell the story to family members, neighbors, or others outside of school. Then, have children ask one listener at home or in their neighborhood to tell them a story. Provide time for the children to report back at school on who told them a story and what the story was about. Continue this pattern periodically—you can even have students prepare familiar stories, their own stories, or stories related to the curriculum or to books they are reading.

Consider hosting a storytelling fair at school and invite families to attend. You may wish to secure a professional storyteller, but chances are that a librarian, drama teacher, or other educator will be able to do a great job as a featured storyteller. Include activity stations for families to tell their own family stories. Provide props and prompts such as “My favorite birthday memory . . . ,” “A funny story from when I was little . . . ,” and “An interesting story about our family . . .” to get families started with storytelling. Encourage families to enjoy, laugh, share, and have fun telling and listening to stories so the experience is positive for children, parents, and other family members (Goyer, 2008). If many of your students’ families are unable to come to school for an event due to work schedules, transportation issues, or other responsibilities, you can create a short video of a storyteller and an invitation for families to tell their own stories. You can e-mail the video link to families or post it on your class website or other online platform. You can also include information about storytelling in your class newsletter or through other communication methods such as Friday folders or online backpacks.

**Getting Storytelling into Families’ At-Home Routines**

To build on the storytelling experiences children are having at school, encourage families to set aside time at dinner or while riding in the car or on the bus to tell stories. One easy way
to get started with storytelling is for families to put several photos or mementos into a box and to select one as a prompt for telling a story. One family member can tell the whole story, or others can chime in or take over the story when requested to do so by the storyteller. They can also tell cumulative stories by beginning with something the teller sees out the window or in the room such as “A tiny white box with a red ribbon was on the table,” and then invite the next person to add more to the story (Wingate, 2015). Family members can continue to add to the story until someone provides an ending. Telling stories around the campfire or scary stories in the dark are also fun ways for families to incorporate stories into their lives.

When families are at a holiday event, birthday party, or other gathering, encourage them to look at family photos, family recipes, or special keepsakes to spark telling stories such as “I remember when . . .” or “Did I ever tell you the story about . . .?” (Wingate, 2015). Families can even put some “story starter” cards on the dinner or holiday table that pose questions to prompt storytelling. Some examples include “What is the best birthday party you’ve ever attended?,” “What is your favorite summer memory?,” or “When was a time you got into trouble?” Using family artifacts and story starters to spark storytelling and conversations across generations will help children and family members experience the joys of telling (and listening to) family stories.

Another way to prompt storytelling is to encourage families to tell “What would you do if” stories (Wingate, 2015). These stories are a great way to provide a structure to help families foster their children’s social-emotional development. Prompts can include “What would you do if everyone was teasing a new student?,” “What would you do if you broke something but no one saw it happen?,” and other dilemma-based prompts. If parents and other family members ask “why” and “how” questions, they can help children think more deeply and extend their stories. For example, questions such as “Why would you do that?” and “How would you feel?” will encourage children to add detail and to expand their stories.

**Linking Storytelling to Writing**

While there are many benefits from telling stories orally, writing them down offers additional literacy development benefits for children. Once families have shared stories orally, they can create a simple picture book by using a spiral notebook or a packet of paper stapled together. They can draw pictures and write captions, sentences, or short paragraphs for each page. Another option is to use photographs or images cut from magazines or printed from the computer. These family storybooks can be read and enjoyed many times and can become special keepsakes that can be given as gifts to family members who live far away.

For younger children or those who do not enjoy writing, a language experience approach can be used (Stauffer, 1970). In this activity, the child dictates his or her story, and a family member serves as a scribe to write what the child dictates. The child can then add pictures to complete the story. Next, they can read the story or tell it orally using the written text to guide their retelling.

Interviewing grandparents or other older family members about their memories and experiences is a great way to create a record of family stories. If family members live far away, children can use technology such as Skype, Face Time, or What’s App to interview family members. Then, children or other family members can write down the stories they learned during the interviews. The written stories can be organized in a three-ring binder so they can easily be accessed for reading and re-reading. Further, this binder of stories is a wonderful way for families to preserve these stories for the future.

Technology can be a great tool to make storytelling even more engaging. Many students and their families will enjoy using free online tools for digital storytelling. Four popular tools are
(1) Voice Thread (www.viocethread.com), (2) UTell Stories (www.utellstories.com), (3) Storybird (www.storybird.com), and (4) Toontastic (www.toontastic.withgoogle.com). These digital stories can be shared with family members who live far away. Orally told stories can also be audio or video recorded so they can be shared and preserved.

Final Thoughts

All families have stories to tell, and, thus, many benefits can be realized by incorporating storytelling into the classroom and making connections to students’ families. The ideas in this column are just the tip of the iceberg. Use your imagination to figure out how storytelling can work in your setting, and encourage students and families to have fun with storytelling in ways that appeal to them. As Sue Monk Kidd (2003) wrote in her novel, The Secret Life of Bees, “Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can’t remember who we are or why we’re here” (p. 107). By promoting storytelling in your classroom with your students and their families, you can provide the space and time to tell, enjoy, and preserve their own precious family stories.

References


About the Author

Laurie Elish-Piper is Dean of the College of Education at Northern Illinois University. She is also a Distinguished Teaching Professor and Presidential Engagement Professor in the Department of Literacy and Elementary Education at NIU. Prior to her work in higher education, Laurie was an elementary and middle school teacher, and an educational therapist in a clinical setting. Her research, publications, and presentations focus on family literacy, parent involvement, literacy assessment, and literacy coaching.
Professional Development
Jennifer Berne, Sophie Degener, Ryan McCarty, and Ivy Sitkoski

About This Column

National news sometimes overwhelms us to the point that it is easy to forget that every single teaching day is an opportunity to impact a life: to encourage a struggling student to see themselves differently, to introduce an at-level reader to a text that truly excites them, and/or to challenge an advanced reader to continue building literacy skills for the future. These are the moments that remind us why we are teachers. I remind myself of these moments as I watch students around the country have their own moment. They are showing us that they can be self-advocates for change, safety, and justice. They are not sitting still and letting policy interfere with their rights to education. Their passions and commitments should inspire us to double down on our own; they should remind us again of the crucial role of literacy instruction. This reminder makes reading about literacy and talking with our colleagues that much more urgent. Consider reading these books (and others like them) as ways to support students as they give voice to their desire for ownership of their future.

Take a Moment


Even though disciplinary literacy has become quite popular over the past several years, it is still hard to find a good disciplinary literacy book for teachers or teacher candidates. This is because even though disciplinary literacy emphasizes the specialized literacy practices of the disciplines, there is much more to it than that. All the things that research tells us about effective literacy instruction still matter. Students still need basic literacy skills. They still need to read actively and monitor their comprehension. The intermediate or “generic” literacy strategies that many of us grew up teaching or learning as students (KWL, QAR, etc.) still have a place—in fact, they can easily be adapted to better fit the disciplines. It is not an “either, or,” it is a “both, and.” Just as schools should not abandon a balanced literacy approach to focus solely on complex texts and close reading, teachers should not forget what they already know about teaching reading to focus solely on specialized disciplinary literacy practices.

That is why I appreciate the new (second) edition of Doug Buehl’s book, *Developing Readers in the Academic Disciplines* so much. Released in 2017, it gives a comprehensive view of teaching reading in middle and high school classrooms, with an emphasis on disciplinary literacy. Buehl, a renowned teacher and reading specialist, makes the research and theory behind disciplinary literacy come to life through extended examples and artifacts that feel as if they were pulled from the pages of a teacher’s plan book—or at least her lesson plan folder on Google Drive! His examples extend beyond the core subjects to areas such as World Languages and Physical Education, which other books rarely address. His style is accessible for non-literacy folks as well. For instance, he explains how students
must develop their signature “reader moves” (p. 236) much like the moves of Lionel Messi in soccer or Stephen Curry in basketball. Like so many other great literacy educators from Nancy Atwell to Christopher Emdin, he includes anecdotes from his own life that give his writing a sense of authenticity. The second edition is also physically larger than the first, making the pages much easier to read and reproduce.

Though Buehl recommends pairing this book with his classic text, Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning (Buehl, 2014), it could stand alone if the reader had a foundational knowledge of literacy instruction. While it may be unfair to critique a book with “developing readers” in the title as being too focused on reading, given the reciprocal nature of reading and writing and the central importance of writing in the disciplines, the book could have been strengthened by more emphasis on how writing disciplinary texts helps students become better readers and vice versa. It also does not put much emphasis on digital literacy. Nonetheless, I strongly recommend Developing Readers in the Academic Disciplines. Every time I open my own copy, I get several new ideas that I am eager to try out in my classroom or share with colleagues. –RM


While this book is undeniably on the scholarly side, there is practical information in it as well. This book helped me with a question I’ve had for quite a while: What exactly will our classrooms look like when we are utilizing multiple literacies in a variety of authentic ways? After reading this book, I have a much clearer picture of that transformation than I did before.

The introduction to the book very helpfully states some essential ideas that are developed in the chapters that follow. They fall into two categories. The first is diversity in meaning-making modalities, with instruction in ways to fully grasp intended meanings in each one. The second category involves the concept of student as designer rather than reader and writer, with a lot more hands-on learning and self-directed inquiry.

Each chapter is authored by a different set of scholars. If you’re up for some theory, many of the chapters provide plenty. However, one chapter also describes an enlightening example called Poetry Inside Out (p. 63). Bilingual students work in groups translating poems from countries all over the world into English. They use biographies and pictures of the poets for extra insight, and they engage in discussions with each other in which they must defend their choices regarding what English words to use. In addition to that, they discuss ways in which to make the translations also sound like poetry so that they themselves are acting as poets.

Another chapter explains Personal Digital Inquiry (p. 119), a framework that combines personal student goals,
collaboration, experiential learning, action to solve real-world problems, and use of multi-modal tools for both knowledge building and sharing. The authors explain how these elements can come together in ways that can be adapted for use by teachers within every school discipline. They greatly clarify how the networking possibilities of digital tools make knowledge much more accessible and allow students to explore multiple perspectives with greater ease. They point out the opportunities for teachers to insert skill instruction into inquiries that will allow their students to navigate the online world in an informed, reflective way. And to make possibilities even easier to visualize, they provide some examples of actual classroom activities they have observed that employ their ideas.

