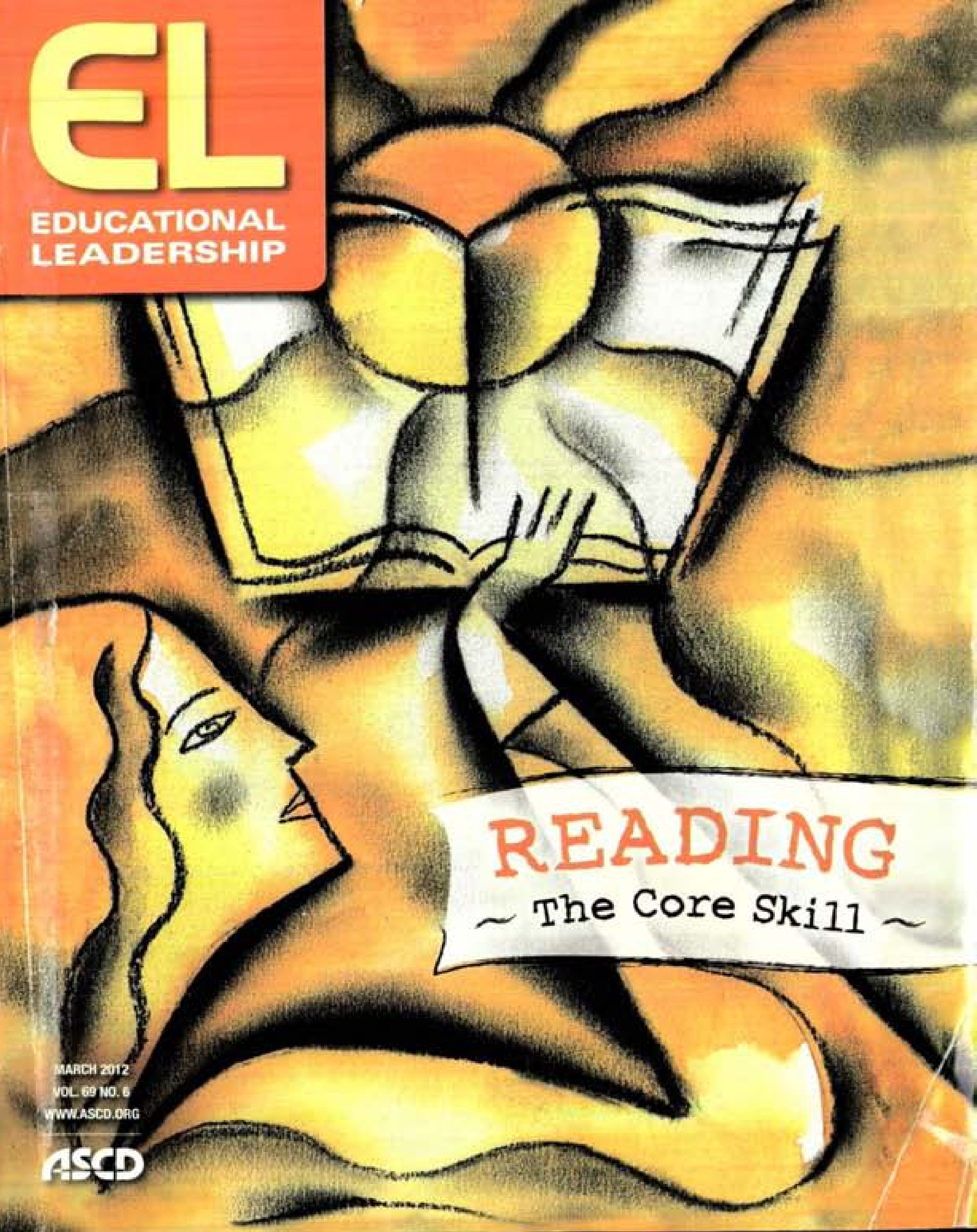
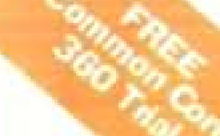

EL
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
READING
~ The Core Skill ~
MARCH 2012
VOL. 69 NO. 6
WWW.ASCD.ORG
ASCD

Common Core 360



Greater Understanding, Successful Implementation— Get It All with Common Core 360

How do we know that Common Core 360 provides the most resources for greater understanding and successful implementation?

We're glad you asked. Common Core 360 is built by educators and experts in education, and it combines real classroom examples of Common Core implementation with tools, known best practices, and teaching strategies from real educators across the United States. Common Core 360 is the only tool in the industry with comprehensive resources for Common Core implementation and the largest online professional learning community of over 822,000 verified educators.

Common Core 360 provides:

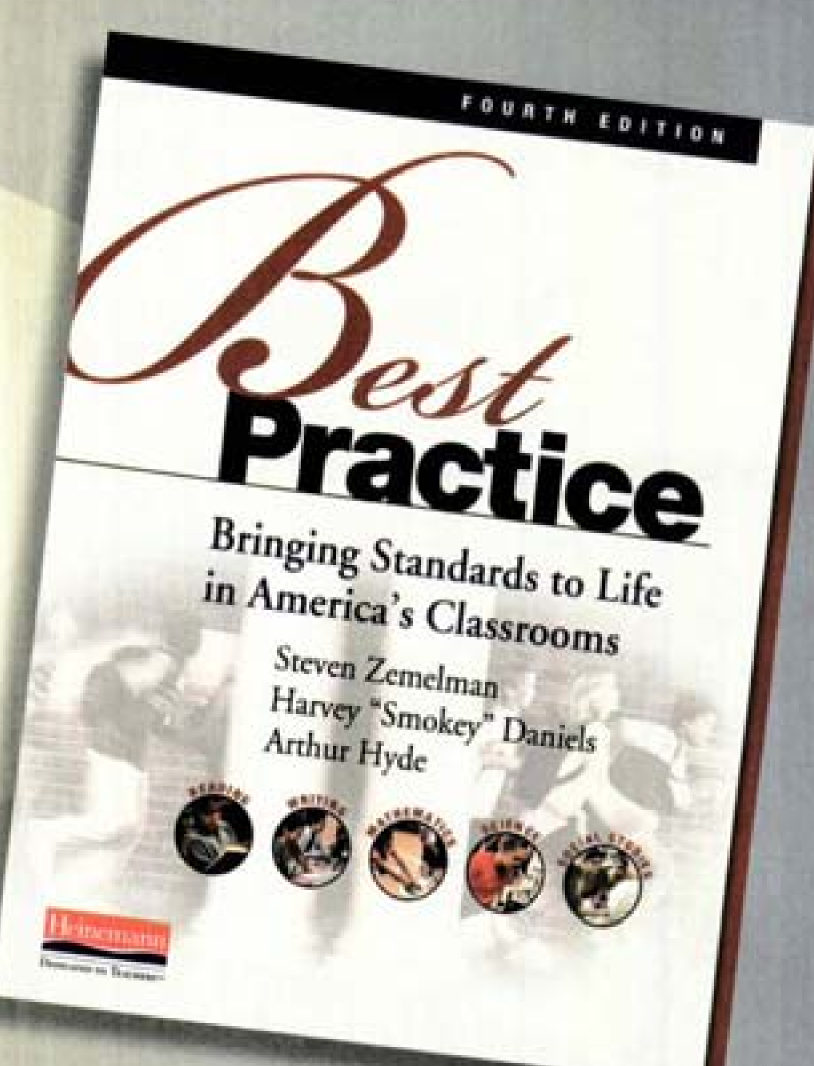
- Video Case Studies
- Vision of the Common Core Standards
- Real Classroom Examples of Alignment
- Learning Progression Tool
- Real Teacher Strategies
- User Uploaded Videos
- Online Professional Learning Community

Start a free, all-access trial to Common Core 360 for 30 days when you call us or visit us online!

TRY COMMON CORE 360 FREE TODAY!

www.CommonCore360.com • 800.572.1153

Because **Best Practice** teaching matters more than ever



"The single most powerful variable in student achievement is the quality of teaching. But what does quality mean? What does it look like in real classrooms? It looks like the teaching in this book."

—Steven Zemelman, Harvey "Smokey" Daniels & Arthur Hyde

Best Practice

FOURTH EDITION

Bringing Standards to Life in America's Classrooms

Steven Zemelman, Harvey "Smokey" Daniels & Arthur Hyde

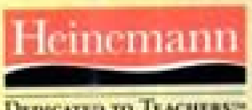
In a time of unprecedented change, **Steve Zemelman, Smokey Daniels,** and **Arthur Hyde** help you meet our most important challenges with proven, state-of-the-art teaching.

BP4 creates common ground for everyone involved in school change with practices drawn from the latest research, professional consensus, and innovative classrooms. It supports entire schools with:

- plans and strategies for exceeding state and Common Core Standards
- cohesive principles and common language that strengthen professional collaboration
- classroom vignettes that show teachers and kids at work
- chapters on reading, writing, math, science, and social studies that support unified instructional goals
- special attention to technology in the classroom, special education, ELLs, struggling readers, and the arts.

Grades K–12 / 978-0-325-04354-8 / 2012 / 304pp est. / $29.50 est.

SAVE 15%
when you buy 15 copies
978-0-325-04384-5



To learn more visit Heinemann.com or call 800.225.5800.

Look for the BP4 product page on Facebook

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

March 2012 . Volume 69 . Number 6

Reading: The Core Skill

features

10 Every Child, Every Day

Richard L. Allington and Rachael E. Gabriel

A powerful reading prescription for all students.

16 Taming the Wild Text

Pam Allyn

Give struggling readers the tools to triumph over their fears.

22 Adolescent Literacy: More Than Remediation

Gina Biancarosa

How to take adolescents who haven't mastered the basics to higher-level literacy.

28 How We *Really* Comprehend Nonfiction

Thomas Newkirk

We never stop looking for the storyline, the author contends. Plot is at the heart of all good writing.

34 Teaching Genre with Purpose

Nell K. Duke, Samantha Caughlan, Mary M. Juzwik, and Nicole M. Martin

Is the genre dramatic, persuasive, informational? Real-world uses matter.

40 Opening the Literature Window

Carol Jago

A call for a reading renaissance.

44 Get Organized Around Assets

Larry Ferlazzo

The community organizer's guide to teaching reading.

52 Teaching for Historical Literacy

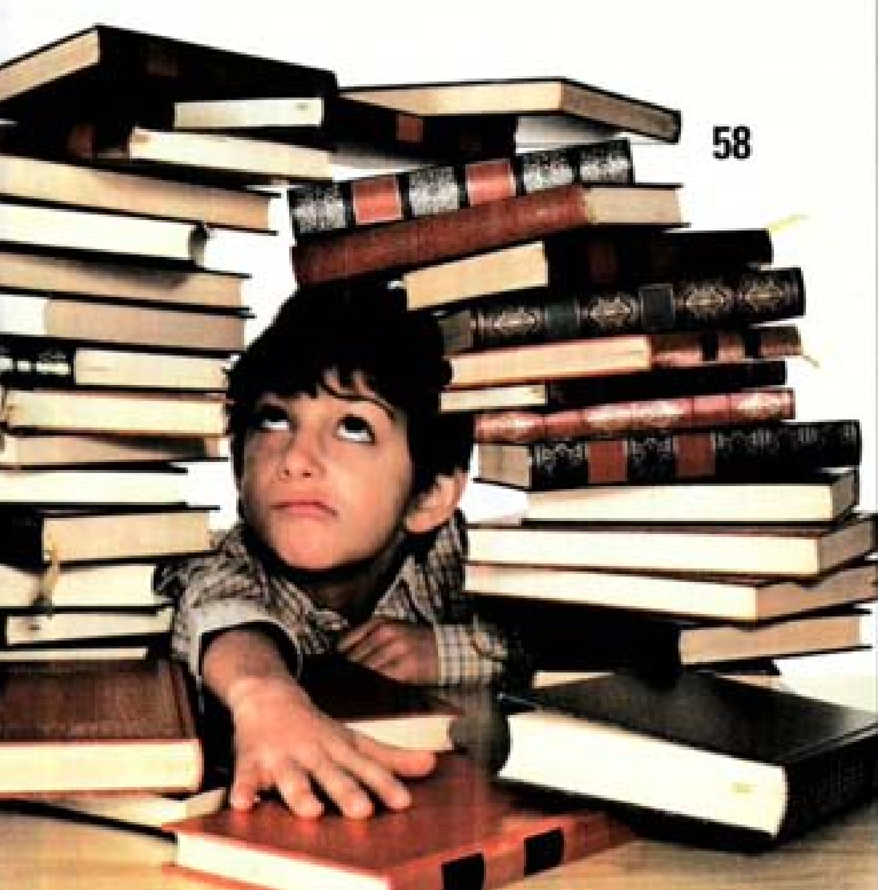
Anne Goudvis and Stephanie Harvey

Social studies need not require a passive slog through textbooks.

58 The Challenge of Challenging Text

Timothy Shanahan, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey

Equipping students to deal with text complexity.



58

88

64 Making Textbook Reading Meaningful

John T. Guthrie and Susan Lutz Klauda

Five crucial practices to motivate adolescents to read informational texts.

70 True—or Not?

Debbie Abilock

In the dizzying world of click-and-go information, how to judge credibility?

75 Reading Remixed

Joyce Kasman Valenza and Wendy Stephens

E-books and social media have expanded the definition of the word "book."

34

| columns |

Perspectives

7 Turning the Page on Reading

Marge Scherer

Listen online at www.ascd.org/el.

Research Says

80 Address Reading Problems Early

Bryan Goodwin

With early intervention, we can get students back on track.

Art and Science of Teaching

82 An Easier Way to Score Tests

Robert J. Marzano

Proficiency scoring is more precise than assigning points to test items.

Principal Connection

84 Got Grit?

Thomas R. Hoerr

Helping kids learn to respond to failure is part of the job.

One to Grow On

86 Creating Flashlight Readers

Carol Ann Tomlinson

How to tap into the (sometimes buried) intrinsic desire to read.

| departments |

8 Double Take

Reviews, research, and relevant reads.

Tell Me About...

88 What You've Learned About Teaching Reading

Read readers' stories here and online, and contribute your own response to an upcoming question.

Talking Back

91 On Privatization

Gary Houchens and James Harvey debate school choice.

94 Index to Advertisers

96 ASCD Community in Action

News and resources from ASCD.

Cover illustration © Leon Zernitsky

Sustainable Results
Through Deep Implementation

The Leadership and Learning Center®

INSTITUTES AND SUMMITS

Digging Deeper into the Common Core State Standards: Going Beyond Awareness to Implementation

April 30-May 1, 2012 • Overland Park, Kansas
June 12-13, 2012 • Boston, Massachusetts
October 16-17, 2012 • Des Moines, Iowa
November 8-9, 2012 • San Francisco, California

From What to How: How Common Core State Standards Should Influence Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

April 11, 2012 • Sacramento, California
October 2, 2012 • St. Louis, Missouri

90/90/90 Schools℠ Summit

May 2-3, 2012 • Chicago, Illinois
July 10-11, 2012 • St. Paul, Minnesota
October 10-11, 2012 • Mount Laurel, New Jersey
December 12-13, 2012 • Phoenix, Arizona

Effective Grading Practices Summit

May 1, 2012 • Chicago, Illinois
December 11, 2012 • Phoenix, Arizona

SEMINARS

Authentic Performance Tasks: The Engaging Classroom Assessments Series

April 17-18, 2012 • Des Moines, Iowa
May 8-9, 2012 • New York, New York

Power Strategies for Effective Teaching

May 8-9, 2012 • New York, New York

Decision Making Results: Data Driven Decision Making and Data Teams

May 8-9, 2012 • New York, New York

Common Formative Assessments

July 24-25, 2012 • Denver, Colorado

Five Easy Steps to a Balanced Math Program

April 17-18, 2012 • Des Moines, Iowa

VISIBLE LEARNING FOUNDATION SEMINAR

Coming Soon!