A chapter on play and imagination makes it clear that some already existing practices belong in the multiliteracies category. What preschool or Kindergarten teacher doesn’t incorporate imaginative play? The authors of this chapter simply put a multiliteracies lens on it by giving examples of ways in which children can use play to redesign and improve reality, as does a boy who made a boat that he imagined would protect places from hurricane damage out of a cardboard box, a spool, and a rubber band. Student as designer!

So, after reading this book, the word “more” comes to mind: more student-selected inquiry, more making and designing, more students collaborating and learning from each other, and more guidance in evaluating the vast treasure trove of information online so it can be used in a way that builds and deepens knowledge. More because these things are already occurring in classrooms; they just need to occur in more classrooms, more often. Books like this one help us see how to accomplish that. –IS


I know. I know. I went off script. I am reviewing a book that was written not this year, not even last, but in the dark ages of 2009. Though I had two other fine books (from this year) set to review, after reading this text and thinking about the high school students in Florida and, just recently, Maryland, I decided that sharing the power of this book was more important than worrying about the date.

*The Right to Literacy in Secondary Schools: Creating a Culture of Thinking* is a must read for middle and high school teachers and a please-read for elementary teachers and administrators. I say this because the ideas in this book don’t spring out of nowhere. They are reliant on strong literacy instruction leading up to high school so that high school teachers can exploit the power of reading and writing in sophisticated ways. Plaut edits this collection that came out of her work in the Public Education & Business Coalition, a policy organization focused upon increasing public awareness and inciting the business community to invest in the important work of professional development in literacy. The authors were part of a study group who met monthly to talk through these ideas and to build a community around shared values. Many of these authors are teachers, some write public policy, some are administrators, and some work in professional development. From these different areas, they share a goal to “grow thinkers and improve student achievement by inspiring and developing educators’ instructional and leadership practices.
through inquiry, application, and scholarly discourse” (p. 5). Plaut encourages faculties to get together and read through the chapters in conversation, especially thinking through these ideas in their own contexts. In short, this book is a call to action for teachers. It asks them to take seriously how urgent it is that young people can read critically and write convincingly. There is no option.

This book is nothing if not user-friendly (now, if all high school textbooks could be just as generous!). Each chapter starts with a brief summary and a few bulleted key points. Following the chapter are sections labeled “How to Begin,” “Lingering Questions,” “Leadership Perspective,” and “Related Readings.” In addition, after each multi-chapter section (on “Vision and Values,” “Beliefs,” and “Essential Frameworks”) is a brief reflection that brings together the small set of related chapters. Don’t overlook the foreword by Theodore Sizer, an important scholar who reminds us that providing contexts for literacy learning is our moral imperative. –JB


Pernille Ripp didn’t start out as a perfect teacher, nor does she claim to be one now. In fact, that is one of the things that is so appealing about her latest book, *Passionate Readers: The Art of Reaching and Engaging Every Child.* On her way to compelling us to reconsider how we approach our language arts instruction, she shares her very relatable journey, warts and all.

In every chapter, she describes her own experiences as a former elementary school and now middle school teacher, missteps she made in her practice, how and why she changed, and small and big changes we can make as well. Her central theme is that one of our most important jobs as teachers is to ensure our students become readers, to take them from where they are when they first enter our classroom (avid readers, non-readers, struggling readers, etc.), and to support their reading journeys, wherever they may take them.

She starts with the premise that if we want to engage our students in reading, really engage them, then we better be readers ourselves and be willing to share our reading identities with our students. She goes on to make a case for prioritizing our classroom libraries above almost anything else. She writes, “It makes little sense to me to spend thousands of dollars on a program that teaches reading comprehension if little to no money is spent on the books handed to students to help them love reading” (p. 33). She shares stories about her students that illustrate the importance of stocking our libraries with not only books we love, but also books reflecting our students’ lives and interests; and she makes a strong pitch for including picture books, no matter the age of students. She then provides tips on ways to acquire books relatively cheaply, how to organize them (not by level, but by genre and subgenre), how to display them, how to get them in students’ hands, and how to approach administration about the importance of thriving classroom libraries.

After discussing the literacy environment and how to make sure students can create learning spaces that maximize their comfort and engagement, she discusses what she believes should be the non-negotiables of the language arts classroom. As a 7th-grade teacher, she has 45 minutes of instructional time; yet, every single day, she makes time for independent reading and read-alouds. She still teaches skills and strategies, still works with small groups, and still...
conferences with individual students, but she prioritizes independent reading because “It will not matter if we have taught every skill needed to a child to become a successful reader if he or she then decides to never read another book again” (p. 90).

This book is a gut check for all teachers. Deep down, we really do believe that our students need time to read widely to become lifelong readers, but we are so beset by standards, testing, and mandated curriculum that we sometimes forget what matters most. I can’t recommend this book highly enough; and with summer upon us, I can’t think of a better book to add to your summer reading than this one. It will recharge you and remind you of why you got into teaching in the first place. Also, check out Ripp’s blog at https://pernillesripp.com to read about her continuing teaching journey. –SD

About the Authors
Jennifer Berne is Dean of Liberal Arts at Harper College. Her research interests include literacy teacher professional development, writing instruction, and whole school change. Sophie Degener is an associate professor of Reading at National Louis University. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Literacy, and her research interests include early literacy, family literacy, and teacher education. Ryan McCarty is an assistant professor at National Louis University. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Literacy and is the site director of the North Shore Reading Center. His research interests include disciplinary literacy, argumentative writing, and teacher education. Ivy Sitkoski is a Reading Resource Specialist at St. Joseph Elementary School. She is also an adjunct professor at National Louis University. Her research interests include methods for teaching literacy as well as collaboration among reading specialists and speech language pathologists. All serve as school district consultants and are frequent presenters at local, state, national, and international literacy conferences. If you have comments about this column or suggestions of books to review, please send them along to Jennifer Berne: jberne@niu.edu.

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SRL - Leaders for Literacy, 6-12
Leadership in Reading

Susan L. Massey

About This Column

Editor’s Note: Susan Massey, the author of this column, will be leaving Northern Illinois University to begin a faculty position in Iowa. This will be her last column for the Illinois Reading Council Journal. Susan, on behalf of the IRCJ editorial board and our readers, thank you for your many years of service to the Illinois Reading Council. We will miss your excellent writing and worthwhile advice. We wish you all the best as you begin this new phase of your career.

Understanding the “Gender Gap”

When provided with a cursory view of student reading achievement, it appears that a gender gap exists between girls and boys according to their reading achievement scores. Girls have outperformed boys in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and basic language skills on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) every year since the initial recording of data in 1971; however, the gap has been narrowing in the past decade (Loveless, 2015). Explanations for the gender gap are commonly attributed to biological or developmental differences, varying school practices, and cultural influences. It is also important to note that environmental and ecological factors contribute to gender gaps because children’s abilities develop within a sociocultural context (Eliot, 2010). While there are definite gender differences in boys and girls related to literacy achievement, it is important to note how boys and girls negotiate reading strategies and skills, how they relate to peers, and how they perceive themselves as readers (Scholes, 2018).

School literacy leaders can assist teachers in their awareness and understanding of how gendered attitudes, stereotypes, expectations, and behaviors influence their pedagogical practices and subsequent student outcomes (Scholes, 2018). Once an awareness is recognized, teachers can adjust their practices to better assist girls and boys as they engage in literacy activities to narrow the achievement gap.

Gender Differences

Neurological, sensory-perception, physical, and biological differences have been recognized between genders. Granted that gender identity is on a spectrum rather than merely a binary of boy and girl characteristics (Sadker & Koch, 2016), male brains mainly process language in the left hemisphere, and female brains process language in both hemispheres (Sousa, 2005). This neurological difference indicates that verbal and written language abilities typically develop earlier in females than in males (Bonomo, 2010). Language skills are a critical component in early literacy development. Conversely, the section of the brain responsible for spatial and mathematical reasoning is generally larger in the male brain and may account for a higher achievement in males’ documented mathematical performance (Bonomo, 2010). Research evidence suggests that sensory-perception differences exist between males and females. Evidence indicates that the construction and the perception of the eye varies between the genders (Bonomo,
Sax (2006) determined that the male eye is drawn to cooler colors such as silver, black, blue, and gray; while the female eye is drawn to warmer colors such as red, yellow, and orange. In addition, females are drawn to more detailed visuals with faces and people, and males are drawn to object-based pictures. These perceptual differences may account for differences in academic material choices between genders. When considering auditory sensory differences, "girls are able to absorb more sensory information than boys and can hear softer sounds better than boys" (Senn, 2012, p. 215). This auditory difference may negatively impact boys' early literacy abilities to discriminate sounds and attend to oral instruction and classroom activities. The auditory differences may also impact boys' attentiveness in classroom situations.

Physiological differences related to the autonomic nervous system are also noted in the literature on gender differences (Bonomo, 2010). The female autonomic system is influenced more by the parasympathetic nervous system and is exemplified by a "rest and digest" response to a question, confrontation, or threat (Bonomo, 2010). When presented with a question, confrontation, or threat, the common reaction for a female is to freeze, feel unable to move, and ponder the situation. On the other hand, the male autonomic nervous system responds to similar conditions in a "fight or flight" response in which the male feels a sense of excitement and enjoys the experience and potential challenge (Bonomo, 2010). Brain research also indicates that males have a higher metabolism and energy level indicating a need for movement to stimulate brain activity and enhanced communication between the two brain hemispheres (Senn, 2012).

Although not considered a physical or biological difference, motivation for literacy tasks between the genders also impacts literacy achievement. Studies indicate that boys are less engaged in reading tasks than girls and have poorer intrinsic motivation to read (e.g., Hochweber & Vieluf, 2018; McGeown, Goodwin, Henderson, & Wright, 2012; McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer, 2012). These differences are evident in elementary school and persist into middle and high school, possibly impacting literacy achievement.

Despite the differences among genders, it is worth recognizing the importance of the brain's neuroplasticity—the concept that the neuropathways of the brain can be reorganized based on firsthand experiences and multisensory stimulation (Gregory & Kaufeldt, 2015; Sadker & Koch, 2016). This discovery provides encouragement for narrowing the achievement gap by challenging the notion that children are limited by their gender characteristics. Given appropriate experiences, the basic architecture of the brain can be rebuilt, and some of these gender differences may no longer be significant.

**Ecological Influences**

Children's literacy development is also influenced by their surroundings and interactional experiences. As Bronfenbrenner (1979) outlined in his Ecological Model of Human Development, a child's literacy development is influenced and shaped through interactions with family, peers, teachers, school community, society, and culture and the interactions among these entities. Therefore, gender perceptions of individuals within these ecological systems become an integral piece of the gender gap puzzle.

Social beliefs related to gender can influence a child's self-efficacy about performance and achievement (Gregory & Kaufeldt, 2015). Self-efficacy, the concept referring to people's beliefs that they have the skills and knowledge to perform certain tasks (Bandura, 1993), influences a child's motivation and performance in reading and writing tasks (Carroll & Fox, 2017). For example, a child with strong literacy skills will likely be aware that he or she is a good reader and writer and, therefore, have a high self-efficacy. Teacher and parent beliefs and attitudes influence their perceptions and attitudes toward their students.
and/or children (Boerma, Mol, & Jolles, 2016). In fact, the results of a study investigating teacher perceptions of boys’ and girls’ reading comprehension abilities indicated that teachers tended to perceive girls as better at reading comprehension than boys (Boerma et al., 2016). Parents often contribute to gender stereotypes based on toys and books chosen for their children, expectations of appropriate activities categorized according to perceived gender roles (Eliot, 2010), and parental views of reading (Scholes, 2018). Gender bias messages, therefore, may be inadvertently transferred to children, subsequently influencing a student’s self-efficacy for literacy-related tasks. When gender differences are reinforced as unmalleable by neuroscientific explanations that are still evolving, harmful and limiting stereotypes about what it means to be a boy and what it means to be a girl become cemented as truths in the minds of parents and educators. . . . There may be innate, biologically based differences in men and women, but gender differences may also be the result of culture and socialization that emphasize different skill sets for men and women and provide boys and girls different opportunities to develop particular abilities. (Scholes, 2018, p. 40)

Taking the physiological gender differences and ecological influences on gender perceptions into consideration, a number of implications for instruction have been promoted by researchers and practitioners. The role literacy leaders assume in narrowing the gender gap is to bring awareness to school personnel and promote instructional practices benefitting all genders to alleviate any gaps in literacy achievement.

**Implications for Instruction and Pedagogical Practice**

Based on studies of gender differences, reading achievement, and reading self-efficacy, several implications for instruction are noted in the literature. These implications for instruction and pedagogical practice relate to all students along the gender spectrum.

**Reduce Gender Stereotyping**

Stereotypes often exist indicating that boys are emotionally stoic, independent, autonomous, competitive, and mathematical (Reichert, 2016), while girls are stereotyped as verbal, prefer sedentary learning activities, and enjoy reading and writing (Brozo et al., 2014; Eliot, 2010). To reduce gender stereotyping, teachers need to be aware of their own biases and to consider the expectations or assumptions they make of students based on gender.

**Maintain High Expectations**

Teachers must maintain high expectations for all students to develop necessary reading and writing skills. Curriculum and assessments should be connected to the everyday lives of boys and girls so that they understand the implications of possessing these integral skills.

**Infuse Higher-Order and Problem-Solving Activities**

One method of infusing higher-order and problem-solving activities is through the adoption of an inquiry model of learning (Fisher & Frey, 2012). An inquiry model promotes an inquisitive mind and helps build connections among engagement, performance, outcomes, and self-efficacy. Engaging in problem-solving activities serves to encourage critical thinking, collaboration, and experiential learning.
**Appeal to Student Interests and Choices**

Allowing students to exercise choice in reading and writing tasks provides them with opportunities to develop a sense of ownership and importance in decision-making processes (Senn, 2012). When students learn about topics that interest them, they engage more in their learning, which, in turn, increases motivation (King, Gurian, & Stevens, 2010).

**Incorporate Manipulative Activities and Movement**

Pairing movement with learning activities increases brain activity (King et al., 2010). Movement and manipulative activities activate the various senses to promote learning. Kinesthetic and experiential learning lessons engage boys and girls in the content presented (Bonomo, 2010).

**Expand Reading Material Options**

Offering a variety of reading material options in the classroom can increase motivation and encourage students to actively engage in literacy activities (King et al., 2010). Materials may include picture books, graphic novels, magazines, digital print, websites, primary documents, short articles, series books, fiction texts, and informational texts (Brozo et al., 2014; Senn, 2012; Serafini, 2013; Zambo, 2007). Presenting a variety of materials in the classroom can easily appeal to a student’s visual interests.

**Enhance Reading Motivation**

A variety of instructional practices serve to enhance reading motivation. When students are given some autonomy over their learning, engage in social interactions as part of reading and writing activities, and understand the relevance of what they are learning, their self-efficacy is enhanced and motivation for reading and writing tasks improves (Carroll & Fox, 2017; Wigfield, Gladstone, & Turci, 2016). Children who have positive experiences with literacy tasks tend to read more which further enhances their language and literacy performance (Boerma et al., 2016).

**Build Respectful and Caring Relationships with Students**

Teachers who develop a respectful and caring environment often share common interests with students, acknowledge common characteristics, and respond to students’ personal interests or talents (Reichert, 2016). In creating a respectful classroom environment, teachers’ positive perceptions of students’ literacy abilities can improve the students’ reading attitude which further influences their literacy achievement (Boerma et al., 2016).

**What Is the Nature of the “Gender Gap”?**

What is the root cause of the perceived gender achievement gap? While physiological differences in genders account for some differences in achievement, a number of other factors influence literacy achievement within the sociocultural context of families, classrooms, and schools. As literacy leaders assist teachers in identifying their gender biases and encourage teachers to create gender-relevant curricula and pedagogical practices, improved learning outcomes can be realized for all students (Bristol, 2015). Improving teaching quality related to cognitive activation serves to reduce the disadvantages boys have faced in literacy achievement while at the same time equally benefitting girls (Hochweber & Vieluf, 2018; Logan & Johnston, 2010). In sum, “Perhaps it is time to move beyond the boy versus girl debate about achievement and focus on structures that motivate and engage readers” (Fisher & Frey, 2012, p. 595).
References


About the Author

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Check This Out

Marie Ann Donovan and Mary Yockey

About This Column

The roles and activities of school librarians and media specialists are rapidly shifting in our 21st-century schools as they transform their centers into learning laboratories for all stakeholders—students, school personnel, and family/community members. This column connects Illinois Reading Council members with the latest research, trends, resources, and ways of thinking about the unique roles and expertise of library and media specialists in fostering student literacy.

Are You Game?
Gamification of the Library

Good games are learning machines. . . . They show that pleasure and emotional involvement are central to thinking and learning. They show that language has its true home in action, the world, and dialogue, not in dictionaries and texts alone.

–Gee, 2007, p. 2

Ten years ago, if you asked upper-elementary students the types of adult-supplied learning engagements and materials they experienced in their classrooms, school libraries, and homes, the overwhelming majority would include books and book-related activities, along with some digital media. Those responses shifted dramatically within this current decade, however. Today, most students note that they routinely engage with digital media across those sites for much of their waking hours—an unprecedented rate of increase in such a relatively short time. Further, although elementary-age students still secure most of these media through the adults in charge of the spaces and/or wallets, what’s also changed is how often students find them on their own, and why: at the behest of their parents and other personally significant adults (Gee, Takeuchi, & Wartella, 2018; Maul et al., 2017).

As the learning ways, means, and reasons shifted from paper to digital, the nature of children’s learning engagements changed, too. In the earlier days of digital learning, school and home software was typically designed for individual use. The younger the child, the more the digital learning experience was mediated by an adult. Although many software titles could be shared through turn-taking, that was not the norm in schools, usually due to how software was used—in classroom learning centers and separate laboratories or in the library, where personal headphones were worn and the purpose was scaffolding each child’s learning separately. This is not the case today. The lines have blurred between digital materials for education and those designed for entertainment; edutainment (Siyahhan & Lee, 2018) is the “new norm” in many schools and homes. And as these lines converged, so too has the work of school librarians who now are most schools’ main (or only) expert on determining the relevance and appropriateness of edutainment media.
Another digital-era changing landscape phenomenon regards how children and adults use the media in schools. With the rising popularity of online, interactive video gaming communities for ever-younger ages, school librarians are shifting yet again in how they design schedules, spaces, and instruction so that children can learn through being part of joint media engagements (JMEs) (Stevens, Satwicz, & McCarthy, 2008) and connected learning experiences. In JMEs, learning is a social event facilitated by multimedia (including print). Participants collaborate and co-view—in person and virtually. The “connected” aspect of the learning is an ecosystem of linked resources that are not all virtual—commercial software (including apps), websites of museums, public and private libraries, students and teachers at other schools, employers, mentors, and youth groups, among others (MacArthur Foundation, 2015). These library-based exploratory learning opportunities are curated and managed by the connected learning librarians and media specialists in the schools or districts. As one veteran librarian we interviewed happily shared, “I used to be called the ‘book whisperer’; now I’m the ‘digital maven’ who knows how to teach over 200 apps!”

In the JME settings we studied, students work together in teams on self-identified projects aided by adults in the library. The librarians determine how best to guide and structure the JME whereby students will build upon curricular concepts, skills, and strategies introduced in the classroom. Although adults remain part of the children’s JMEs, their role is multifaceted—coach, coordinator, and invested participant. What differentiates these learning engagements from others we have studied is how students are choosing to learn—in large part through playing games on their own or with others who may be a world away.

**Play at the Center of Natural Learning**

*Play shows us our common humanity. It is the genesis of innovation, and allows us to deal with an ever-changing world.*

—Brown & Vaughan, 2009, p. 14

Some adults distinguish between *play* and *learning* as though the two are unrelated. (They also divorce *learning* and *fun* in ways that boggle our minds as teachers, but that’s a different column.) What they do not seem to recognize is that play is the most human way of learning. Think back to when you were young and engaged in play. What do you remember most about playing? Was it how immersed you became in your play, creating your own world, fully in charge of making your own decisions, taking learning risks as you figured things out for yourself? Or perhaps how spontaneous and free you could be? Or how much pleasure you derived from playing? What else do you recall?

Children’s modes of play can be categorized in a variety of ways (National Institute for Play, n.d.):

- Body/movement
- Object manipulation
- Imaginary and pretend
- Social
- Storytelling and narrative
- Creative or fantasy

Play-based curricula in preschools model and encourage young children to explore all these types of play as part of their instructional days. Unfortunately, by the time children reach the elementary school, their in-school playtime is significantly reduced. Yet, as the nuances of brain-body connections are identified through advances in neuroscientific research, more educators are actively seeking ways to bring play opportunities of the types listed above back into the curricula. The main way schools are doing so is by incorporating games into students’ everyday classroom and library experiences (Schrier, 2014).
Simply defined, “A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome” (Salen & Zimmerman, 2003, p. 2). Much is understood about what makes one game more engaging than another, no matter its medium (e.g., board or online multiplayer role-playing). In general, the best games possess the following features (Institute of Play, n.d.; Salen & Zimmerman, 2003):

- The environment simulates the real world somehow, even if fantasy-based.
- There is an obvious storyline or stated goal.
- The game sets up a competition, either internal or with other players.
- Feedback is continuous.
- Immediate rewards are obtainable.
- Progress through the game is self-directed, based totally on players’ decisions.
- Risks are low; failure is a learning experience, not the end of play.