We have partnered with Cognition Education to bring John Hattie's ground-breaking synthesis of research on the highest-achieving students, classrooms, schools, and districts to the United States. Join us at this foundation seminar to learn the practices that improve student achievement the most.

Visit **leadandlearn.com/VL** for upcoming dates and locations.

To register or for more information, visit: leadandlearn.com/events

Questions? Contact:

Brooke Little,
at 866.399.6019 ext. 227
BLittle@LeadandLearn.com

The Leadership and Learning Center® is a registered trademark of Advanced Learning Centers, Inc.

90/90/90 Schools℠ is a service mark of Advanced Learning Centers, Inc.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT

EL

Extending Our Theme Online

www.ascd.org/el

Five Reasons Readers Need Technology

Ted Hasselbring

Smart technology can tee up the right kind of reading practice.

Using Readers Theater to Reach Older Readers

Katherine A. Blake

An ideal way to coax students to reread.

Inspiring a Nonreader

Kathryn Karschney

Josh came to 5th grade refusing to read.

EL Study Guide

Naomi Thiers

Inservice Guest Bloggers

Richard Allington and Rachael E. Gabriel

Watch This Spot!

This month's video clip from PD In Focus shows how a middle school civics teacher guides students to read textbooks more actively.

QR Alert

Scan this QR code to access our online-only articles on your smartphone.

WHERE TO FIND *EL*

- Listen to podcasts, view videos, read online-only articles, and more: www.ascd.org/el
- Read and share the digital version of *EL*: www.ascd.org/digitalel
- Discuss selected *EL* articles on Inservice, the ASCD blog: www.ascd.org/blog
- Join the *EL* group on ASCD EDge and comment on any *EL* article: http://ascdedge.ascd.org
- Follow us on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ascd
- Contact us by e-mail: edleadership@ascd.org

JOURNAL STAFF

Margaret M. Scherer, Editor in Chief

Deborah Perkins-Gough, Senior Editor

Amy M. Azzam, Senior Associate Editor

Naomi Thiers, Associate Editor

Teresa K. Preston, Associate Editor

Lucy Robertson, Assistant Editor

Judi Connelly, Senior Graphic Designer

Mike Kalyan, Production Manager

Katy Wogec, Rights and Permissions Manager

Brittany Bowen Fleming, Advertising Manager

• • •

Gene R. Carter, Executive Director

Gary Bloom, Art Director

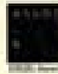
Ronald S. Brandt, Executive Editor Emeritus

Educational Leadership (ISSN 0013-1784) is a benefit of membership in ASCD. Annual membership dues are $25, Student; $49, Basic; $89, Select; $219, Premium; and $565, Institutional, of which $39 per member covers a year's subscription to *Educational Leadership*. *Educational Leadership* is published monthly September through May except bimonthly December/January. Periodical postage paid at Alexandria, Virginia, and at additional mailing offices. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: 1415 Janette Ave., Windsor, ON N8X 1Z1. Postmaster: Send address changes to Membership Department, *Educational Leadership*, 1703 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria VA 22311-1714.

Educational Leadership is intended primarily for leaders in elementary, middle, and secondary education but is also for anyone interested in curriculum, instruction, supervision, and leadership in schools. ASCD publications present a variety of viewpoints. The views expressed or implied in this publication are not necessarily official positions of the association. ASCD editorial office and advertising: 703-578-9600; e-mail: edleadership@ascd.org. *Educational Leadership* is a registered trademark of ASCD.

Copyright © 2012 by ASCD. All rights reserved.

(USPS 168-760). March 2012. Stock No. 112021

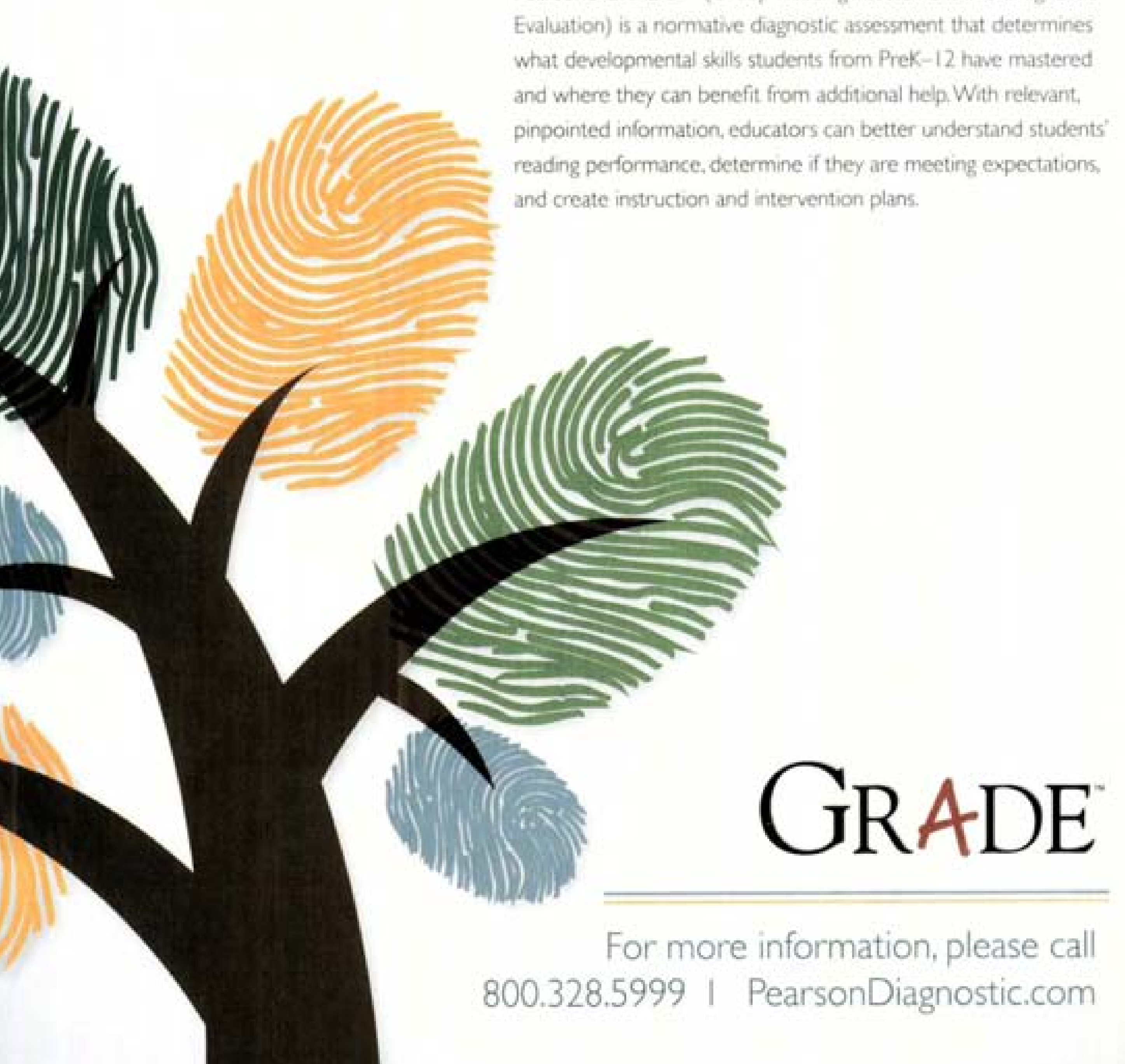


Digital edition by Texterity. Available at www.educationalleadership-digital.com

Helping Students Grow

by Understanding Their Unique Needs

Pearson's GRADE™ (Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation) is a normative diagnostic assessment that determines what developmental skills students from PreK–12 have mastered and where they can benefit from additional help. With relevant, pinpointed information, educators can better understand students' reading performance, determine if they are meeting expectations, and create instruction and intervention plans.



ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

Perspectives

Turning the Page on Reading

"Read like a detective. Write like an investigative reporter." That's how David Coleman, one of the lead authors of the common core state standards, described in a nutshell the approach to the teaching of reading and writing ushered in by the standards. The new emphasis, especially in the upper grades, is on teaching students to read complex nonfiction texts (read like a detective) and to master informative writing (write like a reporter).

"These are not bad goals, but how do we get there?" *EL* author Doug Fisher commented, noting that currently only 34 percent of U.S. 8th graders read at or above the proficient level. He added a worry: "If all we do is teach students to deconstruct text, will we remove all desire to read books?"

The teaching of reading—once primarily dedicated to helping beginners and nonreaders learn how to decode—is shifting to embrace the vital capacities to analyze and comprehend. This emphasis on higher-level skills responds to a need to prepare all students to compete in a world where knowledge is expanding and information is available in multiple formats everywhere and anytime. Twenty-first century learners must not only know how to scan and skim billions of bytes but they also must know how to negotiate complex, difficult text. And—a goal not to be left out, we hope—they need to learn to understand and appreciate demanding and rich literature.

This issue of *Educational Leadership* addresses the huge challenge of adopting wise practice in the face of a new mandate. Here's the advice from our authors.

First, they must read. Richard Allington and Rachael Gabriel (p. 10) lead off by reminding us that everything depends on every child experiencing certain elements of instruction every day. At some time every day, students must be able to choose what they read. At some time every day, they must read something they understand, write something personally meaningful, talk with classmates about their reading and writing, and hear a fluent adult reader read aloud. This is the simple recipe to follow if students are ever going to become competent, independent readers who—of their own free will--choose to read. Worksheets and test prep? Not so much.

Build stamina and trust. In "Taming the Wild Text," Pam Allyn (p. 16) takes up a battle cry for all strugglers who feel defenseless around print. To create a reading culture in which students aren't afraid of challenging text, we must give them a tool kit that contains everything from alphabet charts to word boxes to e-readers. Those who struggle with reading should not be underestimated, but instead be given the opportunity to dive deep and build on their strengths (p. 44).

Use strategies strategically. Several of our authors offer lessons on teaching students to read to learn. Gina Biancarosa (p. 22) addresses the challenges adolescents face in navigating subject-area reading. Nell K. Duke and her fellow researchers (p. 34) explain how to teach reading and writing with attention to the real-world reasons for each genre. Timothy Shanahan, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey (p. 58) look at the factors that affect students' ability to comprehend complex text: from vocabulary and sentence structure to background knowledge. Authors also talk about how to make both the time spent reading textbooks more compelling (pp. 52, 64) and the time using digital resources more meaningful (pp. 70, 75).

Choose excellent works to read . . . Thomas Newkirk (p. 28) writes about the real reason for reading nonfiction. "Everything written is as good as it is dramatic," he quotes Robert Frost. "Reading is not a treasure hunt for the main ideas. It is a journey we take with a writer." Giving our students technical manuals to read is not the way to add rigor to classroom reading. Nonfiction, yes, but excellent nonfiction is what we must teach in the classroom.

. . . and reread. Carol Jago (p. 40) has her own take on choosing what to teach: "Look for aesthetic splendor, cognitive power, and wisdom," she quotes Harold Bloom. Jago assigns her students two books to read at once—one a classic to study in class and one a popular book with a similar theme to read on their own. She knows students need literary works of quality, complexity, and range, and she knows they need to enjoy reading.

The pages we are turning on the teaching of reading are flipping by rather quickly. Following these authors' recommendations is an opportunity to get reading right in more classrooms.

Marge Scherer

—*Marge Scherer*

Double Take

Research Alert

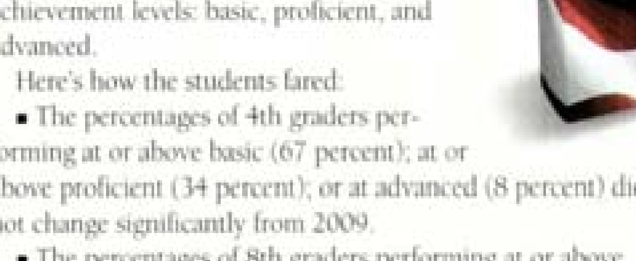
The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2011

Results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading, also known as "The Nation's Report Card," are in, and they're somewhat underwhelming. The short version is that little has changed since 1992, and almost no change has occurred since the last administration of the test in 2009.

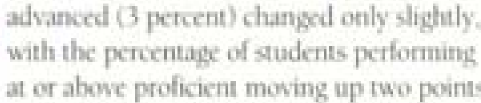
The 2011 reading assessment was given to about 213,000 4th graders and 168,000 8th graders. Results are reported on a scale of 0 to 500 and are broken down by three achievement levels: basic, proficient, and advanced.

Here's how the students fared:

- The percentages of 4th graders performing at or above basic (67 percent); at or above proficient (34 percent); or at advanced (8 percent) did not change significantly from 2009.



- The percentages of 8th graders performing at or above basic (76 percent); at or above proficient (34 percent); or at advanced (3 percent) changed only slightly, with the percentage of students performing at or above proficient moving up two points.



There were some interesting tidbits, however:

- Average scores for 4th graders were higher than in 2009 for four states (Alabama, Hawaii, Maryland, and Massachusetts) and lower for two states (Missouri and South Dakota).
- The gap between the average scores of white and black students did not significantly differ from 2009.
- The gap between the average scores of white and Hispanic 8th graders narrowed by two points since 2009.
- Ten states improved their 8th grade reading scores compared with their 2009 scores, and no states showed lower scores in 8th grade reading.

The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2011 is available at http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2011.