Why is play so important for us educators to reconsider now? After years of identifying a connection between patients who did not experience healthy play when young and their subsequent violent, negative personalities and life outcomes as adults, psychiatrist Stuart Brown founded the National Institute for Play (NIFP) in Carmel, California, to serve as a clearinghouse and think tank for clinical research on play. NIFP’s continued main goal is to expand our understanding of play’s nuances over ages and stages. They seek ways to ensure we all learn how to play, and how to play well, across our lifespans. Among the many findings already coalescing in play research are those related to certain types of video games. In their meta-analysis of extant scientific literature, Granic, Lobel, and Engels (2014) found that many studies’ results converge over how these games improved young adult players’ attention spans, ability to focus, and their regulation of behavior to positive ends, among other psychological benefits. They also discovered how numerous studies illuminated the prosocial skills players develop through their online interactions that carried over into real-world relationships, a burgeoning research vein predicted to change how video and other games are designed in the future (Farber & Schrier, 2017).

Not all types of games that children (and adults) play realize benefits, or the same benefits. Choosing which types will help students meet the planned learning outcomes is key to running a successful library gaming program, as is determining its organizers and stakeholders. Also, not all games need to be digitally based (Harris, 2014). No matter the medium, what distinguishes a better game from a lesser one is the degree to which its design framework views learning as a participatory, not acquisitive, endeavor (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006).

**Game and Game Program Types**

Libraries vary in their approaches to selecting games as well as how students engage with them. Many of the school libraries we studied base their gaming program models on ones developed by public libraries (American Library Association, 2014) and sponsor engagements such as these:

- Scheduled game-focused nights (e.g., tournaments, themed after-school play, make-and-take a game for home)
- Game playing (individually or with partners) options as alternatives to book-based engagements while in the library, but under the supervision of a teacher
- Lending collection of games that students borrow to play at home
- Library sections devoted exclusively to gaming, where students can play

We found that, typically, school libraries use a mixed model in their gaming programming. Some librarians emphasized their need to control the amount of gaming done during the school day,
mainly because teachers or administrators were still warming up to the idea of including games in the curriculum. Other librarians enjoyed collaborating with classroom teachers in developing game nights at the school as a way to teach parents how to interact with their children while gaming (a growing parent education need; Shapiro, 2013). Despite the success of these evening events, the teachers and librarians held off for a while before launching any new program elements. They noted how important it is to start small, limiting the number of events the first year. Doing so affords more time and feedback to fold into ongoing planning for the entire gaming program.

Librarians overseeing gaming programs noted in their conversations with us that all stakeholders—classroom teachers, students, administrators, boards, and PTOs—need to share in designing the gaming program. Recognizing everyone’s basic human need to play is not yet an established value or belief (which is why the NIFP was created). Many adults still view gaming as a pastime—at most, something inappropriate for housing within the four school walls. Others are not familiar with the wide variety of game types available today and fear their children might be forced into playing a shooter game. By involving as many stakeholders as you can in the initial steps of establishing your gaming program, and communicating widely the types of activities as well as materials children will be using, you will increase the odds your program evolves into being sustainable and worthwhile.

No matter your stage of gaming program development, you ultimately face that eternal school dilemma: Where will we fit it in?

Setting Up Your Gaming Space

The expert gaming librarians we know are savvy about finding or repurposing existing space to meet students’ gaming needs. In some schools, we have seen room dividers used to section off the library, which keeps the distracting monitors from interfering with other patrons’ purposes for being in the library. Depending upon the equipment you need for your program type (e.g., consoles for multiplayer games; tables and shelving for board games), consider moving furniture around whereby it creates an isolated space for the gamers. Gamers tend to grow noisier the longer they remain in a space. If they use wireless headsets, they also tend to jump up and yell a lot as a way to comment on the action in the game.

If you cannot do much (or anything) to your physical space, involve all school personnel in identifying under-utilized space in your present building. Once gamers are immersed in their games, they tend to ignore what’s around them. In other words, they do not need as much space or as furnished a space as we adults might think.

If physical space remains a roadblock to launching your program, it might be that you need to narrow the scope of your program and its learning outcomes. In a few cases we learned of, once the librarians were able to tie the games to specific learning outcomes, the local school boards were more interested in allocating funding for furniture and rugs, in addition to equipment and software.

If your school or district has yet to accept responsibility for infusing game playing into the instructional day, direct everyone’s attention to the Common Core State Standards. Librarian Christopher Harris (2014) designed his library’s gaming program around the Common Core Math Practice Standards for abstract and quantitative reasoning by using board games—an inexpensive and recommended way to begin creating your program if you have not yet done so. We include in the “Resources” below a variety of links to other programs and design frameworks that will help you carve out your own initial gaming program.

Learn More, Do More

In our work with schools devoted to introducing and keeping games in their libraries, we discovered that what they had in common was simple: A keen desire to make 21st-century learning more engaging, more relatable, and more successful for all their students. We recognize that
there continues to be great debate over video games’ efficacy, and not all schools will be comfortable in realizing this shift. Nevertheless, we encourage you to try a few games with your students, or to add a few others to your existing mix of titles. Game designs and content change dramatically each year. Keeping abreast—and relevant—is a critical professional activity.

We hope the resources below help you think more about how you can begin developing or refining your library gaming program. As you learn more, please share what you discover with us. We always enjoy learning from our literacy educator colleagues!

https://goo.gl/uf57s7

References


Resources

Arizona State University Center for Games & Impact
https://gamesandimpact.org

The researchers and teachers who collaborate at the Center are wholly devoted to shifting today’s instruction to be more playful, interactive, and relevant to how 21st-century connected learners need to live their lives inside and outside of school. Their research projects are applied in nature. The site resources depict how schools are transformed through adoption of games to their curricula and instructional repertoires.

Joan Ganz Cooney Center
http://joanganzcooneycenter.org

Developed and named for one of Sesame Street’s founders, this New York-based center is wholly focused upon asking the question Joan Ganz Cooney posed decades ago: “How can we harness the power and reach of media to educate children?” If you are looking for confirmation and validation of your desire to adopt gaming (and other digital media) into your school, start by reviewing the wealth of research conducted by this center.

MIT Laboratory for Educators
https://education.mit.edu/research

MIT’s Scheller Teacher Education Program: Education Arcade Laboratory is the research engine for their secondary-level teacher preparation program. Students and teachers seeking professional development work alongside researchers and global school communities to define and refine what we presently know about designing games for optimum learning. The projects and publications on this site are useful in creating a program as well as advocating for funding of it.

Connected Learning Research Network
https://clrn.dmlhub.net

We point colleagues to this site when they struggle to accept or otherwise feel comfortable with incorporating more digital media into their instructional spaces. The Network’s researchers and practitioners investigate tough (i.e., not-easy-to-answer) questions about digital media and their effects on cultures, society, and individuals. The Network offers annual conferences and other events (virtual as well as face-to-face) where practitioners join skeptics to learn and grow through each other’s work in challenging the digital status quo.

ALA Round Table: Games and Gaming
www.ala.org/rt/gamert

We hope you will join this Round Table, developed originally by public librarians but now aiming to include more school-based librarians in its membership. This special interest group features panels and presentations at the annual ALA meeting, and it supports school librarians in developing their programs as well as sharing their experiences across the library world. As you can imagine, they are a fun group to get to know.

Quest to Learn School
www.q2l.org

Did you know there is a public grade 6-12 school where children learn exclusively through engagement in games? Located in New York City, QLS was developed through a grant from the MacArthur Foundation to a group of teachers dedicated to changing how schools conceive their instructional days. We always share this site with educators trying to envision an alternative to their current, overly packed, fragmented, instructional situations. Take a look—you will no doubt find QLS inspirational!
About the Authors

Marie Ann Donovan is an associate professor of Education at DePaul University in Chicago. She teaches preservice teacher courses in reading instruction and children’s as well as young adult literature. Thwarted when young in pursuing a career in library science (due to severe dust allergies), she devotes time to hanging out with librarians, publishers, and children in pursuit of Their Next Good Read. She also researches adult learning and teacher induction in vocational education settings.

Mary Yockey is the director of the Library Media Center at Clifford Crone Middle School in Naperville/Indian Prairie School District 204. After enjoying a career in the publishing industry and as a bookseller, she shifted gears and earned her master’s degree in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She develops school, district, and community literature programs on global awareness, social justice issues, and discovering Your Next Good Read. She also leads a technology-rich program exploring STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) in the context of literacy and literature.

Emili F., Grade 11, Safe Haven School

Tanaria G., Grade 11, Safe Haven School
The “Bates” Shop: Fishing for Primary Source Documents

David Bates

About This Column

Teachers have known for decades about the importance of using primary source documents to help students gain a more complete understanding of historical events. According to the Library of Congress website (www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/whyuse.html), “Primary sources provide a window into the past—unfiltered access to the records of artistic, social, scientific, and political thought and achievement during the specific period under study, produced by people who lived during that period.” Thanks to resources such as the Library of Congress site, teachers have unprecedented access to thousands of documents. Using these resources brings history to life and, perhaps more importantly for IRCJ readers, exposes students to a variety of text structures and formats. In this column, examples for teachers to incorporate primary source documents with language arts will be provided.

Illustrating Historical Fiction

Picture books have always been a crucial way of keeping children’s attention and teaching them to read. Even as adults, practically everyone can list a half-dozen picture books that made an indelible impression on their minds as youngsters. As students grow older, however, the preponderance of pictures in books drops significantly; indeed, it is almost a cliché or bad joke that as children grow older and begin reading more sophisticated fiction, their first question is “Where are all the pictures?” As it happens, this is a more astute question than it may first appear. Research has long held that pictures can boost students’ performance in a variety of text-dependent assessments. Recent research has found that that conclusion remains valid (Carney & Levin, 2002). Indeed, given that the Common Core State Standards for reading demand that students “integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA Center & CCSSO], 2010), the connection between text and images seems more important than ever.