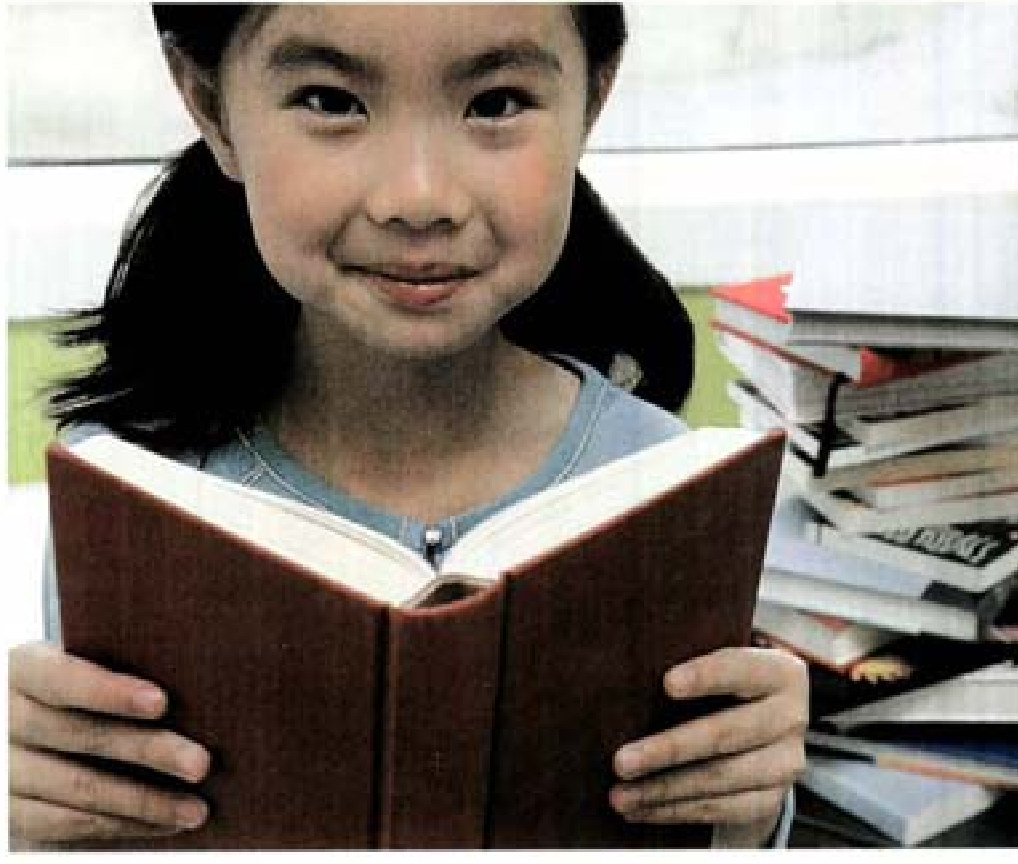
World Spin

Reading for Joy

In Ontario, Canada, the research group People for Education has found that the percentage of students who like to read is on the decline. Just one-half of the 240,000 3rd graders and 6th graders surveyed said they liked to read; 10 years ago, 76 percent of 3rd graders and 65 percent of 6th graders said they enjoyed reading. Ontario's minister of education noted that the decline in reading for pleasure is a trend in developed countries.

for workbooks, photocopying, and computers; yet many schools claim that they have no budget for large, multileveled classroom libraries. This is interesting because research has demonstrated that access to self-selected texts improves students' reading performance (Krashen, 2011), whereas no evidence indicates that workbooks, photocopies, or computer tutorial programs have ever done so (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Dynarski, 2007).

There is, in fact, no way they ever could. When we consider that the typical 4th grade classroom has students reading anywhere from the 2nd to the 9th grade reading levels (and that later grades have an even wider range), the idea that one workbook or textbook could meet the needs of every reader is absurd (Hargis, 2006). So, too, is the idea that skills developed through isolated, worksheet-based skills practice and fill-in-the-blank vocabulary quizzes will transfer to real reading in the absence of any evidence that they ever have. If school principals eliminated the budget for workbooks and worksheets and instead spent the money on real books for classroom libraries, this decision could dramatically improve students' opportunities to become better readers.



2. Every child reads accurately.

Good readers read with accuracy almost all the time. The last 60 years of research on optimal text difficulty—a body of research that began with Betts (1949)—consistently demonstrates the importance of having students read texts they can read accurately and understand. In fact, research shows that reading at 98 percent or higher accuracy is essential for reading acceleration. Anything less slows the rate of improvement, and anything below 90 percent accuracy doesn't improve reading ability at all (Allington, 2012; Ehri, Dreyer, Flugman, & Gross, 2007).

Although the idea that students read better when they read more has been supported by studies for the last 70 years, policies that simply increase the amount of time allocated for students to read often find mixed results (National Reading Panel, 2000). The reason is simple: It's not just the time spent with a book in hand, but rather the intensity and volume of *high-success* reading, that determines a student's progress in learning to read (Allington, 2009; Kuhn et al., 2006).

When students read accurately, they solidify their word-recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills. Perhaps more important, they are likely to understand what they read—and, as a result, to enjoy reading.

In contrast, struggling students who spend the same amount of time reading texts that they can't read accurately are at a disadvantage in several important ways. First, they read less text; it's slow going when you encounter many words you don't recognize instantly. Second, struggling readers are less likely to understand (and therefore enjoy) what they read. They are likely to become frustrated when reading these difficult texts and therefore to lose confidence in their word-attack, decoding, or word-recognition skills. Thus, a struggling reader and a successful reader who engage in the same 15-minute independent reading session do not necessarily receive equivalent practice, and they are likely to experience different outcomes.

Sadly, struggling readers typically encounter a steady diet of too-challenging texts throughout the school day as they make their way through classes that present grade-level material hour after hour. In essence, traditional instructional practices widen the gap between readers.

3. Every child reads something he or she understands.

Understanding what you've read is the goal of reading. But too often, struggling readers get interventions that focus on basic skills in isolation, rather than on

We're not saying that students should never read teacher- or district-selected texts. But at some time every day, they should be able to choose what they read.

The experience of choosing in itself boosts motivation. In addition, offering choice makes it more likely that every reader will be matched to a text that he or she can read well. If students initially have trouble choosing texts that match their ability level and interest, teachers can provide limited choices to guide them toward successful reading experiences. By giving students these opportunities, we help them develop the ability to choose appropriate texts for themselves—a skill that dramatically increases the likelihood they will read outside school (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001, Reis et al., 2007).

Some teachers say they find it difficult to provide a wide selection of texts because of budget constraints. Strangely, there is always money available

Only Online

Ever Wonder?

Wonderopolis (http://wonderopolis.org), a website created by the National Center for Family Literacy, can help parents and teachers draw elementary-age children into literacy-strengthening conversations and activities too fun to resist. Daily, the site posts kid-friendly content organized around that day's "wonder"—a question such as, "Where is the 100-Acre Wood?" or "Who was Mother Goose?" Each wonder is accompanied by

- An interesting video clip.
- Several paragraphs of simple text that introduce content related to the question.
- Learning activities that kids can do at home. ("Write your own short story about a couple of characters based on your own favorite stuffed animals.")
- Vocabulary featured in the text.
- A "Still Wondering" section that offers links to content on other sites (such as book lists, podcasts, and lesson plans).

There's a place after each wonder for kids to add their comments and respond to those of others. Also, the site offers a clickable list of all past wonders alphabetized by category, from "animals" to "writing."

Wonderopolis is only one of dozens of downloadable resources available on the National Center for Family Literacy's website (www.famlit.org/free-resources). Check out the Celebrate Literacy Calendar and the online parent magazine for terrific literacy-related ideas.

Relevant Reads

Transforming Literacy: Changing Lives Through Reading and Writing **by Robert P. Waxler and Maureen P. Hall** (Emerald Publishing, 2011)

Although science and math are crucial to education in the digital age, we must keep reading and writing at the heart of the educational process, write the authors. They argue that the Socratic dictum "know thyself" is as important in the modern world as it was in ancient Greece. With an interdisciplinary focus, this book centers on enlarging teachers' understanding of how the language arts can satisfy the basic human desire to know and understand ourselves and contribute to education in the 21st century.

“Being human is dependent on our use of language to shape our ideas and the ideas of others. The classroom, with its potentialities for community interchange, is the right place for deep reading, deep writing, and face-to-face discussion with others.” (p. 149)

Numbers of Note

66 The percentage of children ages 9–17 surveyed who say they will always want to read books printed on paper, even when e-books are available.

47 The percentage of children surveyed who cite "giving me time away from technology" as a reason they read books.

91 The percentage of children ages 6–17 surveyed who say they are more likely to finish a book they choose themselves.

Source: Scholastic & Harrison Group. (2010). *2010 kids and family reading report: Turning the page in the digital age.* Retrieved from Scholastic at www.scholastic.com/readingreport. Based on a nationally representative sample of 1,045 children ages 6–17.

PageTurner

"I asked him why he was reading Junie B. Jones if he didn't like it, and he said, 'It's at my level; it's all I'm allowed to read.'"

—*Pam Allyn, p. 16*

The six elements of effective reading instruction don't require much time or money—just educators' decision to put them in place.

Every Child, Every Day

Richard L. Allington and Rachael E. Gabriel

"Every child a reader" has been the goal of instruction, education research, and reform for at least three decades. We now know more than ever about how to accomplish this goal. Yet few students in the United States regularly receive the best reading instruction we know how to give.

Instead, despite good intentions, educators often make decisions about instruction that compromise or supplant the kind of experiences all children need to become engaged, successful readers. This is especially true for struggling readers, who are much less likely than their peers to participate in the kinds of high-quality instructional activities that would ensure that they learn to read.

Six Elements for Every Child

Here, we outline six elements of instruction that every child should experience every day. Each of these elements can be implemented in any district and any school, with any curriculum or set of materials, and without additional funds. All that's necessary is for adults to make the decision to do it.

1. Every child reads something he or she chooses. The research base on student-selected reading is robust and conclusive: Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read. In a 2004 meta-analysis, Guthrie and Humenick found that the two most powerful instructional design factors for improving reading motivation and comprehension were (1) student access to many books and (2) personal choice of what to read.

reading connected text for meaning. This common misuse of intervention time often arises from a grave misinterpretation of what we know about reading difficulties.

The findings of neurological research are sometimes used to reinforce the notion that some students who struggle to learn to read are simply "wired differently" (Zambo, 2003) and thus require large amounts of isolated basic skills practice. In fact, this same research shows that remediation that emphasizes comprehension can change the structure of struggling students' brains. Keller and Just (2009) used imaging to examine the brains of struggling readers before and after they received 100 hours of remediation—including lots of reading and rereading of real texts. The white matter of the struggling readers was of lower structural quality than that of good readers before the intervention, but it improved following the intervention. And these changes in the structure of the brain's white matter consistently predicted increases in reading ability.

Numerous other studies (Aylward et al., 2003; Krafnick, Flowers, Napoliello, & Eden, 2011; Shaywitz et al., 2004) have supported Keller and Just's findings that comprehensive reading instruction is associated with changed activation patterns that mirror those of typical readers. These studies show that it doesn't take neurosurgery or banging away at basic skills to enable the brain to develop the ability to read: It takes lots of reading and rereading of text that students find engaging and comprehensible.

The findings from brain research align well with what we've learned from studies of reading interventions. Regardless of their focus, target population, or publisher, interventions that accelerate reading development routinely devote at least two-thirds of their time to reading and rereading rather than isolated or contrived skill practice (Allington, 2011). These findings have been consistent for the last 50 years—yet the typical reading intervention used in schools today has struggling readers spending the bulk of their time on tasks other than reading and rereading actual texts.

Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read.

Studies of exemplary elementary teachers further support the finding that more authentic reading develops better readers (Allington, 2002; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003). In these large-scale national studies, researchers found that students in more-effective teachers' classrooms spent a larger percentage of reading instructional time actually reading; students in less-effective teachers' classrooms spent more time using worksheets, answering low-level, literal questions, or completing before-and-after reading activities. In addition, exemplary teachers were more likely to differentiate instruction so that all readers had books they could actually read accurately, fluently, and with understanding.

4. Every child writes about something personally meaningful.

In our observations in schools across several states, we rarely see students writing anything more than fill-in-the-blank or short-answer responses during their reading block. Those who do have the opportunity to compose something longer than a few sentences are either responding to a teacher-selected prompt or writing within a strict structural formula that turns even paragraphs and essays into fill-in-the-blank exercises.

As adults, we rarely if ever write to a prompt, and we almost never write about something we don't know about. Writing is called *composition* for a good reason: We actually *compose* (construct something unique) when we write. The opportunity to compose continuous text about something meaningful is not just something nice to have when there's free time after a test or at the end of the school year. Writing provides a different modality within which to practice the skills and strategies of reading for an authentic purpose.

When students write about something they care about, they use conventions of spelling and grammar because it matters to them that their ideas are communicated, not because they will lose points or see red ink if they don't (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2010). They have to think about what words will best convey their ideas to their readers. They have to encode these words using letter patterns others will recognize. They have to make sure they use punctuation in a way that will help their readers understand which words go together, where a thought starts and ends, and what emotion goes with it. They have to think about what they know about the structure of similar texts to set up their page and organize their ideas. This process is especially important for struggling readers because

it produces a comprehensible text that the student can read, reread, and analyze.

5. Every child talks with peers about reading and writing.

Research has demonstrated that conversation with peers improves comprehension and engagement with texts in a variety of settings (Cazden, 1988). Such literary conversation does not focus on recalling or retelling what students read. Rather, it asks students to analyze, comment, and compare—in short, to think about what they've read. Fall, Webb, and Chudowsky (2000) found better outcomes when kids simply talked with a peer about what they read than when they spent the same amount of class time highlighting important information after reading.

Similarly, Nystrand (2006) reviewed the research on engaging students in literate conversations and noted that even small amounts of such conversation (10 minutes a day) improved standardized test scores, regardless of students' family background or reading level. Yet struggling readers were the least likely to discuss daily what they read with peers. This was often because they were doing extra basic-skills practice instead. In class discussions, struggling readers were more likely to be asked literal questions about what they had read, to prove they "got it," rather than to be engaged in a conversation about the text.

Time for students to talk about their reading and writing is perhaps one of the most underused, yet easy-to-implement, elements of instruction. It doesn't require any special materials, special training, or even large amounts of time. Yet it provides measurable benefits in comprehension, motivation, and even language competence. The task of switching between writing, speaking, reading, and listening helps students make connections between, and thus solidify, the skills they use in each. This makes peer conversation especially important for English language learners, another population that we rarely ask to talk about what they read.

6. Every child listens to a fluent adult read aloud.

Listening to an adult model fluent reading increases students' own fluency and comprehension skills (Trelease, 2001), as well as expanding their vocabulary, background knowledge, sense of story, awareness of genre and text structure, and comprehension of the texts read (Wu & Samuels, 2004).

Yet few teachers above 1st grade read aloud to their students every day (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000). This high-impact, low-input strategy is another underused component of the kind of instruction that supports readers. We categorize it as low-input because, once again, it does not require special materials or training; it simply requires a decision to use class time more effectively. Rather than conducting whole-class reading of a single text that fits few readers, teachers should choose to spend a few minutes a day reading to their students.

Things That Really Matter

Most of the classroom instruction we have observed lacks these six research-based elements. Yet it's not difficult to find the time and resources to implement them. Here are a few suggestions.

First, eliminate almost all worksheets and workbooks. Use the money saved to purchase books for classroom libraries; use the time saved for self-selected reading, self-selected writing, literary conversations, and read-alouds.

Second, ban test-preparation activities and materials from the school day. Although sales of test preparation materials provide almost two-thirds of the profit that testing companies earn (Glovin & Evans, 2006), there are no studies demonstrating that engaging students in test prep ever improved their reading proficiency—or even their test performance (Guthrie, 2002). As with eliminating workbook completion, eliminating test preparation provides time and money to spend on the things that really matter in developing readers.

It's time for the elements of effective instruction described here to be offered more consistently to every child, in

every school, every day. Remember, adults have the power to make these decisions; kids don't. Let's decide to give them the kind of instruction they need.

First, eliminate almost all worksheets and workbooks.

References

Allington, R. L. (2002). What I've learned about effective reading instruction from a decade of studying exemplary elementary classroom teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(10), 740–747.

Allington, R. L. (2009). If they don't read much . . . 30 years later. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Reading more, reading better* (pp. 30–54). New York: Guilford.

Allington, R. L. (2011). Research on reading/learning disability interventions. In S. J. Samuels & A. E. Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (4th ed., pp. 236–265). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Allington, R. L. (2012). *What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Aylward, E. H., Richards, T. L., Berninger, V. W., Nagy, W. E., Field, K. M., Grimme, A. C., Richards, A. L., Thomson, J. B., & Cramer, S. C. (2003). Instructional treatment associated with changes in brain activation in children with dyslexia. *Neurology, 61*(2), E5–6.