While it may not be practical to re-introduce true picture books in later grades, there is no reason not to integrate images with text materials. Indeed, as students get older, teachers can shift much of the onus for locating, matching, and analyzing images to the students themselves. In one iteration of this idea, you can ask students to illustrate a text themselves—to locate a crucial chapter or page or passage or even word that strikes them as important or memorable. Then, you can ask them to match that passage to an image to illustrate that text. In this way, you are not only forging a connection between the text and the images, but also promoting students’ research and analytical skills. In this essay, I will show how a variety of images—namely, photographs, maps, and other data—can be used to illustrate Upton Sinclair’s 1906 novel The Jungle.

The Jungle, a staple of upper-level history courses practically since its publication, is almost
as fascinating in its back story as in its narrative. Sinclair, a “muckraker” who sought to expose the corruption of Gilded Age America, reportedly said on his arrival in Chicago in 1904, “I have come to write the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* of the labor movement” (quoted in Barrett, 1988, p. xi). This boast was perhaps more true than even Sinclair intended. Like Harriet Beecher Stowe’s famous antislavery novel, *The Jungle* was a work of questionable literary quality—its prose is turgid, its plot convoluted, and its characters one-dimensional—that nonetheless endures because of its social and historical significance.

*The Jungle* follows Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkus as he suffers through brutal working and living conditions in the Chicago stockyards and encounters the degeneracy of economic elites and the corruption of political bosses. After a series of personal tragedies, Rudkus turns to socialism as the only way forward. Sinclair was hoping to write a socialist polemic, but—then and now—the novel’s most arresting quality, and the one which had the most social impact, is the revolting descriptions of meatpacking work. As Sinclair famously quipped, “I aimed at the public’s heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach” (quoted in Barrett, 1988, p. xiii). But this quality of realism is by far the novel’s strongest suit. Hambasted as Sinclair may have been as a stylist, he was a masterful journalist. As historian James Barrett put it in an introduction to a recent edition of the novel, “Sinclair’s real genius . . . was an unrelenting realism in describing the grittier details of life among common people” (p. xiv). This documentary quality has not only ensured the novel’s legacy, it also makes it a straightforward example of how students might “illustrate” a book through the use of photographs, maps, or data visualizations.

**Photos**

Much of *The Jungle* is concerned with the brutal work of meatpacking—the exhausting drudgery, the constant danger of injury or even death, and the filth and disease. These descriptions form the centerpiece of the book, both by design (in Sinclair’s hopes of fomenting socialist change) and by accident (in its ultimate impact of fomenting disgust at food handling practices). These scenes, vividly drawn and meticulously described, lend themselves perfectly to an illustrating project. Take this passage, from Chapter 9, which is among the most famous in the book:

> *Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one. Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef-boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it. . . . There were men who worked in the cooking rooms, in the midst of steam and sickening odors, by artificial light; in these rooms the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour. . . . Some worked at the stamping machines, and it was very seldom that one could work long there at the pace that was set, and not give out and forget himself and have a part of his hand chopped off. . . . Worst of any, however, were the fertilizer men, and those who served in the cooking rooms. These people could not be shown to the visitor—for the odor of a fertilizer man would scare any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards, and as for the other men, who worked in tank rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting—sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham’s Pure Leaf Lard!* (Sinclair, 1906, pp. 116-117)

Given the book’s setting in early 20th-century Chicago, a multitude of photographs can be
used to accompany these passages. Perhaps the most interesting comes from Geo. R. Lawrence Co., a Chicago-based photography studio that specialized in panoramic photographs. At the turn of the century, around the time of the publication of The Jungle, Lawrence sent a team into the Armour plant to record conditions there (Moser, 2012). The resulting image is a bizarre, entrancing, and disturbing pastiche of packinghouse work.

The photo combines six images showing the life cycle of beef within the yards, from its beginnings in the stock pens through its finishing into chops and its shipping to market (Figure 1). In between, images show the working conditions of meatpackers. On the killing floor, men in white coats are shown clubbing cattle in front of a wall spattered with blood, while skinners and splitters begin butchering the cattle. At each stage, one is confronted by the sheer brutality of packinghouse work. The cattle are enormous, impossibly heavy, hanging from hooks and dwarfing the men nearby. All of the men are hunched over, working hard, and one cannot help but remember that most stockyard workers worked 12 hours a day, six days a week. The spattering of blood on the wall and on the white coats of hunkered-down men reinforces Sinclair’s horrific passage about the thumbs of the “knife-men.” The presence of coats and hats brings to mind the numbing chill in which the men were forced to work. None of the rooms look particularly clean (the room where sides of beef are hung for storage appears to have a dirt floor), and the men are working without gloves or other sanitary protection save white coats.

To integrate this image with the book, you might ask students at this point to choose one of the images and match it to a specific sentence or portion of the passage (or another—The Jungle contains no shortage of passages detailing work in the stockyards). Or, to match Sinclair’s own intentions, you might ask them to consider the men standing off to the side in each photo, hands in pockets. These men were, of course, the supervisors—company men who monitored the pace and quality of work and ruled their respective floors with an iron fist. You might ask students how the workers might feel, as—already freezing, sore, frequently injured—they are closely supervised by men who have hiring and firing power. As Sinclair (1906) himself put it, “The managers and superintendents and clerks of Packingtown were all recruited from another class, and never from the workers; they scorned the workers, the very meanest of them” (p. 121). This imperiousness only served to remind workers of their powerlessness—their own presence as a cog within a great slaughtering machine.

In a similar vein, Sinclair (1906) dedicates a number of pages to describing the revolting conditions of Packingtown, the neighborhood near the stockyards where employees and their families—mostly immigrants—live. Among the most vivid of these passages include the arrival of Jurgis and his young bride, Ona, in the neighborhood:

[T]here were no pavements—there were mountains and valleys and rivers, gullies and ditches, and great hollows full of stinking green water. In these pools the children played, and rolled about in the mud of the streets; here and there one noticed them digging in it, after trophies which they had stumbled on.
One wondered about this, as also about the swarms of flies which hung about the scene, literally blackening the air, and the strange, fetid odor which assailed one’s nostrils, a ghastly odor, of all the dead things of the universe. It impelled the visitor to questions and then the residents would explain, quietly, that all this was “made” land, and that it had been “made” by using it as a dumping ground for the city garbage. (p. 32)

The Newberry Library’s digital collection, “The Jungle and the Community: Workers and Reformers in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago,” contains a whole host of photos documenting these tenements and their environs. One image, from an article in the American Journal of Sociology, is a posed shot of Packingtown youths “gathering Christmas trophies from the dump” (Figure 2). The scene is indescribably pathetic: five children, none older than ten—with a sixth, a toddler, poking its head out of a stroller—gathering parcels. One holds up a threadbare Christmas tree barely taller than he is. In the background, the smokestacks and killing houses of the stockyards loom like a nightmare. Perhaps more than any other, this single image conveys the desperate poverty of stockyard workers and their families, and serves as a reflection of the horrors Sinclair hopes to illuminate.

Another image shows daily life in Packingtown (Figure 3). It shows a filthy, trash-strewn alley, its mud rutted by the tracks of a wagon visible in the background. A boy squats on a rickety wooden box and stares impassively at the camera. The image transmits to the viewer a scene of desperate poverty. The boy is in threadbare clothes. The alley in which he sits is dark and seems damp and unhealthy—a breeding ground for disease. It is the kind of place where the boy might be in danger of drowning in a shallow puddle, as happens to Jurgis’s only child, Antanas (Sinclair, 1906, pp. 251-252). Whereas the photo of children in the dump conveys the desperation of their lives, this photo communicates the grim misery of their everyday lives—confined to ramshackle homes on a filthy dirt street constructed on top of a pile of garbage. When matching these images, you might ask your students to consider physical feelings such as the frigid, unremitting cold of winter or the stinking, flyblown heat of summer; the prospect of playing in a filthy street where one could be drowned or crushed under a wagon or contract some hideous disease; or life within a tiny one-room house where food was scarce.

One final photo gives a grim glimpse into a stockyards tenement house (Figure 4). It shows an old woman holding a child on her lap, while...
a girl stands nearby, a slight smile playing across her face. The room in which they stand is tiny—barely big enough to contain the three of them and the massive iron stove that dominates the image. All around the room laundry hangs on clotheslines. In the background, a bedroom—likely the only one in the apartment—is just barely visible. The room contains no light of its own, and is lit only indirectly by sunlight leaking in from the bedroom. The photo is reminiscent of Sinclair’s (1906) description of Jurgis and Ona’s first apartment:

[W]hen they saw the home . . . they could not but recoil . . . in all their journey they had seen nothing so bad as this. . . . There were four . . . flats in each building, and each of the four was a “boardinghouse” for the occupancy of foreigners.

. . . There would be an average of half a dozen boarders to each room—sometimes there were thirteen or fourteen to one room, fifty or sixty to a flat. Each one of the occupants furnished his own accommodations—that is, a mattress and some bedding. The mattresses would be spread upon the floor in rows—and there would be nothing else in the place except a stove. It was by no means unusual for two men to own the same mattress in common, one working by day and using it by night, and the other working at night and using it in the daytime. . . . [The] home was unthinkably filthy . . . [but] [t]here was nothing better to be had. (pp. 30-31)

Again, asking students for sensory impressions would be helpful here. Imagine the family crowded around the stove in winter, gathering

Figure 4. “Tenement Interiors in Chicago” (Hunter, 1901b)
whatever meager heat they could. Imagine the enormity of the summer heat in such a cramped, crowded space—especially for women, who were forced by the rules of gender propriety to be covered from head to toe year-round. Imagine the stink of Packingtown wafting in from outdoors and mixing with the sour smells of human sweat, soiled linens, and old food. The house would provide no respite whatsoever from the horrific conditions and bone-tiring toil of the stockyards; indeed, as Sinclair notes, Jurgis’s home provides but more agony for him and his family. These were the facts Sinclair hoped to convey to his readers, and these images help bring them to life.

Maps and Data

While photos can give students a window into the sensory and material conditions of the stockyards and Packingtown, you might also wish to provide a broader context on the area itself to help students situate it in their minds. Sinclair’s (1906) memorable recounting of the Rudkuses’ arrival in Packingtown can set the scene:

A full hour before the party reached the city they had begun to note the perplexing changes in the atmosphere. It grew darker all the time, and upon the earth the grass seemed to grow less green. Every minute, as the train sped on, the colors of things became dingier; the fields were grown parched and yellow, the landscape hideous and bare. And along with the thickening smoke they began to notice another circumstance, a strange, pungent odor. They were not sure that it was unpleasant, this odor; some might have called it sickening, but their taste in odors was not developed, and they were only sure that it was curious. . . . [Y]ou could literally taste it, as well as smell it—you could take hold of it, almost, and examine it at your leisure. . . . It was an elemental odor, raw and crude; it was rich, almost rancid, sensual, and strong. . . . [T]here were two rows of brick houses, and between them a vista: half a dozen chimneys, tall as the tallest of buildings, touching the very sky—and leaping from them half a dozen columns of smoke, thick, oily, and black as night. It might have come from the center of the world, this smoke, where the fires of the ages still smolder. It came as if self-impelled, driving all before it. . . . stretching a black pall as far as the eye could reach. (p. 28)

To illustrate such a passage, a broader view provided by maps or other data may be helpful. Several such sources are available. Charles Bushnell’s study of the Packingtown area produced two different sources that students can use to bring fact to bear on Sinclair’s fiction. The first is a map of the major industries of Chicago (Bushnell, 1901c; Figure 5), which is linked to areas of a variety of social and demographic indicators (child mortality, economic distress, 

Figure 5. “Map No. 4 of Chicago Showing the Geographical Relations of the Largest Industries” (Bushnell, 1901c)
criminality, and others). The map is sobering to behold. The industries are marked as small black dots, but the areas of social strain are cross-hatched lines that carve a great swath through an enormous segment of the city.

A map such as this helps convey, simply and straightforwardly, the ways in which the city’s industries contributed to a broad array of social ills—precisely Sinclair’s object when writing *The Jungle*. Examining the map and matching fact to fiction helps reveal Sinclair’s purpose while deepening students’ understanding of the historical circumstances surrounding his novel.

One final source repurposes the data from this map and puts it in a graph (Bushnell, 1901b; Figure 6). Bushnell used data from Packingtown and the comparatively tony Hyde Park neighborhood to create a comparison between the two along a number of the aforementioned indicators. The results are heartbreaking. In areas such as total deaths, number of saloons, and number of arrests, Packingtown far outpaces Hyde Park. The child mortality numbers are particularly heartbreaking and reflective of the disastrously unhealthy state of Packingtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. In Hyde Park, the mortality rate for children aged 0 to 5 is 20 per 1,000 live births; in Back of the Yards (the stock yard districts), it is nearly 40. For comparison’s sake, the 2016 figure for the United States as a whole was 7 (World Bank, 2018).

Students could use this data in a variety of ways. One way would be to compare the novel’s portrayal of life for immigrant stockyard workers with what they find in the data. What aspects of life in Packingtown made mortality rates so high? Why were so many people arrested? Why were saloons so plentiful? Combining their reading of the novel with the data in these sources can help shed light on this historical period. More importantly, it can make the novel come to life by showing that Sinclair’s (1906) story, lurid as it may seem, was built on meticulous research into the all too real horrors of life in Packingtown.

Historical fiction’s great advantage is that it can make history come alive for students. But all too often, it also results in placing a sort of distance between students and the material—making actual historical events seem overdramatized or subject to the vagaries of plot and narrative. By asking students to examine and match fictional works with nonfiction primary sources, you can help illuminate the author’s purpose while also giving students insight into historical actors, events, and periods. Rather than limiting students’ understanding of working-class immigrants to the embroidered tale of Jurgis Rudkus

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**Figure 6. “Graphic Comparison of Hyde Park and Stock Yard Districts of Chicago” (Bushnell, 1901b)**

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The “Bates” Shop
and his family, you can expand their knowledge into the very real people who populated Packingtown in the early 20th century, thus giving them a better sense of Sinclair’s purpose and a better sense of history for the unnamed millions who never made it into a novel.

References


About the Author

David Bates is an assistant professor of History at Concordia University Chicago. Previously, he served as director of the Teaching with Primary Sources program at DePaul University and as an adjunct instructor in DePaul’s College of Education. His research centers on issues of race and labor in U.S. history.
A Warm wELLcome for Language Learners

Joyce R. Bojko-Jeewek

About This Column

Years back, after telling friends and family I was getting my ESL endorsement, a lot of them asked if I spoke Spanish. This misconception is common among those not in the teaching profession, and occasionally even within our community. One does not need to speak another language to teach English to ELL students, but teachers do need to know what factors might cause difficulty in learning a new language. This is the next entry in our column dedicated to teaching our English Language Learners.

Culture and Language Transfer: Implications for All Teachers of English Language Learners

English Language Learners and Culture Shock

ELL students’ academic performance is highly influenced by their home culture and native language. Cultural identities affect students’ experiences academically, socially, and emotionally. The ELL population is comprised of many different cultures, including many who were born in the United States and speak a language other than English in the home. Students with the same language do not necessarily share the same cultural background; therefore, the student needs to be seen as a child and not as a member of a language group. Upon entering a new country, many ELL students may experience culture shock, a feeling of entering unfamiliar territory where cultural attitudes, values, and lifestyles are completely different than what they are accustomed to, and this shock may last up to two years (Storti, 2001). The greater the difference between ELLs’ new culture and their primary culture, the greater the culture shock will be (Levine & Adelman, 1993).

Second culture acquisition occurs when an individual obtains or learns about a second culture. Second language acquisition is accompanied by second culture acquisition (Libben & Lindner, 1996). The learner acquires new cultural knowledge and a set of culture-specific constraints on linguistic behavior. When an individual experiences a new culture, they may be exposed to this culture shock. Four stages can occur during culture shock: (1) the honeymoon stage, (2) the frustration stage, (3) the adjustment stage, and (4) the acceptance stage (Bellini, 2014). During the honeymoon stage, individuals feel extreme joy and excitement, responding to the new environment with fascination and enjoyment in the differences in areas such as fashion and food. In the frustration stage, individuals become angry, frustrated, and often critical of the new culture, resulting in having trouble with the new language, making friends, the housing situation, or schoolwork. The adjustment stage causes individuals to become critical of the new environment, including people, culture, and areas noticeably different from their home culture. Individuals may view their past culture as superior to the new culture. The last stage is the acceptance stage, and this occurs when individuals have adjusted to the changes and become more comfortable, often employing skills and resources to become fully adjusted.
Negative student behavior can also be reflective of culture shock. Culture shock is cyclical, and students can experience the various stages more than once when experiencing new situations (Brown, 2007). When experiencing a new language in the initial four-month period, excitement can be motivating. New sights and experiences can be compared to that of a tourist who is fascinated with the differences and similarities to language, culture, and country. Between four to eight months, though, the novelty wears off, and cultural differences become too obvious. Often, questions as to how the student fits into the new environment come up as prejudices may be experienced and develop. At between eight to 12 months, ELLs may experience greater participation in the new cultural environment and begin to accept their situation, knowing that they are here and need to make the best of it (Brown, 2007).

**BICS and CALP**

Understanding the stages of culture shock allows teachers to help ELL students navigate the potential rough waters related to these stages. Remembering that our English language is often unconventional, teachers need to consider both the social and academic aspects of language development. As academic language development takes between five and seven years, ELLs are being exposed to two types of communication: (1) social and (2) academic. Cummins (1989) discusses the aspects of these two kinds of language proficiency, and they have often been explained by using an iceberg as a visual (see Figure 1).

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are usually the first to develop between six months and two years. This is what is seen of the iceberg from sea level and above, the tip of the iceberg, as these are surface language skills. At this point, ELLs will develop social conversations, often informally, which might include talk while playing sports, during playground interactions, and even from social media or television. ELLs comprehend language by observing and hearing gestures through voice, body, and facial cues (Cummins, 1989).

For ELLs, social communication is an important aspect of developing language and is usually the first to develop—often outside of the classroom; however, classroom teachers have a much more difficult role as language instructors, and that is the focus in teaching Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). According to Cummins (1984), this is ELLs’ ability to cope with the academic demands in various content areas. School or academic language usually takes between five to seven years, and can take longer for ELLs who were not literate in their primary language when they started in a U.S. school (Collier & Thomas, 1989). Forms of academic language include comparing and contrasting; listing, defining; classifying; predicting, explaining; analyzing, justifying; inferring, deducing; integrating, evaluating; and arguing, persuading, defending. The responsibility of providing opportunities for academic language development rests with teachers. Planning instruction can be aided with knowledge and an understanding of the current proficiency level of ELLs as they come into the educational environment.

**Individualistic vs. Collectivist Cultures and Relation to Education**

Another influence on how language transfers to a new environment can be cultural differences. Educators may not be aware of how an ELL...
A student in their class has been raised to perceive the role of a teacher or school system. Two specific ideals which may impact learning include an individualistic or collectivist culture. An *individualistic culture* would be one that treats everyone as an individual with their own personal differences (Hopper, n.d.). With individualism, each person is acting on his or her own. Individuals make their own choices and can interact with groups, having the mindset that they are also each individuals. A person from an individualistic culture would see themselves as independent and separate from others while also contributing ideas and decisions to a whole group (Rowlands, 2006). Individualistic school systems expect teachers to be challenged and their students to offer opinions (Knight, 2018). Individualist teachers also want students to formulate their own ideas, thoughts, and theories. In education, a person who demonstrates individualism expects to learn how to learn. Those who display individualism believe education is a way of improving one's economic worth and self-respect based on their ability and competence (Knight, 2018).

A *collectivist culture* recognizes the individual as part of a community. A person living in this type of culture would see themselves in terms of their relationships to other people and members of their community (Hopper, n.d.). Collectivism is the practice or theory of giving a group priority over each individual in it. The group typically has its own values that are different from those of the individual members (Rowlands, 2006). Instead of judging the group as individuals interacting, it judges the group as a whole and views the individuals as just members of a group. In collectivist cultures, the role of education is that of social acceptance. An award or diploma may be important to the individual, but it is an even greater honor to the group. Regarding education, the mindset of a collectivist culture is for the teacher to educate students and provide them with knowledge. In a collectivist-focused school culture, individual students may only speak in class when called upon by the teacher (Knight, 2018). Collectivist teachers are often perceived as having a lot of authority. Understanding that ELL students may be influenced by one of these two different cultural paradigms may help classroom teachers better guide ELL students regardless of the school or home culture.