Betts, E. A. (1949). Adjusting instruction to individual needs. In N. B. Henry (Ed.), *The forty-eighth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Part II, Reading in the elementary school* (pp. 266–283). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cazden, C. B. (1988). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). The impact of print exposure on word recognition. In J. Metsala & L. Ehri (Eds.), *Word recognition in beginning literacy* (pp. 235–262). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cunningham, P. M., & Cunningham, J. W. (2010). *What really matters in writing: Research-based practices across the elementary curriculum.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Dynarski, M. (2007). *Effectiveness of reading and mathematics software products: Findings from the first student cohort.* Washington, DC: Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20074005

Ehri, L. C., Dreyer, L. G., Flugman, B., & Gross, A. (2007). Reading Rescue: An effective tutoring intervention model for language minority students who are struggling readers in first grade. *American Educational Research Journal, 44*(2), 414–448.

Fall, R., Webb, N. M., & Chudowsky, N. (2000). Group discussion and large-scale language arts assessment: Effects on students' comprehension. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(4), 911–941.

Glovin, D., & Evans, D. (2006, December). How test companies fail your kids. *Bloomberg Markets,* 127–138. Retrieved from http://timeoutfromtesting.org/bloomberg_education.pdf

Guthrie, J. T. (2002). Preparing students for high-stakes test taking in reading. In A. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (pp. 370–391). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Guthrie, J. T., & Humenick, N. M. (2004). Motivating students to read: Evidence for classroom practices that increase motivation and achievement. In P. McCardle & V. Chhabra (Eds.), *The voice of evidence in reading research* (pp. 329–354). Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Hargis, C. (2006). Setting standards: An exercise in futility? *Phi Delta Kappan, 87*(5), 393–395.

Ivey, G., & Broaddus, K. (2001). Just plain reading: A survey of what makes students want to read in middle schools. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36,* 350–377.

Jacobs, J. S., Morrison, T. G., & Swinyard, W. R. (2000). Reading aloud to students: A national probability study of classroom reading practices of elementary school teachers. *Reading Psychology, 21*(3), 171–193.

Keller, T. A., & Just, M. A. (2009). Altering cortical activity: Remediation-induced changes in the white matter of poor readers. *Neuron, 64*(5), 624–631.

Krafnick, A. J., Flowers, D. L., Napoliello, E. M., & Eden, G. F. (2011). Gray matter volume changes following reading intervention in dyslexic children. *Neuroimage, 57*(3), 733–741.

Krashen, S. (2011). *Free voluntary reading.* Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Kuhn, M. R., Schwanenflugel, P., Morris, R. D., Morrow, L. M., Woo, D., Meisinger, B., et al. (2006). Teaching children to become fluent and automatic readers. *Journal of Literacy Research, 38*(4), 357–388.

National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* Rockville, MD: National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development. Retrieved from www.nationalreadingpanel.org/publications/summary.htm

Nystrand, M. (2006). Research on the role of classroom discourse as it affects reading comprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English, 40,* 392–412.

Reis, S. M., McCoach, D. B., Coyne, M. Schreiber, F. J., Eckert, R. D., & Gubbins, E. J. (2007). Using planned enrichment strategies with direct instruction to improve reading fluency, comprehension, and attitude toward reading: An evidence-based study. *Elementary School Journal, 108*(1), 3–24.

Shaywitz, B., Shaywitz, S., Blachman, B., Pugh, K., Fulbright, R. K., Skudlarski, P., et al. (2004). Development of left occipitotemporal systems for skilled reading in children after phonologically based intervention. *Biological Psychiatry, 55*(9), 926–933.

Taylor, B. M., Pearson, P. D., Peterson, D. S., & Rodriguez, M. C. (2003). Reading growth in high-poverty classrooms: The influence of teacher practices that encourage cognitive engagement in literacy learning. *Elementary School Journal, 104,* 3–28.

Trelease, J. (2001). *Read-aloud handbook* (5th ed.). New York: Viking-Penguin.

Wu, Y., & Samuels, S. J. (2004, May). *How the amount of time spent on independent reading affects reading achievement.* Paper presented at the annual convention of the International Reading Association, Reno, Nevada.

Zambo, D. (2003). The importance of providing scientific information to children with dyslexia. *Dyslexia* [online magazine]. Retrieved from Dyslexia Parents Resource at www.dyslexia-parent.com/mag47.html

Richard L. Allington is a professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville; richardallington@aol.com. **Rachael E. Gabriel** is assistant professor at the University of Connecticut in Storrs; rachael.gabriel@uconn.edu.

Taming the Wild Text

A top-10 list of strategies to help the struggling reader become fierce, unafraid, and strong.

Pam Allyn

We learn to do well what we learn to love; it's as true in reading as in anything else. For 10 years, I've guided a reading program for boys at the Children's Village, a residential school in New York City for children in foster care. These boys have been through bruising school and home experiences that have made them feel extraordinarily vulnerable as readers. Many have told me that they've never once experienced pleasure in reading. But over the years, as we've built a culture for reading, I've seen many of these strugglers make a breakthrough; they stop seeing their struggles as a barrier to success and begin to see them within the larger picture of the challenges all readers experience as they learn to find pleasure in print.

One of my students told me that the first time he ever experienced joy in reading was when I read to him from *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. With his eyes full of tears, he said, "I feel a lot like Max sometimes, all alone. But he makes me feel brave again."

The truth is, we're all struggling readers. At some time today or tomorrow, you'll be reading something and you'll feel the print sliding away from you, your sense of power over the page slipping, your comprehension becoming murkier as you press on. It doesn't feel good. There are children who feel this every day, whether looking at a street sign or a simple picture book. When the world of print lacks deep meaning for a child, the reading experience becomes like wandering in an unfamiliar universe.

These are the kids in our classrooms who search hungrily for distraction. You know them well. They'll look for any escape—using the bathroom or talking to a friend—as soon as reading time begins. Unlike Max in *Where the Wild Things Are*, who stands with his sword ready to fight the wild things, these students avoid encounters with text at all costs.

For language is a wild thing. Whether the words are unfamiliar, the story unusual, or the text about complex and layered information, the wild elements of language present one challenge after another to a struggling reader.

It's vital that we nurture a love for reading in all children from a young age—especially those who find reading daunting—so we eliminate the danger of illiteracy for them. The National Center for Education Statistics notes that U.S. public school students who reported reading for fun almost every day scored higher on average on the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress than did students who reported doing so less frequently. Students who reported never or hardly ever reading for fun scored lowest.[1] Adults who never become competent readers have difficulty not only with finding work or keeping jobs but also with writing letters or e-mails, filling out forms, and assisting their children with homework.

Ten Actions for Creating a Reading Culture

From my observations at the Children's Village and my decades of work with vulnerable readers, I have built a top-10 list for how teachers can create a classroom culture that ensures that all students fall in love with reading. From that love, students will build reading muscles for lifelong strength. Through these actions, we can help each struggling reader arm himself or herself for the joys of engaging with the wild thing of printed text—and taming it.

1. Don't judge the reader.

Environments that offer many reading materials at different levels and in different forms—without judging any form as superior—enable students to find the materials that work best for them. Today's reader is exposed to more media, in all forms, than any reader before. Avid readers, and some budding readers, will read anything: cereal boxes, magazines, posters, video game instructions, graphic novels. It's essential that teachers acknowledge these forms of reading as "real" and not simply validate and praise award-winning chapter books, for example.

Ask students to describe times when reading felt good to them, what they were reading at the time, and why it felt good. Don't dismiss their descriptions of the sports page, a great website, or a manual for how to build a castle. Embrace all these as signs of an inspired reading life.

Today's readers use different forms of media—e-mails, text messages, blog posts, and so on—to communicate. Name these communications as reading, too, and celebrate any minutes a child spends absorbing print. Using these methods of communication in the classroom can make the reader more aware of his or her ability as a literate person and spur confidence to read more.

Finally, never judge the older reader who needs to read books at lower levels to build stamina and fluency. Too often we fixate on titles read, when in fact the key to lifelong literacy is reading frequently and ingesting a high number of words.

2. Offer a range of materials.

Students may be reluctant readers not because they lack basic skills, but because they haven't been exposed to materials suited to their interests, ability, and temperament. A 2008 survey by Scholastic and Yankelovich[2] found that despite the abundance of information and reading materials out there, "55 percent of the children surveyed agreed with the statement 'There aren't enough really good books for boys/girls my age'" (p. 47). A key reason that children ages 9–17 don't read more books for fun is that they have trouble finding books they like. Only 15 percent said they don't read for fun because they "don't like to read."

Literature gives us all an opportunity to think about the world that we live in and react to it in a deeply personal way.

These findings imply that we must introduce kids to a wide range of reading materials. Finding books and other reading resources that will match your most struggling readers' interests and passions might be easier than you think. Many educators have created websites, blogs, and Facebook pages that discuss ways to engage reluctant readers and suggest books to tempt them.[3] Looking at the websites of Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and indie booksellers, one can often find new titles. Local librarians—those trustworthy and stalwart supporters of reading—if asked, will also provide lots of guidance.

3. Provide time for dialogue.

Just because students appear to be reading independently doesn't mean teachers can forsake the social aspect of reading.

Often, reluctant readers are given less time than fluent readers to be social and interactive about reading because they're thought to need more practice time. The absence of this vital dialogue only contributes to struggling readers' feeling of isolation and rarely inspires them to pursue more challenging texts.

Dialogue is a window into another person's reading experience and is an effective way to get people excited about reading. And dialogue doesn't always mean traditional discussion about comprehension or plot summaries. It can also mean asking students what they're wondering about or what they're hoping will surprise them as they read on. Or encouraging students to use Twitter or text messaging to share ideas from their reading. Rather than a dry Q and A with the teacher having the "right" answer and students guessing at it, dialogue should accomplish some genuine purpose.

With boys at the Children's Village, I led a unit of study on social issues and debate. Boys met in small groups and read articles on subjects that interested them; then each of them developed a question to pursue together, incorporating their different points of view.

When a teacher and student read together or talk one-on-one about a reading selection, they can enter into a safe, nurturing dialogue that builds a literacy bond. And one way to create dialogue among peers is to create text clubs. Talking about graphic novels, comics, short stories, or poems offers struggling readers a chance to explore big ideas in depth through text that's not necessarily "big."

We can model how we delve into text of all sorts and develop our own complex thinking through reading a few pages in a comic book or a one-page blog post. Read aloud from easier texts and celebrate the genius of Dr. Seuss or Arnold Lobel, valuing their sophisticated approach to language even in texts that are easier to read.

4. Give readers a tool kit.

Max's sword is his tool and his protection; he's ready to face the wild things because he's got what he needs. Our struggling readers often feel defenseless around print. Let's arm them with everything they need. We give vulnerable readers a chance to jump over hurdles when we equip them with resources like alphabet charts, word boxes, word walls, or a key ring holding cards printed with commonly challenging words and pictures or clues to meaning. Many digital devices can help, such as word lists and other reading-relevant applications on cell phones or smartphones, e-readers, and tablet computers.

5. Let readers read at their comfort level.

Too often, parents and teachers assume a student is at a certain reading level because of his or her age; they may even say things like "this is where he *should* be now." Instead, we should assess the independent reading level of each student and guide him or her to read texts at that level as well as texts at a slightly lower and slightly higher level. This practice encourages comfort with many different reading materials and validates the fact that authentic readers read at a variety of levels.

Books slightly below the student's reading level encourage that student to read faster and more confidently. Such books should never be underestimated, and a student should never be ashamed to read them. Texts at a slightly higher level should be on subjects or by authors whom students truly love, motivating them to push themselves as readers and thinkers.

Students should never be locked into one level. In one classroom, I encountered a student unhappily reading the Junie B. Jones series. I asked him why he was reading it if he didn't like it, and he said, "It's at my level; it's all I'm allowed to read." This book is never going to motivate this kid. I'd much rather he read one book about something he loves, like sharks, skimming the parts he doesn't quite comprehend, to build his sense of himself as a reader who asks questions, gets excited about new information, and wanders through new territory.

A key reason that children ages 9–17 don't read more books for fun is that they have trouble finding books they like.

6. Dive deep.

Literature gives us all an opportunity to think about the world we live in and react to it in a deeply personal way. Talking to students about their reactions allows them to express their feelings in safe and nonthreatening ways. Start by having students share their favorite reading places—and celebrate the sheer fact that they chose to read.

Struggling readers need ways to discuss books deeply with dignity; this helps them see that a text doesn't have to be super-long to be worth a deep response. You might read simpler texts aloud to demonstrate weighty thinking. For example, read from a picture book like *Fox* by Margaret Wild, then ask students to sketch their response to one part that moved or inspired them and share the response with a partner.

Thoughtful dialogue makes the reading experience social and deepens comprehension. Challenged readers often welcome going through a process I refer to as the LitLoop: reading, writing, speaking, and listening—some of the time with others who are reading the same material. Rather than waiting for a show of hands from your active participants, let all students communicate about a book through journaling and blogging within your class or across different classrooms. This inspires reluctant readers to share ideas.

Two ways to engage readers are to highlight purpose (when reading feels hard, a struggler wants to know why he or she is doing it) and to broaden audience. Reading the same text with other students in different grades, schools, or countries and sharing experiences through writing (often using technology) combines both methods and is extraordinarily motivating. I've arranged for a class of students in Harlem, New York, to regularly chat through Skype with students in Kibera, Kenya. The New York students' motivation for reading their assigned poems is extremely high now because they know they'll be talking about these poems across many miles.

7. Value browsing and rereading.

Browsing and rereading are signs of a strong reader. Rereading builds comprehension; a person is reading differently

every time he or she comes to the text. Find moments to praise your students who spend time browsing, and compliment them on rereading.

Encourage learners to reread a favorite story in another form; for instance, many classics texts have been rewritten as graphic novels. Poems such as "Honey, I Love" by Eloise Greenfield have been retold in picture books. Finding stories told in different guises can appeal to the struggling reader who's looking for ways to enjoy reading across multiple genres.

8. Build stamina.

"Quick reads" give a challenged student a successful reading experience without making that student wait weeks to feel successful. Using a timer is a great way to get a resistant reader to commit to small increments of reading. For some reason, setting the timer to odd times, such as 13 minutes, really helps! And keep your commitment; don't ever add time even if your readers seem totally settled in. The students will come to trust that you keep your word and will be able to add more minutes as they build their reading muscles.

Challenge reluctant readers to read further on topics they enjoy and have explored already rather than to try new topics, which requires wading through a lot of new vocabulary. Reading within one's "passion zone" is motivational. Tell students that practicing reading fast will help them build stamina and that reading different texts on one subject will help them learn how people talk about the same ideas in different ways.

Kyle, one boy at the Children's Village, loved cars, so those of us working with him created a collection of texts at different levels that reflected this passion—a poem, a magazine article, a website, and an excerpt from *The Phantom Tollbooth* in which the main

character sits in an amazing little car. Kyle read from that basket for hours.

9. Teach students to curate their own reading lives.

In this era, reading is varied and rich with possibility. We should empower students to choose what they read and to see themselves as readers who sample widely across genres. Show kids different ways to keep a record of the material they read—from writing book lists on bookmarks to keep in their current paperback, to saving book titles in a computerized database, to creating e-files of books that include information about the author, characters, and other books in a series. Upload these files onto a wiki or class blog so others can dip in. Encouraging students to use their mobile devices to record the authors and titles of books they liked (or didn't) motivates them.

10. Remember, joy matters.

Most reluctant readers have experienced a great deal of anxiety and stress around reading in their lives. What will it take for such readers to experience the joy of reading? Getting to joy is important, because the prize of reading competence comes at great cost. What too many challenged readers remember, even once they read well, is the hardship and loneliness of that long trek uphill.

Let's create a world for all readers that's full of the joy of discovery, imagination, and information. The only way to do this is to make the world come alive with stories students will love and texts that connect to their passions. Let's hand reluctant readers the sword with which to conquer the wild things of language—and learn to love reading. ■

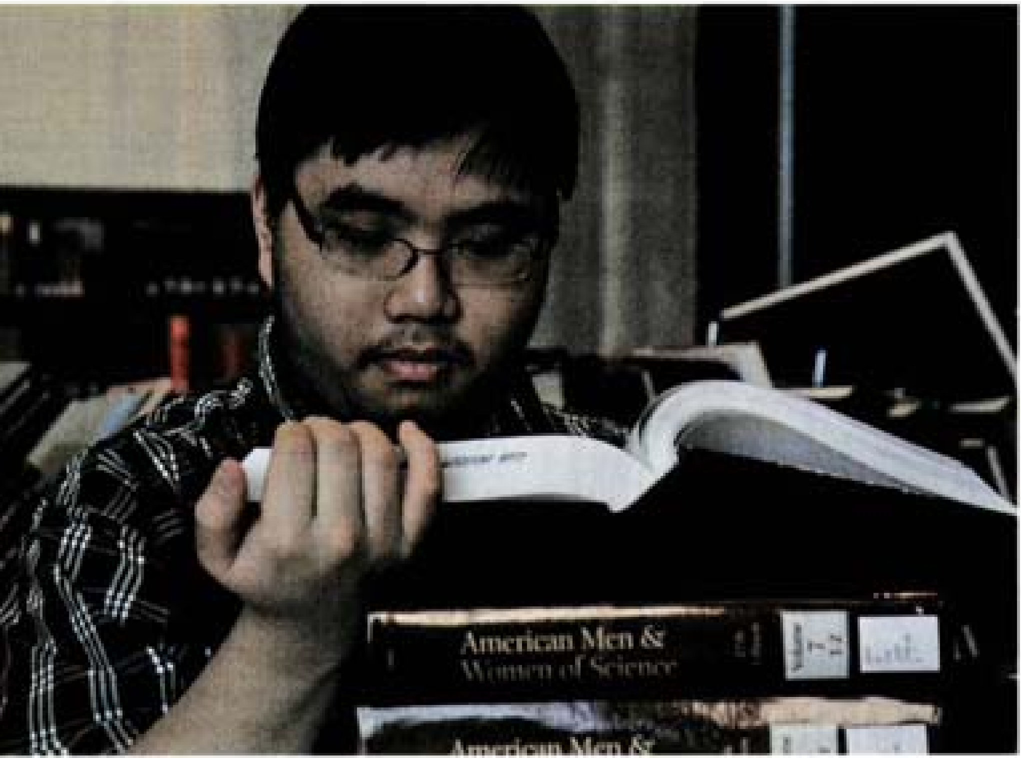
[1]National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). *Reading 2011: National Assessment of Educational Progress at grades 4 and 8.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

[2]Scholastic & Yankelovich. (2008). *Kids and family reading report: Reading in the 21st century: Turning the page with technology.* New York: Scholastic.

[3]Anita Silvey (www.childrensbookalmanac.com); Leonard Marcus (www.leonardmarcus.com); Franki Sibberson and Mary Lee Hahn (www.readingyear.blogspot.com); and Mr. Schu (http://mrschureads.blogspot.com) are a few advocates with blogs or websites that provide guidance on children's reading.

Copyright © 2012 Pam Allyn

Pam Allyn is executive director of LitWorld and author of many books on teaching reading and writing, including *Pam Allyn's Best Books for Boys* (Scholastic, 2011). She founded Books for Boys, a reading program for children in foster care; pam.litlife@gmail.com.



© GALE ZUCKER

Adolescent More Than

To be successful learners, adolescent readers must master complex texts, understand the diverse literacy demands of the different content areas, and navigate digital reading.

Gina Biancarosa

Despite nearly a decade of attention to adolescent literacy among education policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, most people still believe that the major problem for struggling adolescent readers is their failure to master basic reading skills. However, advocates for adolescent literacy recognize that the issue is broader than simply providing remediation for students who cannot read at basic levels. The heart of adolescent literacy reform must be ensuring that students leave high school with the reading and writing skills they need to thrive in the 21st century career and college landscape.

Even excellent basic reading instruction in the primary grades does not guarantee that a student will successfully make the shift to these higher-level literacy demands. Researchers have long recognized that academic reading changes after 3rd grade. Chall (1983) first described this transition as a shift from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. To make this transition, she wrote, students must learn how to organize and apply their background knowledge as a context for their reading, get information efficiently from text, and monitor and adjust their reading as needed.

Literacy: Remediation

Research suggests that schools should attend to three major challenges students face in making the transition from basic literacy to higher-level literacy: mastering increasingly difficult texts, understanding the distinctions among reading in different content areas, and reading digital content.

Increasingly Challenging Texts

As older elementary students learn to read for academic purposes, they face new challenges in the texts they are asked to read. The length of the text is perhaps the most obvious change, but the words and sentences students read also typically become longer and more difficult (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy [CCAAL], 2010; Snow, 2010).

As students progress through the grades, their textbooks use more complex words to cover the same content. For example, consider the excerpts from elementary, middle, and high school textbooks in Figure 1 on page 25. All three texts introduce the concept of plant reproduction through spores, but they do so with increasingly complex academic vocabulary. In terms of vocabulary complexity alone, the most advanced words a 4th grade student might encounter are *reproduce* and *examples*, but a 7th grade student must also cope with words like *ancestors* and *characteristics*, and a 10th grade student must handle *psilophytes*.

The words students must read to learn not only get longer, but also refer to more complicated, specific concepts. All three textbooks in Figure 1 introduce the topic of reproduction via spores, but the middle and high school textbooks also introduce the topic of vascular tissue. Similarly, the elementary textbook refers to types of plants, but the middle and high school textbooks use the idea of relationships among categories of plants.

At the same time, sentences grow longer and syntactically more complex across the grade levels as structural devices designed to support comprehension become fewer (van den

Broek, 2010). The simple, declarative sentences in the elementary textbook are replaced by complex compound sentences in the more advanced textbooks. Similarly, the elementary text invokes and repeats terms as it adds to the conceptual load, building in redundancies that help establish coherence for the reader; the middle and high school texts employ fewer of these structural niceties.

Increasing word, sentence, and concept complexity are just a few aspects of how texts become more demanding. The need to synthesize information across multiple texts and formats (such as tables, graphs, pictures, and figures) also increases sharply from elementary through high school. Even the way that texts incorporate and use graphical representations changes (Lee & Spratley, 2010).

And these changes are not specific to textbooks (CCAAL, 2010; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Lee & Spratley, 2010). The same can be said for the novels that students read in language arts classes, the historical documents they read in history classes, the lab instructions they read in science classes, and the word problems they solve in mathematics classes.

Unfortunately, experience with texts in earlier grades does little to prepare students for the increasing demands of the texts they must learn from in middle and high school. Without explicit instruction in how to cope with the evolving complexity of these texts, too many adolescents fall behind in their reading development, and their ability to learn from text suffers.

Different Reading for Different Disciplines

As students move up through the grades, the texts they read in different content-area classes become progressively more distinct from one another (CCAAL, 2010; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Lee & Spratley, 2010). The novels, poems, essays, and plays students read in language arts classes bear little resemblance to the textbooks, historical documents, and speeches in history classes or the textbooks, laboratory notes, and graphical displays in science classes. At the same time, the expectations for reading comprehension also become more specialized (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, & Mueller, 2001; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

Too often, schools do not explicitly teach students how the reasoning processes, strategies, and rules for achieving comprehension vary across the content areas (Lee & Spratley, 2010; Moje, 2008). Lacking instruction, many students struggle to navigate the escalating discipline-specific diversity of texts.

For example, consider the different ways in which students are expected to respond to the term *characteristic* in various disciplines. Characteristics that are valued in making arguments in science classes include physical properties but do not include psychological properties; in contrast, social science and language arts value both physical and psychological properties. Thus, when asked about the characteristics that help a species evolve and adapt, a science student is not expected to cite intelligence and conviviality, but rather physical characteristics of the species and its environment.

Similarly, a history student who uses numerical odds alone to explain Napoleon's victories and defeats would not be evaluated highly; but the mathematics student who uses Napoleon's courage, charisma, and stubbornness to calculate his odds would also not fare well. Thus, reading a subject-area text with comprehension requires understanding what "counts" within a discipline. As a result, it should come as no surprise that early reading success does not inoculate students against later reading struggles in the content areas (Greenleaf et al., 2001; Pearson, Moje, & Greenleaf, 2010).

Like the idea of developmental change in reading, the idea that reading becomes (or rather, should become) increasingly disciplinary is not new. As early as the turn of the 20th century,

FIGURE 1. Elementary-, Middle-, and High School–Level Textbook Excerpts on Seedless Reproduction in Plants

Elementary School[1]	Middle School[2]	High School[3]
Plants Without Seeds You have read that some simple plants don't have roots, stems, or leaves. These simple plants don't have seeds either. They reproduce by spores. . . . Ferns are examples of this type of plant. Ferns, like simpler plants, reproduce by spores.	**Characteristics of Seedless Vascular Plants** The odd-looking plants in the ancient forests were the ancestors of three groups of plants that are alive today—ferns, club mosses, and horsetails. Ferns and their relatives share two characteristics. They have vascular tissue and use spores to reproduce.	**Non-seed Plants** The divisions of non-seed plants are shown in Figure 21.6. These plants produce hard-walled reproductive cells called spores. Non-seed plants include vascular and nonvascular organisms. . . . **Psilophyta** Psilophytes, known as whisk ferns, consist of thin, green stems. The psilophytes are unique vascular plants because they have neither roots nor leaves.

[1]Bell, M. J. (2005). *Harcourt Science, Science: Grade 3.* New York: Harcourt School.

[2]Padilla, M., Miaoulis, I., & Cyr, M. (2004). *Science explorer: Discoveries in life, earth and physical science.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

[3]Biggs, A. (2004). *Biology: The dynamics of life.* New York: Glencoe.

Huey (1908/1968) advocated that reading instruction be absorbed into content-area instruction. In addition, methods textbooks for preservice teachers have long acknowledged the importance of disciplinary reading in the intermediate and middle grades (Anders & Guzzetti, 1996; Dupuis, Lee, Badiali, & Askov, 1989).

In the last decade, however, a flurry of reports have called for increased professional and policy attention to the need for literacy instruction beyond 3rd grade, specifically regarding the key role of literacy across the content areas (Berman & Biancarosa, 2005; CCAAL, 2010; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Kamil, 2003; Lee & Spratley, 2010; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). This idea has also recently gained a foothold in education standards. Most visibly, the new common core state standards integrate English language arts with two major content areas (history and social sciences and science and technical subjects) and also provide sample relevant texts for each of the content areas. This remarkable development is stimulating increased attention to the need for professional development and curriculum to acknowledge the central role that reading, writing, and oral language play in content-area learning.

No matter how successful early instruction in reading is, it cannot fully prepare students for the literacy demands that evolve after 3rd grade.

Digital Reading

Adding to the complexity of the literacy landscape after 3rd grade, the last decade has seen an explosion in the range of devices and mechanisms available for interacting with texts (Digital Trends, 2011; Patel, 2007). Digital technology is becoming the default tool for both communication and task completion on the job, as well as in the marketplace, higher education, and the political process (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007). Digital reading has also radically increased the amount of text to which adolescents have access and heightened the need for critical reading.

Debate still rages about the extent to which reading in digital contexts is really new or different. But common themes have emerged that characterize such reading as more multifaceted, with constantly changing mediums and modalities (Leu, O'Byrne, Zawilinski, McVerry, & Everett-Cacopardo, 2009).

For example, reading in digital environments introduces nonlinear options for proceeding through texts. This nonlinearity can be a boon or a barrier to struggling readers. On one hand, it gives readers access to background knowledge, definitions of unfamiliar terms, efficient location of relevant information through the use of search tools, and motivating choices

for personal inquiry. On the other hand, gaining proficiency in digital reading is by no means automatic (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004; Leu et al., 2009). The rapid rise in the use of digital devices for reading and the increasing expectation that adults can use them facilely, flexibly, and critically brings new urgency to calls for increased attention to advanced and critical reading skills, and specifically to reading in digital contexts (Duke, Schmar-Dobler, & Zhang, 2006; Lemke, 2006).

As a result, reading instruction after 3rd grade should target skills, strategies, and behaviors that research has identified as central to reading in digital environments. For example, in a digital context, instead of preteaching background knowledge, teachers have the option of teaching search strategies and text structures of informational websites so that students can fill in missing background knowledge themselves (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Readers conducting research on the Internet must master the ability to glean pertinent information through targeted reading (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Research has found that, at the same time, students take longer to read the same texts in digital formats than in printed formats, suggesting that readers must also learn to cope with a loss of reading efficiency when reading digitally (Reinking, 1988).

Some argue that the Internet will soon become the default medium for reading (Leu et al., 2007). Regardless of whether and when such predictions prove true, the literacy and technology skills students must master to participate in all facets of society are becoming more interwoven. Thus, teaching reading, especially beyond 3rd grade, necessarily includes teaching students to navigate the specific demands of digital texts (Duke et al., 2006).

How to Support Adolescent Literacy

No matter how successful early instruction in reading is, it cannot fully prepare students for the literacy demands that evolve after 3rd grade. Supporting adolescent literacy requires simultaneous attention to the needs of students who have not mastered basic reading skills and to the common need of all students to master ever-more-challenging texts in ever-changing contexts for increasingly divergent goals.

Remediation for struggling readers often squeezes out content-area reading and learning, thus giving these students fewer opportunities to learn advanced literacy skills in other academic subjects (Greenleaf et al., 2011; Haycock, 2001). If our adolescents are to meet 21st century expectations for reading, all students must have opportunities to learn specialized reading habits and skills. In short, struggling readers who need basic skills instruction should receive it *plus* instruction in adolescent literacy.

Improvement of adolescent literacy also requires that we move away from outmoded 20th century approaches to invent and implement 21st century policies and practices. For example, funding and accountability policies must anticipate the incorporation of disciplinary and digital literacy into reading instruction and practice. Otherwise, reform efforts are likely to miss those they are intended to aid.

Content-area teaching materials and professional development also must change dramatically. As long as curriculums do not include explicit teaching of disciplinary norms for reading, it will be difficult for teachers to include this crucial aspect of content-area learning. In addition, schools should provide teachers with ongoing, systematic professional development opportunities that build on problems of practice and help them use a disciplinary lens when teaching reading. This professional development should not be yet another attempt to get all teachers teaching the same strategies regardless of relevance to their content areas. Rather, it should enable teachers to realize the role literacy plays in their content areas and make that role explicit and manageable for the full

All students must have opportunities to learn specialized reading habits.

range of learners in their classrooms.

As teachers get up to speed with their role in teaching disciplinary reading, they will also need guidance in how to deal with digital reading. They need help building an understanding of the distinct demands digital reading places on their students. Learning standards also must continue to evolve to help teachers and students navigate this burgeoning new medium for reading. Just as is true for adolescent literacy more broadly, digital reading should be positioned not as an appendage to already-overwhelming teaching duties, but as integral to learning across all domains.