**Language Transfer: Positive-Negative-Zero**

Have you ever learned another language and found that little bits and pieces seem to come back when you encounter it again? Think about the way you now try to interpret meaning and words. Do you look or try to hear familiar words to help with comprehension? Most ELL students are doing the same. When we use the term *transfer*, we are referring to “the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired in one situation affect a person’s learning or performance in a subsequent situation” (Ormrod, 2014, p. 206). The replication of rules from a first language to a second language is called *language transfer*, while the process of negative language transfer is often also referred to as *linguistic interference* or *cross meaning* (Rangelova, 2018). Language interference often explains different accents and mistakes people make when communicating or comprehending.

Because ELLs use their primary language experiences to progress in their acquisition of English, students who have a strong base in their primary language are better able to transfer that understanding to the acquisition of English (Cummins, 1989). Depending on instructional program models, interactive classroom activities expose ELLs to interactions with native speakers. *Social interaction* can allow ELL students to experiment with new language in non-judgmental situations, while the closeness of the two languages can also predict how quickly students may acquire that second language.

When people are learning a new language, there are aspects of their native language that
can advance them, hinder them, or possibly have no effect at all. It may be helpful to understand three different language transfer scenarios. When language transfer results in correct L2 production, it is called positive transfer (Rangelova, 2018). This happens when there are similarities between two languages which can include sounds, word structures, meanings, collocations, or any other linguistic aspect of the two languages. This type of transfer facilitates and accelerates the acquisition process and leads to fewer mistakes (Rangelova, 2018). Often called a true cognate, some examples for positive transfer include no, as it is the same in English, Spanish, Polish, and many other languages; stop, which is the same in English and Polish; or repeat and fruit, which are similar to the Spanish words repite and fruta.

Zero transfer is when a sound or meaning encountered in English does not exist in the primary language and ultimately has no effect on the transfer between two languages. There may be some minor differences, but not to the extent that it hinders an individual’s performance, understanding, or meaning (Lu, 2010). Zero transfer includes words such as raspberry in English, which has no resemblance to the Spanish word frambuesa or the Polish word malina. Other examples include the English word dog and the Spanish word perro; fruit in English with owoc in Polish; or apple in English and manzana in Spanish. These are not cognates; and as they have no transfer value, they will not usually impact comprehension.

Negative transfer should be of most concern to teachers as this exchange interferes with meaning and allows for the most confusion for ELLs. Negative transfer occurs when L1 knowledge influences L2 understandings and results in errors (Lu, 2010). The greater the differences between the two languages, the stronger the negative effects can be. Negative transfer includes an element of the primary language that conflicts with an element of English (or another second language) and causes difficulty in acquiring that specific element of English (or any second language being learned), thus affecting different linguistic systems in which two languages can differ or be similar. These may include phonology, pronunciation, semantics, word choice, written systems, syntax, and so on, of L2 (Morales, 2012).

A word in the second language being learned may look or sound similar to one in the first language, so using background knowledge, ELLs can assimilate those words (Morales, 2012); however, their different meanings may cause confusion with comprehension. Consider ELLs encountering the following examples while reading a story. In English, the word dog is very different from the Polish word pies. Imagine a student whose first language is Polish encountering a story about a character eating pies and using their background knowledge to figure out meaning. Although it may seem funny, teachers need to be aware that negative transfer of words may inhibit comprehension. These false cognates are words that may be spelled or sound similar to words in a first language but whose meanings are different. More examples include tall in English to alto in Spanish or foot in English to pie in Spanish. Consider the confusion those words could make in comprehension.

**Implications for Educators**

As teachers of the English language, we do not need to speak another language, but we do need to be aware of cultural and language transfer issues that might help or hinder learning for our English Language Learners. The next time your ELL student makes a semantic or syntactic error, remember that it might be due to other influences with the first language or culture. This may provide insight as to how to assess the situation so an appropriate instructional plan can be implemented.
References


About the Authors

Joyce R. Bojko-Jeewek, EdD, is an associate professor at Benedictine University and teaches children's literature and reading & language arts methods and assessment courses for both undergraduate and graduate Special Education and Elementary Education majors. She has experience as a classroom teacher for 1st through 8th grades and as a Title I reading instructor, REI teacher, Special Education Intervention Manager, Principal, and Curriculum Director. With special interests in differentiated instruction and assessment, Joyce is a frequent presenter at both state and national conferences.

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A statewide project promoting reading for Illinois citizens, *Illinois Reads* annually selects six books in each of six different age categories ranging from read-to books for infants to adult readers. It is a project of the Illinois Reading Council (IRC), with over 4,000 members across the state. It was introduced in March 2013 to encourage everyone to read books by Illinois authors. When the IRC and *Illinois Reads* Honorary Chairman, Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White, announced the 2018 book titles, they selected *Aberdeen* by Stacey Previn as one of the titles for Birth–age 4.

Stacey has illustrated over 17 children’s books, including the *Way to Be!* series, a 2007 Teachers’ Choice Award winner, and *Find Spot!*, her first book as the author and illustrator. After living in France for a couple of years, she moved to Oak Park, where she now resides with her husband and two sons.

*Ronda Mitchell*: How did you feel when you heard the news that your picture book, *Aberdeen*, had been selected as one of the 2018 Illinois Reads titles?

*Stacey Previn*: I was thrilled! It is such an honor. Illinois has so many great writers.

*RM*: The story is so sweet, and your watercolor illustrations are absolutely beautiful! Will you talk about your inspiration for writing about a little mouse with a lot of curiosity?

*SP*: I have two boys, and when they were little, I used to hear the phrase “I didn’t mean to” every day. Most often, one of them would be crying; and when I would ask why, they would say the other one hit them in the head or something like that. Almost always, the next thing I would
hear was “I didn’t mean to.” Or they would be playing in the yard and kick a ball into a window or the car, and you would hear one of them yell “I didn’t mean to!” almost immediately afterward. I started thinking about all the things you “accidently” do, and that is how Aberdeen came to be.

**RM:** *When were you first interested in art?*

**SP:** I don’t think I was ever not interested in art. My parents have photos of me drawing as soon as I could hold a crayon.

**RM:** *What brought you to the decision to write your own books after illustrating many children’s books for other authors?*

**SP:** I love storytelling. I was happy to do the visual storytelling for authors, but then I had some ideas of my own that I wanted to see brought to life. After I wrote a few, I got an agent, Steven Chudney, and things took off after that.

**RM:** *If Snowflakes Tasted Like Fruitcake is a creative rhyming, winter-themed book! I love everything about this book . . . the rhyme, the theme, and the illustrations, especially the little child with the red snowsuit! How did you come up with this idea?*

**SP:** There was a photo I saw of a kid with their tongue out catching snowflakes that sparked this idea. What if they all tasted like different foods? It is something that all kids do, and I thought it could be really fun. I loved Ezra Keats’ book, *A Snowy Day*, and I thought a red snowsuit would be a nice homage to that.

**RM:** *Will you talk about the technique that you used for the illustrations?*

**SP:** That book is all digital illustration. I wanted it to look organic, though, so I layered the art to look like screen printing on wood. It is all done in *Photoshop*. The color choices were also to have a retro feel for a more modern art style.

**RM:** *Find Spot! is a fun read-aloud and has beautiful, heavy brush strokes! Children will enjoy finding all of the spots throughout the book. Do you plan on writing more concept books?*

**SP:** I love concept books. I have written a couple of others that hopefully will find homes with publishers. They are so hard to write, though. They seem like they would be easy because they seem simple, but *Find Spot!* had the most revisions of any of my books. Every time one pair changed, it actually changed four pages because of the rhyme.

**RM:** *You have succeeded in your career. What advice do you have for others hoping to do the same?*

**SP:** Be incredibly thick skinned. It took seven years to get one of my books published. I once had an agent write back and say that she “clearly wasn’t on the same wave length as me.” Wow! I thought. That was harsh. Seriously, it is not easy, and everyone has opinions, but if you work hard and listen to the comments that make sense, you will succeed. A lot of the feedback is really valuable if you open your mind.

**RM:** *I think it would be a remarkable experience to live in France, even for a short period of time! What was it like for your family?*
SP: I loved it. I didn’t speak French before we moved, but that was my goal; and I felt when I could argue with someone in French that I had succeeded. I did that at a public pool, so I felt great afterward! My kids went to public school there and became fluent very quickly. We still keep in touch with people there, and my oldest son is majoring in Global Studies with a minor in French and will study there next year. He kept his French since he was in the 3rd grade when we came back. My younger son doesn’t remember it that well since he was in the 1st grade when we came back. We lived there for two years, but the exchange rate killed us. We came back because we were broke, but it was worth every penny!

RM: How do you spend your day when you aren’t working on a book?

SP: I have a full-time job as a Creative Director at an advertising agency. My days are pretty long on average, so I work on books whenever I can or I take vacation time to work on them. I am happy to take days for school visits as well.

RM: What are you working on now?

SP: I just finished a book called Joe, The Spotted Spidersaurus that my agent is sending out. It is about an eight-legged dinosaur who is looking for a friend and doesn’t know how to find one. He thinks they should have something physical in common (spots, eight legs, etc.) but learns that isn’t what makes a friend.

RM: Thank you for sharing your time. Please tell readers how they can learn more about you, your books, and your availability.

SP: They can check my website, which I am vowing to update more often this year, Staceyprevin.com, or they can e-mail me at staceyprevin2003@yahoo.com.

Books by Stacey Previn

Aberdeen, Viking books for Young Readers, 2016.
2018 Illinois Reads Award

If Snowflakes Tasted Like Fruitcake, Little Bee Books. 2016.


About the Author

Ronda J. Mitchell is an assistant professor and the director of Project Midstate Student Support for Teaching at the University of Illinois at Springfield. She is a past president and currently a regional director of the Illinois Reading Council and president of the Macon County Reading Council. Her research interests include studying non-traditional teachers. She may be reached at rmitche@uis.edu.
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This is the moment. Now is the time!
As a member of a council, you understand the importance of developing and maintaining a lifelong commitment to literacy and education in your community.

Now let us invite you to take your commitment one step further by becoming a part of the International Literacy Association’s global movement to end illiteracy. ILA will succeed only with your help, as you are the direct connection to students, leaders, and policymakers in your local communities. As the champion of a vibrant community of literacy professionals and activists, we recognize the importance of working together to expand the reach of literacy around the world and amplify the impact of each other’s efforts. Imagine what we can accomplish if we work together. Be the difference.

Join ILA today at literacyworldwide.org/cm15 and get $10 off Basic Membership with discount code CNCLB.