Finally, a challenging piece of the adolescent literacy puzzle is devising assessments that reflect the reality of reading after 3rd grade. Currently, good formative and summative assessments of disciplinary literacy and digital literacy do not exist. Policymakers must redress this lack if the changes we seek are to take hold. Given the current climate in education, evidence of effectiveness and data to inform decisions must become priorities if we are to make true progress in adolescent literacy. ■

References

Anders, P. L., & Guzzetti, B. J. (1996). *Literacy instruction in the content areas*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Berman, I., & Biancarosa, G. (2005). *Reading to achieve: A governor's guide to adolescent literacy*. Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.

Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy. (2010). *Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Chall, J. S. (1983). *Stages of reading development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Coiro, J., & Dobler, E. (2007). Exploring the comprehension strategies used by 6th grade skilled readers as they search for and locate information on the Internet. *Reading Research Quarterly, 42*, 214–257.

Digital Trends. (2011, March 24). Tablet adoption drives ereader sales by 400% [blog post]. Retrieved from *Online Marketing Trends* at www.online marketing-trends.com/2011/03/tablet-adoption-drives-ereader-sales-by.html

Duke, N. K., Schmar-Dobler, E., & Zhang, S. (2006). Comprehension and technology. In M. C. McKenna, L. D. Labbo, R. D. Kieffer, & D. Reinking (Eds.), *International handbook of literacy and technology* (Vol. 2, pp. 317–326). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dupuis, M. M., Lee, J. W., Badiali, B. J., & Askov, E. N. (1989). *Teaching reading and writing in the content areas*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Greenleaf, C. L., Litman, C., Hanson, T. L., Rosen, R., Boscardin, C. K., Herman, J., et al. (2011). Integrating literacy and science in biology: Teaching and learning impacts of reading apprenticeship professional development. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*(3), 647–717.

Greenleaf, C., Schoenbach, R., Cziko, C., & Mueller, F. (2001). Apprenticing adolescents to academic literacy. *Harvard Educational Review, 71*(1), 79–129.

Haycock, K. (2001). Closing the achievement gap. *Educational Leadership, 58*(6), 6–11.

Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Huey, E. B. (1908/1968). *The psychology and pedagogy of reading*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Original work published 1908)

Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Adolescents and literacy: Reading for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Lee, C. D., & Spratley, A. (2010). *Reading in the disciplines: The challenges of adolescent literacy*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Lemke, J. L. (2006). Towards critical multimedia literacy: Technology, research, and politics. In M. C. McKenna, L. D. Labbo, R. D. Keiffer, & D. Reinking (Eds.), *International handbook of literacy and technology* (Vol. 2, pp. 3–14). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Leu, D. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J., & Cammack, D. (2004). Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the Internet and other information and communication technologies. In R. B. Ruddell & N. Unrau (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (5th ed., pp. 1568–1611). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Leu, D. J., O'Byrne, W. I., Zawilinski, L., McVerry, J. G., & Everett-Cacopardo, H. (2009). Comments on Greenhow, Robelia, and Hughes: Expanding the new literacies conversation. *Educational Researcher, 38*(4), 264–269.

Leu, D. J., Reinking, D., Carter, A., Castek, J., Coiro, J., Henry, L. A., et al. (2007, April). *Defining online reading comprehension: Using think aloud verbal protocols to refine a preliminary model of Internet reading comprehension processes*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago. Retrieved November 13, 2011, from http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dcbjhrtq_10djqrhz

Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 52*(2), 96–107.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2007). *PISA 2006: Science competencies for tomorrow's world* (Vol. 1). Paris, France: Author.

Patel, N. (2007, November 21). Kindle sells out in 5.5 hours [blog post]. Retrieved from *Engadget* at www.engadget.com/2007/11/21/kindle-sells-out-in-two-days

Pearson, P. D., Moje, E. B., & Greenleaf, C. (2010). Literacy and science: Each in the service of the other. *Science, 328*, 459–463.

RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

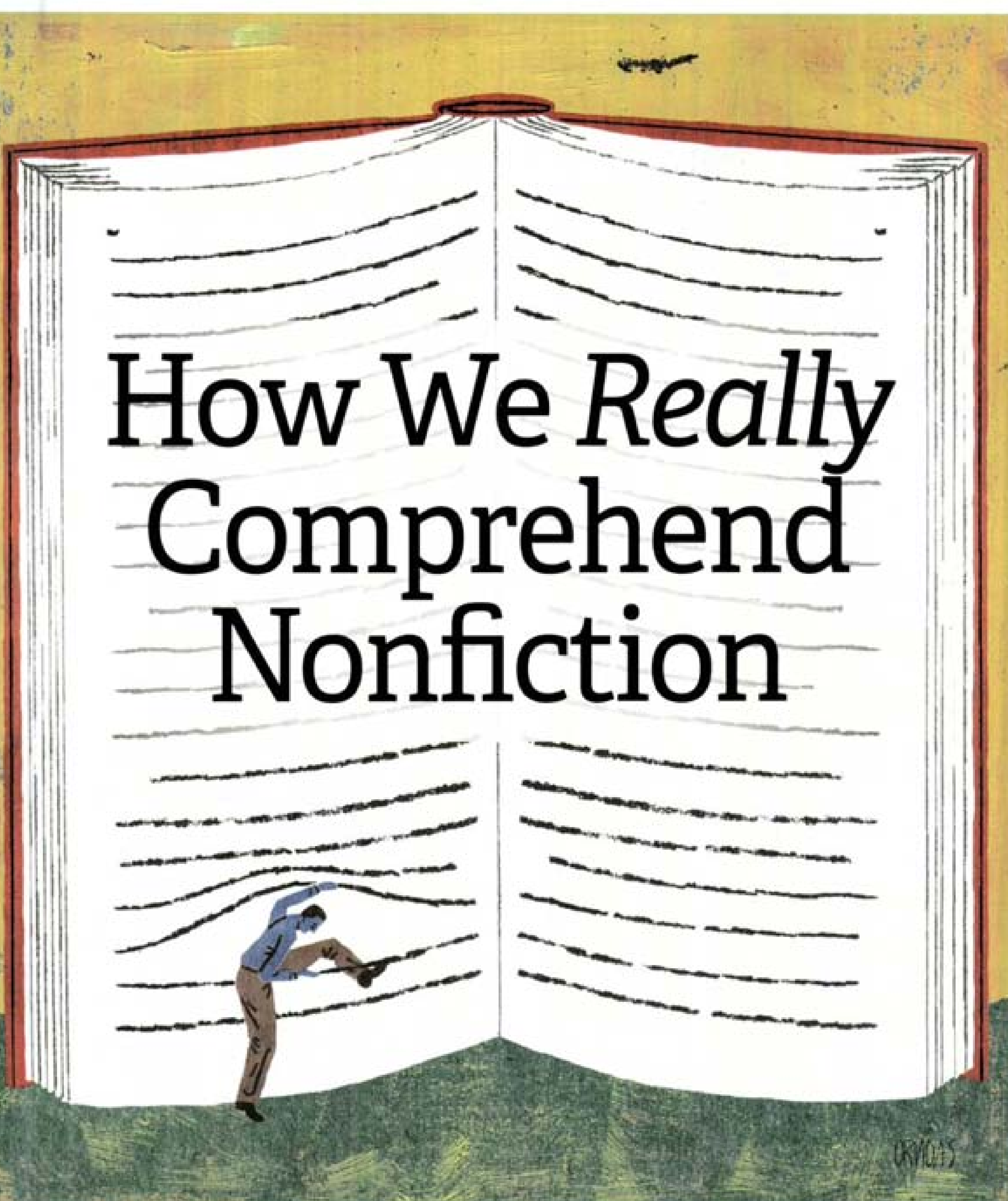
Reinking, D. (1988). Computer-mediated text and comprehension differences: The role of reading time, reader preference, and estimation of learning. *Reading Research Quarterly, 23*(4), 484–498.

Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content area literacy. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*(1), 40–59.

Snow, C. E. (2010). Academic language and the challenge of reading for learning about science. *Science, 328*, 450–452.

van den Broek, P. (2010). Using texts in science education: Cognitive processes and knowledge representation. *Science, 328*, 453–456.

Gina Biancarosa is assistant professor in the College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene; ginab@uoregon.edu.



How We *Really* Comprehend Nonfiction

Although we tend to downplay the importance of narrative, nonfiction is all about plot.

Thomas Newkirk

You be the judge. Which of these two sentences is easier to read?

> The Appeals Court's position is one of rejection concerning the proposed individual mandate.

or

> The Appeals Court has rejected the proposed individual mandate.

Obviously the second sentence is, even if it's expanded:

> The Appeals Court, in a unanimous ruling, rejected the proposed individual mandate.

This sentence has almost the same number of words as the first one I cited, but it retains an architecture—the subject-verb-object sequence—that is easier to process. We innately prefer sentences that tell a small story: An agent is acting, having an effect on something (Williams, 2002). We have a craving for narrative.

This simple comparison can help us move to a wider question about how we read longer stretches of writing in various genres, many of which are not thought of as narrative. The conventional wisdom is that we employ radically different reading skills when we read (or write) texts that are variously called informational, analytic, or argumentative—indeed, that moving toward these texts (and away from narrative) should be a feature of high school and college reading. The clear message in the common core literacy standards is that narrative reading is to be reduced in the upper grades and that college-ready students need to master the more demanding tasks of reading texts that are not narrative (see Coleman & Pimentel, 2011).

One might even argue that this hierarchy goes back to Plato's *Republic* (380 BCE/1991), in which philosophers were placed above artists and the conceptual above the visual. So any argument to the contrary faces a pretty strong headwind.

But when I read the best analytic writing—the work of Michael Pollan, Malcolm Gladwell, Stephen Jay Gould, Jonah Lehrer, Elizabeth Kolbert, my favorite columnists, even Plato for that matter—it often *feels* like a story to me. The writing unfolds. I enjoy the playing out of ideas and positions, the ways they conflict, the ways questions are raised and explored—the way they are narrated. All of these writers are masters of the embedded story that grounds any point in live experience, which gives it what rhetoricians call *presence*. This work confirms the claim of Robert Frost that "everything written is as good as it is dramatic. It need not declare itself in form, but it is drama or it is nothing" (quoted in Poirier, 1997, p. 452).

So here is my modest proposition—that narrative is the deep structure of all good writing. *All good writing*. We struggle with writers who dispense with narrative form and simply present information because we are given no frame for comprehension. Mark Turner (1996), a cognitive psychologist and literary critic, puts it this way: "Narrative imagining—story—is the fundamental instrument of thought. Rational capacities depend on it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, of predicting, of planning, of explaining" (pp. 4–5) (see also Eubanks, 2004). This claim is true for even the most specialized academic writing; even research reports must tell a story.

We never really *read* for raw information. We can't. So-called "informational texts" work only when the writer has been able to establish a set of expectations to drive the reading. Otherwise, there is no motor, no dynamic forward movement. This frame stabilizes the reading, gives it purpose, provides a pattern to place the "information" in. If readers fail to detect this pattern (or writers fail to construct it), they simply drift on, defeated by the specifics of the text. I am talking about more than a thesis. I mean a human problem or situation that needs examination, something that matters, that calls for writing.

So rather than pretending to move beyond narrative, we should be teaching students how it works in their reading—and how to employ narrative in their writing.

What Students Should Attend to as They Read

Looking for Trouble

Tolstoy begins his epic novel *Anna Karenina* (1877/1995) with the famous line, "All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." It follows that unhappiness, some form of trouble, is the starting point for the plot; a character is stifled in his or her situation, or

is trying to avoid something, or must confront some loss, or is tempted in some way.

Take, for example, this opening to a story by Ben Marcus (2011), "What Have You Done?":

> When Paul's flight landed in Cleveland, they were waiting for him. They'd probably arrived early, set up camp right where the passengers float off the escalator scanning for family. They must have huddled there watching the arrivals board, hoping in the backs of their minds, and the mushy front parts of their minds, too, *yearning with their entire minds* that Paul would do what he usually did—or didn't—and just not come home. (p. 55)

So much trouble here. Paul clearly doesn't want to be here, visiting his "mushy"-brained family—and he suspects that they would just as soon he didn't come. We learn that there is a history of their waiting for him, and his failing to show up. But he's here, and they're here, and the story has forward movement. How will this encounter play out? Also, we have a sense of how the story will be narrated, from Paul's perspective, with full access to his negative opinions about his family (and himself).

Now let's look at a nonfiction opening, the beginning to Michael Pollan's *In Defense of Food* (2009), a book that would be classified as argumentation:

> Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants. (p. 1)
>
> That, more or less, is the short answer to the supposedly incredibly complicated and confusing question of what we humans should eat to be maximally healthy.
>
> I hate to give the game away right here in the beginning of a whole book devoted to the subject, and I am tempted to complicate matters in the interest of keeping things going for a couple hundred more pages or so. I'll try to resist, but will go ahead and add a few more details to flesh out the recommendations. Like, eating a little meat isn't going to kill you, though it might be better approached as a side dish than as a main. And you're better off eating whole fresh foods rather than processed food products. That's what I mean by the recommendation to "eat food," which is not quite as simple as it sounds. (p. 1)

I contend that the same process is at work. There is trouble here as well. Why must this expert on food tell us that his main recommendation is to "eat food"? How have we gotten to a place where this notion is at all controversial or even an interesting thing to advise us to do? Why is it "not as simple as it sounds"? What gets in our way of "eating food"? In other words, we have the beginning of a plot. We have an itch to scratch.

Reading is not a treasure hunt for the main idea; it is a journey we take with a writer.

Literary form, described by Kenneth Burke (1931) as "an arousing and fulfillment of desire" (p. 124), is absolutely central in works we would not consider literary. Because you are clearly still reading this article, you probably sense that I am following the pattern I am describing. There is "trouble" in the way we categorize kinds of writing—a conflict between our innate need for narrative structure and the claims that we should move beyond narrative to more demanding texts. Proposals and research reports similarly follow this kind of pattern: There is an unmet social problem, or an irreconcilable position in a field of study, or new evidence that challenges accepted views. Articulating this "trouble" is integral to such academic reading and writing.

Consequently, openings should be read very slowly, and reread if possible. So much is happening. So many commitments are being made, which is why writers often find them so nerve-wracking to write. Openings establish the topic, suggest the problem, and convey a sense of the narration and tone of the piece, risking at any millisecond that the reader will go elsewhere. Sometimes when I hear that students are taught to write "introductions," I think, "*Introduction*? What is this? A kaffee klatch?" There is far more work to be done than "introducing" a thesis; the writer has the much more difficult (but interesting) task of creating the *need* for the thesis, of setting up the dramatic structure of the piece, one that a reader aligns with.

Identifying the Players

Readers of fiction instinctively begin with the questions, Who are the actors? and How are they in conflict? We have no interest in reading about the mythical happy families that Tolstoy mentions.

Similarly, all analytic writing needs conflicting perspectives, contending solutions, weaknesses and strengths, even good guys and bad guys. If these positions can be attached to spokespersons, so much the better for the drama. Writing is dialogic, involving multiple voices, orchestrated by the author. To comprehend a text is to be attuned to this conflict.

Several years ago, I had a reading crisis of my own when I had to teach a graduate seminar in rhetorical theory that spanned two millennia (most programs responsibly break this up into different courses). I had a good anthology, but it covered so many diverse writers, intellectual traditions, eras, rhetorical issues, and writing styles that I was panicked about where to start. It was educational malpractice for sure. But I began to read each writer with the questions, Whom is this writer responding to? Whom is he or she arguing with? What provoked this writing? In the seminar,

we all acknowledged that we were in over our heads, but we dug in and tried to establish this conversation. It's been a lifeline for me ever since.

Attending to Patterns of Thought

Reading, as I am describing it, is not a treasure hunt for the main idea; it is a journey we take with a writer. Gretchen Bernabei (2005) encourages her students to make flow-charts of the basic moves of nonfiction writers to track this movement of the mind. Take, for example, a classic text in American history, Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech. To comprehend this great achievement, a reader (or listener) needs to attend to the "plot" that King creates. There is trouble from the onset. He invokes Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation but soon sounds a dark note:

> But one hundred years later, the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination.

In this opening, King establishes the central conflict of the speech—the gap between the promise of freedom and the realities of racial discrimination. In the middle section, he moves to the question of what must be done to get to the "promised land"; in the final part, he describes what that promised land will be. To comprehend the speech is to be attuned to this construction of tension and resolution, something we miss when we only focus on the speech's better-known conclusion.

Engaging with a Teller

We don't get information raw. Even telephone books are constructed with categories and with some information highlighted. Extended informational writing is mediated by a teller; someone is guiding us through facts, theories, or perspectives. Sometimes this teller uses an "I" and perhaps even relates personal stories connected with the topic. But even when the "I" is not used, there is an authorial presence, as Thoreau reminds us at the beginning of *Walden* (1854/2000), "it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking" (p. 3).

Great nonfiction writers know how to employ this "I." In that short Michael Pollan opening, he writes, "I hate to give away the game right here. . . ." The *game*? "Keep things going for a couple hundred pages. . . ." *Things*? It's like he is saying, "It's really stupid that I even have to write this book about something so obvious, but I do." We know what kind of guide or narrator we will travel with—one with a swagger—and I am with him.

Even when the "I" is not used, the personality of the writer is not effaced. We can sense his or her cognitive energy, the fascination with the topic, the delight in the odd and unexpected fact, the sense of irony or humor that leavens even writing on the most serious topics. There is a relationship, a trust even. When, in the name of pure objectivity, these traits are withheld (usually the case with textbooks), we have difficulty reading; the writing is called *academic*, synonymous, in the public mind at least, with dullness. Or to use a term from the field of reading, these texts are *inconsiderate*.

The elephant in this room of nonfiction is, of course, the textbook. Whenever I raise the question of comprehending nonfiction, someone asks, How will your ideas help students read textbooks? The short answer is, they won't. Textbooks are not *read*—that is, they do not require sustained attention to the development of an idea, the kind of reading that it might take to read an essay in *The Atlantic* or a professional research article.

Take, for example, a standard high school text like *Biology* (Biggs, Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, & National Geographic Society, 2007), which weighs in at a hefty 6.2 pounds. For all its bulk, students are rarely asked to read more than three paragraphs before a text break or a new topic occurs. The writing itself seems geared for presenting terminology (all **bolded**) rather than for engaging a reader. Two or three terms are introduced per page, for a total of approximately 1,500 terms for the entire book. The pages are extraordinarily busy, with sidebars, photos, and diagrams, all distracting in a *People*

Magazine sort of way. So what we have is essentially a dictionary with elaborated definitions. As historian Frances Fitzgerald (1980) notes about history texts, they are not really written, they are "developed." If this is the kind of nonfiction we provide students, no wonder they come to dislike reading (and history, for that matter). It is tedious going.

We prefer sentences that tell a small story. We have a craving for narrative.

Why We Read Nonfiction After All

It is a truism that we read informational writing for . . . information. It is the antithesis to literary reading. It is the sober, rational, practical, and duller older brother. In the classification schemes of the most respected literacy educators—Louise Rosenblatt (1994), for example—informational reading is "efferent" and functional, a carrying away, in this case, of information. We build our store of knowledge with it.

But my own reading of excellent nonfiction doesn't work that way. Take, for example, Siddhartha Mukherjee's *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize and arguably one of the greatest pieces of expository writing in the last decade. If anyone were to quiz me on the information in this book—ask me to name the major experimenters or give a rudimentary account of the cell biology work—I would fail miserably. And who knows how much I will retain a year from now? Yet reading this book was one of the most thrilling and gratifying experiences I have had in years. What did I get, if not information?

What I got was the *experience* of being with the author as he led me through the cycles of hope and defeat, the carnage of so many patients in such grueling trials, and the hesitant but steady progress of researchers. I retain the sensation of cancer itself becoming the main character of the book—evasive, adaptive, persistent, multiple, an adversary of extraordinary wiliness and devastation. I retain these narrative contours—and the information I retain adheres to them.

In other words, I hold on to this nonfiction book in the same way I retain my appreciation of much fiction. The details quickly become a blur, and I recall only basic themes and the feeling the book created for me. I retain the sensation of Mukherjee leading me though this terrain, employing a network of stories—about researchers, about his own practice with cancer patients, and especially about cancer itself, how it begins, how it grows.

The great value of works like this, like good fiction, is that we put ourselves in the hands of someone else. We sign on for the journey. If we only read for bits of information, if all nonfiction is viewed as a glorified phone book, we simply plug that information into preexisting schema and we don't change (which is why I think a lot of Internet reading only confirms prejudices). In that case, Wikipedia would suffice. But to be taken into a book like *The Emperor of All Maladies* is to move outside ourselves and to be present as a first-rate mind explains the science and human drama of cancer research. I suspect this fellow-traveling is the great lasting benefit we get from sustained reading of good nonfiction.

These writers never leave narrative far behind. Instead, they use narrative in more complex and embedded ways. It's time we let students in on the secret.

References

Bernabei, G. (2005). *Reviving the essay: How to teach structure without formula.* Shoreham, VT: Discovery Writing.

Biggs, A., Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, & National Geographic Society. (2007). *Biology.* Columbus, OH: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.

Burke, K. (1931). *Counter-statement.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Coleman, D., & Pimental, S. (2011). *Publishers' criteria for the Common Core Standards in English language arts and literacy, grades 3–12.* Retrieved from Common Core State Standards Initiative at www.corestandards.org/assets/Publishers_Criteria_for_3-12.pdf

Eubanks, P. (2004). Poetics and narrativity: How texts tell stories. In C. Bazerman & P. Prior (Eds.), *What writing does and how it does it: An introduction to analyzing texts and textual practices* (pp. 33–56). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Fitzgerald, F. (1980). *America revised.* New York: Vintage.

King, M. L. (n.d.). The "I have a dream" speech. Retrieved from U.S. Constitution Online at www.usconstitution.net/dream.html (Original work published 1963)

Marcus, B. (2011, August 8). What have you done? *New Yorker*, 54–63.

Mukherjee, S. (2011). *The emperor of all maladies: A biography of cancer.* New York: Scribners.

Plato. (380 BCE/1991). *The republic of Plato* (A. Bloom, Trans). Boston: Basic Books. (Original work published approx. 380 BCE)

Poirier, R. (1997). Reading pragmatically. In L. Menand (Ed.), *Pragmatism: A reader* (pp. 403–455). New York: Vintage.

Pollan, M. (2009). *In defense of food: An eater's manifesto.* New York: Penguin.

Rosenblatt, L. (1994). *The reader, the text, and the poem: The transactional theory of the literacy work.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

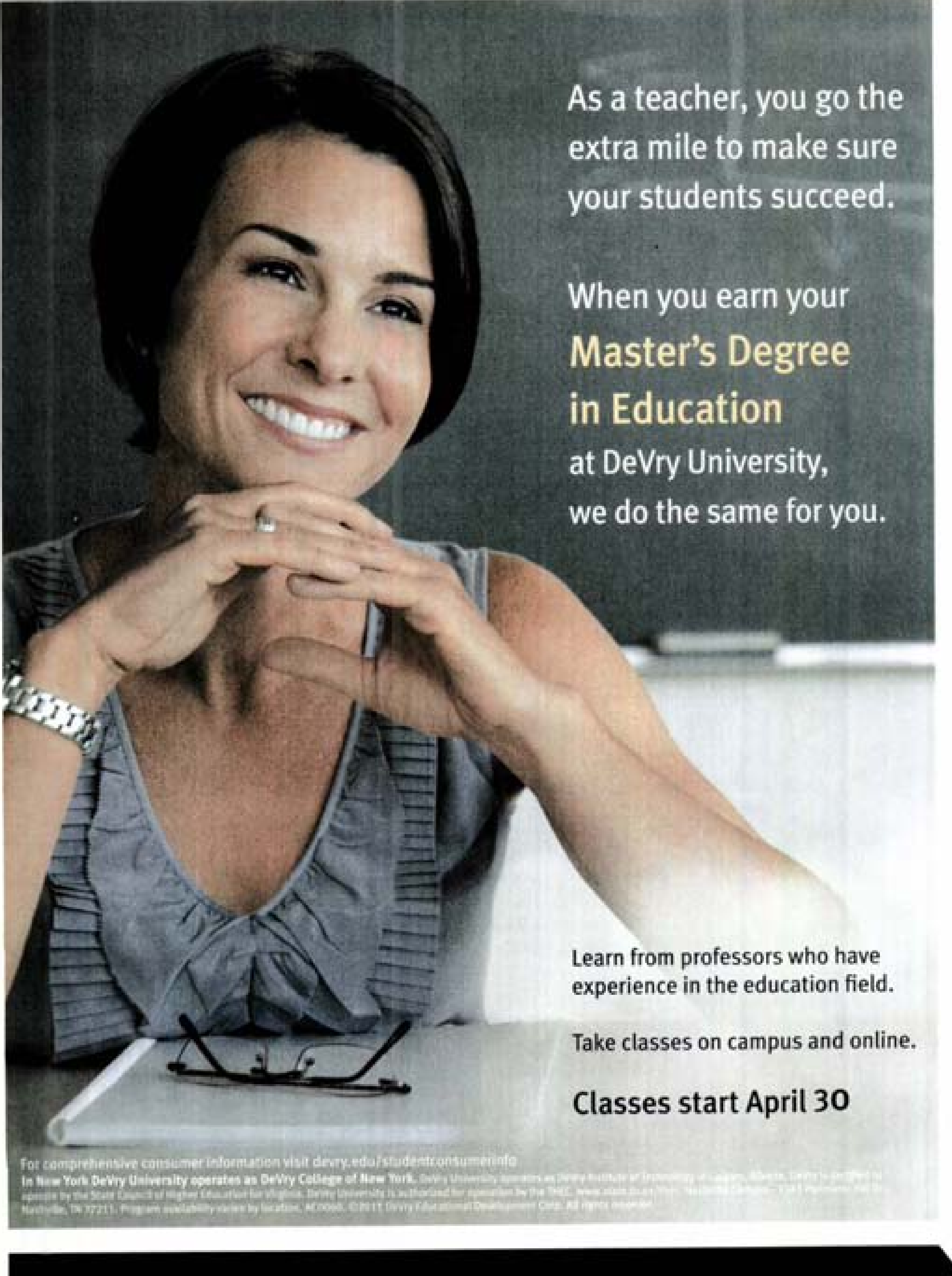
Thoreau, H. D. (1854/2000). *Walden and civil disobedience.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (Original work published 1854)

Tolstoy, L. (1877/1995). *Anna Karenina.* (L. & A. Maude, Trans.). Ware, England: Wordsworth Classics. (Original work published 1877)

Turner, M. (1996). *The literary mind.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Williams, J. (2002). *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace* (7th ed.). New York: Longman.

Thomas Newkirk is professor of English at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. His most recent book is *The Art of Slow Reading: Six Time-Honored Practices for Engagement* (Heinemann, 2011); thomas.newkirk@unh.edu.



DeVry University

Learn more at devry.edu

Teaching Genre WITH Purpose

Students should read and write in school for the same purposes for which people read and write outside school.

Nell K. Duke, Samantha Caughlan, Mary M. Juzwik, and Nicole M. Martin

Consider the last issue of *Educational Leadership* that you read. Now consider a story a friend told you in a recent e-mail. Some people think these two acts of reading require the same skills. But increasingly, we understand that readers use different processes to read different kinds, or genres, of text.

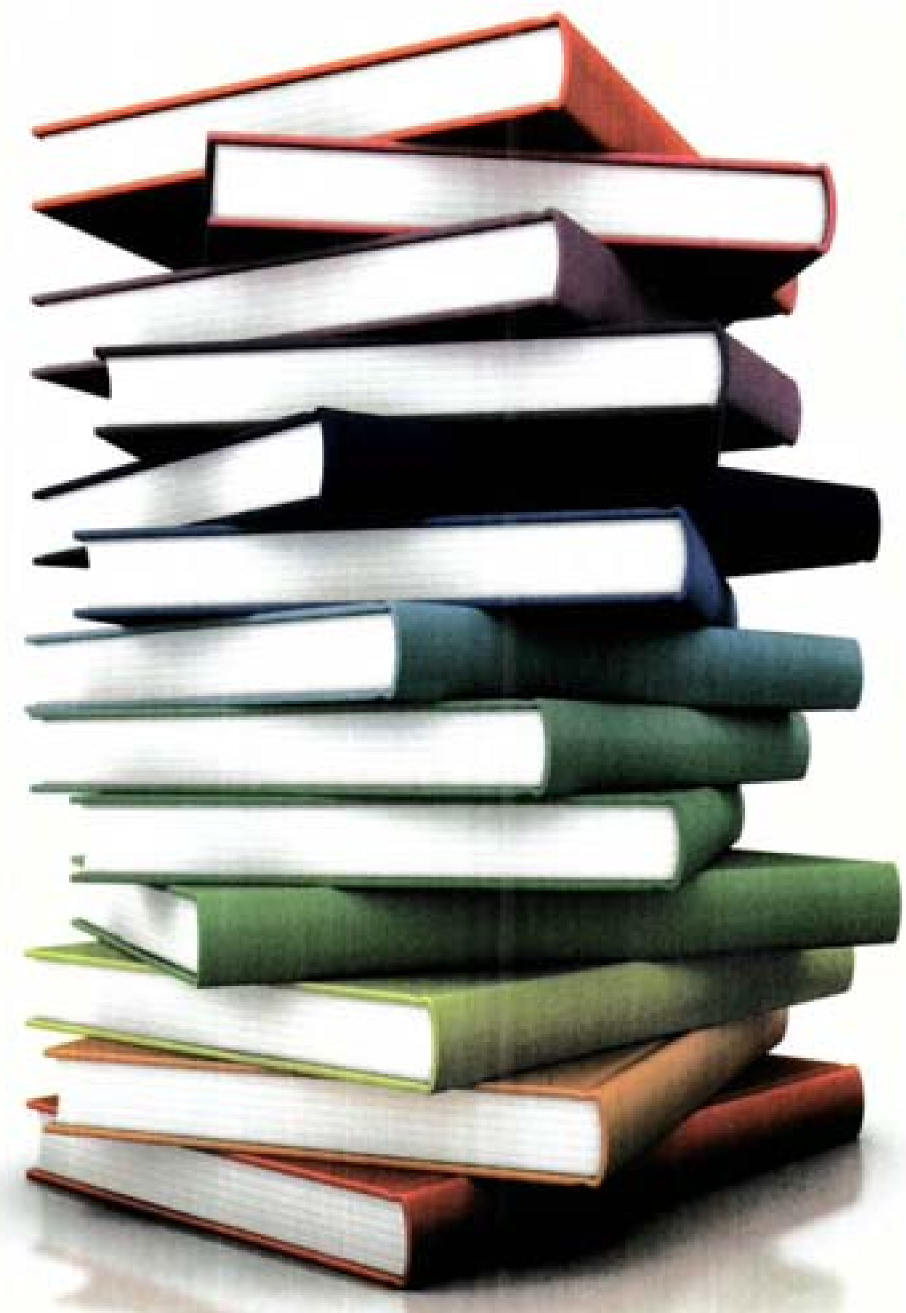
For example, when you picked up the journal, you probably consulted the table of contents; made use of headings; skimmed some sections; and read others carefully, even rereading them at times. With the story from a friend, you most likely did none of these things. Rather, you engaged in different processes, such as envisioning the setting and people involved in the story and seeking to understand how your friend feels about the events that occurred. To a significant degree, your reading processes vary by genre. Reading is genre-specific (Duke & Roberts, 2010).