Together, we are the future of literacy, and the future is now.
ILA membership grants you access to the following resources:

- **Literacy Today**, a bimonthly print and digital magazine covering all things ILA and literacy related, from new research and teaching tips to reviews of children’s and YA literature
- **ILA E-ssentials**, a variety of e-publications providing timely, easy-to-implement ideas to enhance your classroom practice
- **ILA Bridges: Instructional Units for the Engaging Classroom**, ready-to-go, standards-based literacy units created by classroom teacher and researcher teams
- Subscription eligibility for our renowned, peer-reviewed **journals** filled with high-quality, hands-on strategies and best practices
- **Free or discounted access** to our many articles, books, DVDs, and lesson plans and to our annual conference
- The opportunity to be involved in **international outreach** through our Global Operations program

### 1. COMPLETE YOUR ILA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name Initial Last Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and State/Province</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Zip/Postal Code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address (necessary to receive all membership benefits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### PRIMARY OCCUPATION

- School-Based Educator
- Reading teacher or specialist
- Special education teacher
- Bilingual/ESL teacher
- Literacy coach
- ELA coordinator
- School librarian, media specialist
- Administrator
- School administrator
- District administrator
- College/University
- College/University faculty

#### LEVEL

- All elementary (5–11 yrs.)
- Primary (5–7 yrs.)
- Intermediate (8–11 yrs.)
- Middle (12–15 yrs.)
- Secondary (16–18 yrs.)
- Junior/community college
- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Researcher
- Adult education
- Other

#### YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A PROFESSIONAL

### 2. ARE YOU CURRENTLY A MEMBER OF A STATE/PROVINCIAL COUNCIL?

- Yes
- No
- If yes, which one?

### 3. SELECT YOUR ILA MEMBERSHIP (PLEASE CHOOSE ONE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUNCIL BASIC</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNCIL ONLINE</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COUNCIL ONLINE

### 4. ADD JOURNAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Reading Teacher (learners up to age 12)</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Research Quarterly</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Members may add Print & Online or Online-Only journal subscriptions to their membership. Online Members may add Online-Only journal subscriptions.

### 5. TOTAL (MEMBERSHIP + SUBSCRIPTIONS)

### 6. METHOD OF PAYMENT

- Check made payable to ILA
- Credit card
- Purchase order (include signed copy)

Special student and retired professional rates are available. Contact ILA’s friendly Customer Service team at 800.336.7323 (U.S. and Canada) or 302.731.1600 (all other countries) or customerservice@reading.org for details.

### 4 Easy Ways to Join

**Online** — literacyworldwide.org/cm15 (use discount code CNCLB for $10 off Basic Membership)

**Mail** — Return this form to ILA, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA

**Phone** — 800.336.7323 (U.S. and Canada) or 302.731.1600 (all other countries)

**Fax** — 302.737.0878
The Illinois Reading Council Journal editorial staff welcomes manuscript submissions at any time. Please follow the guidelines below for preparing and submitting manuscripts.

IRCJ seeks manuscripts dealing with topics, issues, and events of interest to educators involved in literacy programs at all levels of education. The review process for articles takes approximately 10 to 16 weeks. Upon receipt of a manuscript, the editor will send an acknowledgment to the author. The manuscript will be evaluated by at least two reviewers who are uninformed as to the identity of the author. Manuscripts are evaluated in terms of interest, quality of writing, appropriate documentation of ideas, uniqueness, and needs of the journal.

Research articles should include a clear description of the methodology and should be written in a style that will be readable by classroom teachers. The final decision for acceptance of manuscripts resides with the editor. The editor reserves the right to suggest changes in format to the authors. Please review articles in the journal before submitting manuscripts for consideration. Graduate student papers should be reformatted into articles prior to submission.

**Short Submissions**

For each issue, short items such as original poems, cartoons, artwork, or personal anecdotes may appear throughout the journal. Such submissions should be one-half page to one page in length, double-spaced, and word-processed. Front and back cover art is also accepted. The editor selects these items.

If you have questions about the submission process, please e-mail Roxanne Owens, IRCJ editor, IRCJournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

**IRCJ Submission Guidelines**

We seek articles that deal with research and innovative instructional practices for literacy education at all levels. Article submissions should be eight to 25 double-spaced pages, including references. Please prepare and submit your manuscript consistent with the following guidelines:

**Manuscript Preparation**

- Organization style and format: APA, most recent edition
- Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt
- Running head: Please add a running head with the short title and page number in the upper right corner.
- To ensure impartial, blind review, please remove all identifying information from the manuscript.

**Manuscript Submission**

1. Save the manuscript as a Word document .doc or .docx. (Please do not save as .pdf, .pages, or .rtf.)
2. Please use the contact author's last name, the word "article," and a six-digit submission date as the title of the document. For example, if Mary Owens submits an article on January 1, 2018, the title of the document would be Owensarticle010118.docx.
3. Complete the Cover Sheet. Save the cover sheet as contact author's last name, the word "Cover," and the six-digit submission date (e.g., Owenscover010118.docx).
4. Attach both documents to an e-mail with the subject line: IRCJ ARTICLE SUBMISSION.

**Send to IRCJournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.**

**Cover Sheet Information**

Title of article:

Author(s): Please include name, work position/location (such as 3rd-grade teacher at Smith School, 123 Jones Street, Bradford, IL 61421), home address, phone number (best one to reach—home, office, cell), and e-mail address for EACH author:

Name:
Work position:
Work address:
Home address (including zip code):
Best number to call:
E-mail address:

If you are currently attending graduate school, please indicate name of school and program:

Author serving as the primary contact for this article:

Abstract (200 words)

_____Yes, I verify that this article has not been submitted or published elsewhere.
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ircjournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org
**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in Education Profession</th>
<th>Highest Degree Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. ___ 18-24</td>
<td>a. ___ 0-4</td>
<td>a. ___ Bachelors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ___ 25-39</td>
<td>b. ___ 5-14</td>
<td>b. ___ Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. ___ 40-54</td>
<td>c. ___ 15-29</td>
<td>c. ___ Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. ___ 55 and over</td>
<td>d. ___ 30 and over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Present Position**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Teacher:</th>
<th>Administrator:</th>
<th>Other:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. ___ preschool</td>
<td>a. ___ curriculum/reading</td>
<td>a. ___ librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ___ k-3</td>
<td>b. ___ supervisor</td>
<td>b. ___ parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. ___ 4-6</td>
<td>c. ___ building principal</td>
<td>c. ___ special ed. teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. ___ middle school/jr. high</td>
<td>d. ___ superintendent</td>
<td>d. ___ gifted/talented teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ___ high school</td>
<td></td>
<td>e. ___ Title I/remedial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. ___ post Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td>f. ___ reading specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>g. ___ retired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List the council(s) you wish to join.**

When you join, you receive membership in the IRC, as well as membership in a local or special interest council. You must select at least one of the councils listed on the back.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________

**List the dues amount of each council you are joining.**

- $45 - One year membership
- $25 - Preservice Teacher membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Dues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discount for multiple memberships.**

If you join more than one local or special interest council at this time, each additional council is $15. Preservice teachers pay $5 for each additional council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Discount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Before Discount**

**Discount**

**TOTAL AMOUNT DUE**

**Method of Payment:**

- Check (payable to IRC)
- Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover)

**Return this form with payment to:**

**Illinois Reading Council**

**ATTN: Membership Dept.**

203 Landmark Drive, Suite B
Normal, IL 61761

**Paying by credit card? Join Online or Fax: 309-454-3512**

**Signature**

**In our continuing effort to provide meaningful services to our members, IRC requests the following information.**

**Are you a member of the International Literacy Association (ILA)?**

- a. ___ yes
- b. ___ no

**Membership #**

**Expiration date**

**Professional Areas of Interest (Check 3)**

- a. ___ administration
- b. ___ adult literacy
- c. ___ affective reading
- d. ___ assessment
- e. ___ children’s literature
- f. ___ comprehension
- g. ___ content area reading
- h. ___ family literacy
- i. ___ holistic reading
- j. ___ multilingual/multicultural
- k. ___ newspapers in education
- l. ___ parents and reading
- m. ___ reading for gifted students
- n. ___ research
- o. ___ study skills
- p. ___ teacher education
- q. ___ technology in reading
- r. ___ Title I/remedial reading
- s. ___ young adult literature
- t. ___ young authors/writing

**Present Position**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Teacher:</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>g. ___ retired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Illinois Reading Council Membership

Locations of IRC Local & Special Interest Council Regions by Counties

The annual membership of $45 includes membership in the Illinois Reading Council and a local or special interest council. The annual preservice teacher membership is $25 for one who has not been certified in the teaching profession and is working toward an initial teaching certificate. Please select the council(s) you wish to join from the list below. Residence in any of the designated council counties you join is not required. If you join more than one local or special interest council at this time, each additional council is $15. Preservice teachers pay $5 for each additional council. Follow the steps on the front of this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION 1</th>
<th>REGION 2</th>
<th>REGION 4</th>
<th>REGION 5</th>
<th>REGION 7</th>
<th>REGION 8</th>
<th>REGION 9</th>
<th>REGION 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA) - (Chicago Area - Cook County within the Chicago city limits)</td>
<td>Lake Area Reading Council - (Western Lake, McHenry, Northwestern Cook)</td>
<td>South Suburban Reading Council - (Those parts of Cook Co. bounded on west by Will-Cook Rd., north by 115th St., and/or Chicago City limits)</td>
<td>Two Rivers Reading Council - (Kankakee, Iroquois, Northern Ford)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ILLC - (Illinois Language and Literacy Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA) - (Eastern Lake, Northern Cook)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Will County Reading Council - (Will)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ITA - (Illinois Title I Association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SRL - (Secondary Reading League)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGION 3</td>
<td>REGION 4</td>
<td>REGION 5</td>
<td>REGION 6</td>
<td>REGION 7</td>
<td>REGION 8</td>
<td>REGION 9</td>
<td>REGION 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox Valley Reading Council - (Kane)</td>
<td>Prairie Area Reading Council - (Western DuPage County)</td>
<td>Mississippi Valley Reading Council - (Adams, Brown, Pike, Scott, Greene, Calhoun)</td>
<td>Central Illinois Reading Council - (Logan, Menard, Cass, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Montgomery)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Suburban Reading Council - (DuPage County east of Route 83 and those parts of Cook County west of Austin Boulevard excluding all areas within the Chicago city limits)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Macon County Reading Council - (Macon)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MID-State Reading Council - (McLean, DeWitt)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11-16