Standards and assessments seem to be increasingly concerned with genre. The common core state standards, for example, are organized, in part, by types of text, such as literature and informational text. Within these, the standards cite a range of text types (see fig. 1).

A word about writing: Although we tend to separate reading and writing in school, putting them in different places in the curriculum, reading in the world outside school is intricately wound up in writing. For example, after reading the article in *EL*, perhaps you revised a lesson plan or shot off a memo to the faculty in your school suggesting a new policy. After reading your friend's story, you probably sent an e-mail in response. Reading and writing work together in sets to help us achieve things in our lives, so we address both here.

Different Genres, Different Processes

In U.S. schools, we too often teach reading and writing without attention to genre. We teach "the" writing process, even though the processes used in writing are considerably different for different kinds of text. (Consider a research paper, for example, as compared with a story about something that happened over the weekend.) We teach comprehension strategies generically, as though they apply in the same way to every type of text. Yet "predicting" means something quite different in a story (what will *happen* next?) than it means in an



Your reading processes vary by genre. Reading is genre-specific.

informational text (what will I *learn* next?). Some strategies are unique to specific types of text (see fig. 2).

Three Principles for All Genres

The three principles that follow can help teachers teach in a way that's sensitive to genre.

Principle 1: Engage students with reading and writing for real-world reasons.

In the hottest stretch of summer, a group of young boys pore over informational texts that are considerably beyond their reading levels. The boys stretch to read these texts because they're on a mission: The local city zoo has asked them to develop guides for exhibits. The boys take seriously the responsibility to learn about the animals housed there and to share their learning with others.

This scene is unusual for many reasons. Rather than providing another six weeks of the same kind of literacy instruction that proved ineffective for these boys during the school year, this summer school has taken a fresh approach.[1] Instead of feeling stigmatized, the students seem excited, even proud, of attending. They are reading and writing informational text because they want or need to know something—not because the teacher told them to and not to earn a sticker. They are reading and writing for real-world purposes.

People used to think of genre as determined by the features of a text, but now we define genre primarily by the *purpose* of the text. According to Carolyn Miller (1984), genres arise to serve particular functions in particular situations, and the features of genres have arisen to help serve their function. For example, consider a recipe, whose purpose is to guide readers in preparing food in a given way. One of its features is a list of ingredients, which appears at the beginning of the recipe so that readers can see from the outset whether they have the ingredients on hand or need to put any missing ones on a shopping list.

We believe that students learn to read and write genres best when they use the genres and their features for the same reasons the genres and features arose in the first place, and there is some research support for this belief (for example, Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007).

Consider the following:

- In *narrative genres*, the primary purpose is to share and interpret experiences. Students might read history texts and visit historical landmarks as they

research a historical-narrative book that they will collaboratively write, share with other schools, and sell through the Internet.

- In *dramatic genres*, the primary purpose is to have characters come alive through conflicts and interactions. Students might carefully read and reread scripts for two short plays, highlighting certain lines, making notes in the margins, and making lists of props and costumes. This close reading will prepare them to perform these plays for other classes in their school.
- In *persuasive genres*, the primary purpose is to influence the target audience's ideas or behavior. Students might research caffeine's effects on the body and then write persuasive letters aimed at changing adults' coffee-drinking habits and submit these to a local newspaper.
- In *informational genres*, the primary purpose is to convey information about the natural or social world to people who want or need that information. Students could participate in the Books of Hope project (www.e-luminate.org) and write informational texts for students in Uganda who have access to few published texts.
- In *procedural genres*, the primary purpose is to teach people how to do something they don't know how to do. Students might research and write a book on how to reuse common

FIGURE 1. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Tables on Range of Text Types

Focal Grades	Genre	CCSS Description
K–5	Stories	Includes children's adventure stories, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth
6–12		Includes the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels
K–5	Dramas	Includes staged dialogue and brief familiar scenes
6–12		Includes one-act and multi-act plays, both in written form and on film
K–5	Poetry	Includes nursery rhymes and the subgenres of the narrative poem, limerick, and free-verse poem
6–12		Includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free-verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics
K–5	Literary nonfiction and historical, scientific, and technical texts	Includes biographies and autobiographies; books about history, social studies, science, and the arts; technical texts, including directions, forms, and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps; and digital sources on a range of topics
6–12		Includes the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience

Source: Adapted from *Common Core State Standards for the English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (p. 31, "Range of Text Types for K–5" and p. 57, "Range of Text Types for 6–12"), 2010. Retrieved from www.corestandards.org/the-standards

household items and then sell the book at a local home goods store, using the proceeds to start a recycling program at their school (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2011).

To engage students in reading and writing for real-world reasons, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I engage students in reading or writing a type of text that people read and write *outside* school, as opposed to school-only texts, such as worksheets, textbooks, and five-paragraph essays?
- Do students read or write this text for the same purposes for which people read and write this genre outside school—not just because I told them to, I'm grading it, or I want them to practice?

(See Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2006/2007 for tools to use when observing classrooms with similar questions in mind.)

It might seem as though certain types of texts—for example, complex fiction and biographies—wouldn't lend themselves to genre-with-purpose projects. However, we have seen teachers use fiction texts within purpose-driven genre projects. For example, one middle school teacher read a range of such texts with students in preparation for writing fiction narratives that were to be donated to a local pediatrician's office. Another group of students read a range of fiction narrative texts and then wrote persuasive letters advocating for a particular text to be selected for a one-book, one-school initiative. A third teacher engaged middle school students in reading published biographies as they researched and wrote biographies about respected people of color in the community to be included in a book distributed to local schools.

We mistakenly teach comprehension strategies generically, as though they apply in the same way to every type of text.

Principle 2: Teach genre features and their functions.

Providing students with experience using genres and their features for real-world purposes is certainly an important step. But it's also helpful to teach specific features. For example, research suggests that teaching young children specific story elements, such as character, setting, and problem, can be valuable (Baumann & Bergeron, 1993; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001).

Teaching genre features requires deeper understanding of genre than many of us developed in preservice or inservice teacher education. Taking time to study and reflect on the features of genres you want your students to read and write can go a long way. You may recognize, for example, that *dramatic texts*—a set of genres referenced in the common core state standards 47 times!—often have protagonists (one or more characters with whom the reader identifies), as well as antagonists (those in opposition to the protagonists). They have beginning conflicts, climaxes, resolutions, dialogue as the majority of the text, cast lists, and stage directions in italics.

Procedural or how-to texts have different features (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). For example, they often make the final goal explicit in a goal statement or title (such as "How to Make a Story Quilt") and include a list of materials needed in order of use. They organize the explanation in successive steps, using imperative verbs (for example *draw, cut, take*); and they often include graphics that demonstrate the various stages or show the final product. These texts may address

the reader directly (for example, "You will need . . ."), and they don't generally use third-person pronouns, such as *he* or *she*. They frequently include headings and subheadings as well as measurement units, such as millimeters or feet. They usually end with an evaluation, a summary of anticipated results, or a scientific explanation. (For more information about genre features, see Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2011; Schleppegrell, 2004.)

Given the large number of features of any given genre, we certainly don't recommend explicitly teaching every feature to every student. Some students may need more instruction in certain features than other students do. For example, you might notice that some students have difficulty following steps in a procedural text; they jump around or skip ahead to the "fun" steps. You might clarify for just that small group of students how authors use letters or numbers to indicate the proper sequence of steps.

Also, we recommend focusing on what the feature does for the reader. Instead of asking, "Did you use the index?" ask, "How did you find the information you were looking for in this book?" Instead of asking, "Did you include pictures to go with each step?" ask, "Did you include pictures that show the reader how to do each step?" Such questions can deepen learning.

FIGURE 2. Examples of Genre-Specific Strategies

Genres	Examples of Strategies
Narrative genres	Visualize the setting, characters, and events; evaluate the significance of reading.
Dramatic genres	Infer character appearance and personality; imagine the staging of a scene.
Persuasive genres	Identify the audience; weigh the quality of evidence.
Informational genres	Skim and scan; predict (what the author will tell you next).
Procedural genres	Gather or ensure you have the materials or ingredients needed; read steps in order, from beginning to end; pause frequently.

Principle 3: Teach genre-specific strategies.

Students need to be taught how to read different genres differently. Let's look at approaches that work particularly well with narrative reading, informational reading, and persuasive reading.

Narrative reading. Joanna Williams and colleagues (1994, 2001) have developed a teaching approach—the *theme scheme*—for helping students infer the theme or moral of a story, even when it's implicit. Teachers can use this with both fiction and nonfiction narratives. It involves the following four-part framework:

- *Introduce the theme.* Consider what your students already know about the theme and what new ideas you should introduce.
- *Read the story.* As you read, stop frequently to pose questions and discuss the events with students.
- *Conduct a postreading discussion.* Focus students' attention on the theme by asking, Was what happened good or bad—and why? (Williams, Hall, Lauer, & Lord, 2001).
- *Conclude the lesson.* Invite students to find the theme in a new text; have students generate examples of the theme from their life experiences; and stimulate reflection on the theme through an enrichment activity, such as drawing or dance.

Informational reading. Janette Klingner, Sharon Vaughn, and colleagues developed *collaborative strategic reading* to help students read informational texts. Research supports the effectiveness of this strategy (Klingner, Vaughn, Arguelles, Hughes, & Leftwich, 2004; Klingner, Vaughn, Dimino, Schumm, & Bryant, 2001).

In collaborative strategic reading, teachers teach students to

- *Preview text.* Before students begin reading, the teacher asks them to think about what they already know and predict what they will learn.
- *Click and clunk.* As they read, students monitor their comprehension, spot-checking their understanding, using the word *click*, which means they got it, or *clunk*, which means that something wasn't clear. They then use strategies such as rereading to fix the "clunks."
- *Get the gist.* As they read, students find the key concepts, events, and people in the text, answering the question, What is the most important *who* or *what*?
- *Wrap up.* When they've finished reading, students reflect on their

learning and construct questions about the key concepts, events, and people in the text (Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998).

Teachers introduce the model during whole-group instruction, explaining and modeling each strategy. Students take turns applying the four strategies as a class and then in small, teacher-facilitated groups in front of the class. Finally, students work in small, student-led groups. They take turns being the expert for each strategy, helping team members apply the strategy, while the teacher circulates to support each group as needed.

Persuasive reading. Susan De La Paz (2005) had middle school students prepare to write arguments by having them read, discuss, and take notes on readings portraying different points of view on historic events. Students who learned to read for point of view wrote longer and more convincing arguments than those in a control group who didn't have this preparation.

Students deepen their understanding of point of view by learning how to

- *Identify each author or speaker and describe his or her argument.* Students define the speaker's purpose, consider his or her reasons, and look for evidence of bias.
- *Compare details and look for conflicting views.* Students look for inconsistencies within a work, consider differences in how different authors describe people and events, consider what's missing in each argument, and make inferences across sources.
- *Make careful notes on each source.* Students organize their notes and use Cornell notes or graphic organizers to compare differing points of view (De La Paz, 2005).

Purpose at the Core

The *genre-with-purpose* approach goes beyond *genre study*, or learning genre features for their own sake. Instead, it embeds genre instruction in a rich bed of purpose-driven activity that—in our experience—students and teachers alike find more engaging and instructive. We encourage you to put genre with purpose at the core of your curriculum.

Instead of asking, "Did you use the index?" ask, "How did you find the information you were looking for in this book?"

[1]Kathryn Roberts developed the curriculum for the summer school program.

References

Baumann, J. F., & Bergeron, B. S. (1993). Story map instruction using children's literature: Effects on first graders' comprehension of central narrative elements. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 25*(4), 407–437.

De La Paz, S. (2005). Effects of historical reasoning instruction and writing strategy mastery in culturally and academically diverse middle school classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 97*(2), 139–156.

Duke, N. K., Caughlan, S., Juzwik, M. M., & Martin, N. M. (2011). *Reading and writing genre with purpose in K–8 classrooms.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Duke, N. K., Purcell-Gates, V., Hall, L. A., & Tower, C. (2006/2007). Authentic literacy activities for developing comprehension and writing. *The Reading Teacher, 60*(4), 344–355.

Duke, N. K., & Roberts, K. M. (2010). The genre-specific nature of reading comprehension. In D. Wyse, R. Andrews, & J. Hoffman (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of English, language and literacy teaching* (pp. 74–86). London: Routledge.

Gersten, R., Fuchs, L. S., Williams, J. P., & Baker, S. (2001). Teaching reading comprehension strategies to students with learning disabilities: A review of research. *Review of Educational Research, 71*(2), 279–320.

Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., Arguelles, M. E., Hughes, M. T., & Leftwich, S. A. (2004). Collaborative strategic reading: "Real-world" lessons from classroom teachers. *Remedial and Special Education, 25*(5), 291–302.

Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., Dimino, J., Schumm, J. S., & Bryant, D. (2001). *From clunk to click: Collaborative strategic reading.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., & Schumm, J. S. (1998). Collaborative strategic reading during social studies in heterogeneous fourth-grade classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal, 99*(1), 3–22.

Miller, C. (1984). Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 70*(2), 151–167.

Purcell-Gates, V., Duke, N. K., & Martineau, J. A. (2007). Learning to read and write genre-specific text: Roles of authentic experience and explicit teaching. *Reading Research Quarterly, 42*(1), 8–45.

Schleppegrell, M. J. (2004). *The language of school: A functional linguistics perspective.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Williams, J., Brown, L. G., Silverstein, A. K., & deCani, J. S. (1994). An instructional program in comprehension of narrative themes for adolescents with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly, 17*(3), 205–221.

Williams, J. P., Hall, K. M., Lauer, K. D., & Lord, K. M. (2001). Helping elementary school children understand story themes. *The Exceptional Child, 33*(6), 75–77.

Nell K. Duke (nkduke@msu.edu) is professor of teacher education and educational psychology and codirector of the Literacy Achievement Research Center; **Samantha Caughlan** (caughlan@msu.edu) is assistant professor of English education; and **Mary M. Juzwik** (mmjuzwik@msu.edu) is associate professor of language and literacy at Michigan State University, East Lansing. **Nicole M. Martin** (nicolemartin@uncg.edu) is assistant professor in reading education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

OPENING the Literature Window

With help from the teacher, students can read books they wouldn't tackle on their own.

Carol Jago

I owe a refund to the first 8th graders I taught. Convinced then as I am now that reading was a key to success in school and beyond, I became obsessed with turning reluctant scholars into readers. I made it my mission to find books that I believed would do the work for me, scouring secondhand bookstores and garage sales for anything on skateboarding, surfing, whatever I thought would entice them. I filled my classroom with short, easy-to-read, funny books. Alas, this "build it, and they will come" approach didn't work. Students glanced at the books and told me in no uncertain terms that they hated reading. The only volumes that attracted any attention were *The Guinness Book of World Records* and *Name Your Baby*. It made no sense. I loved to read. Why didn't they?

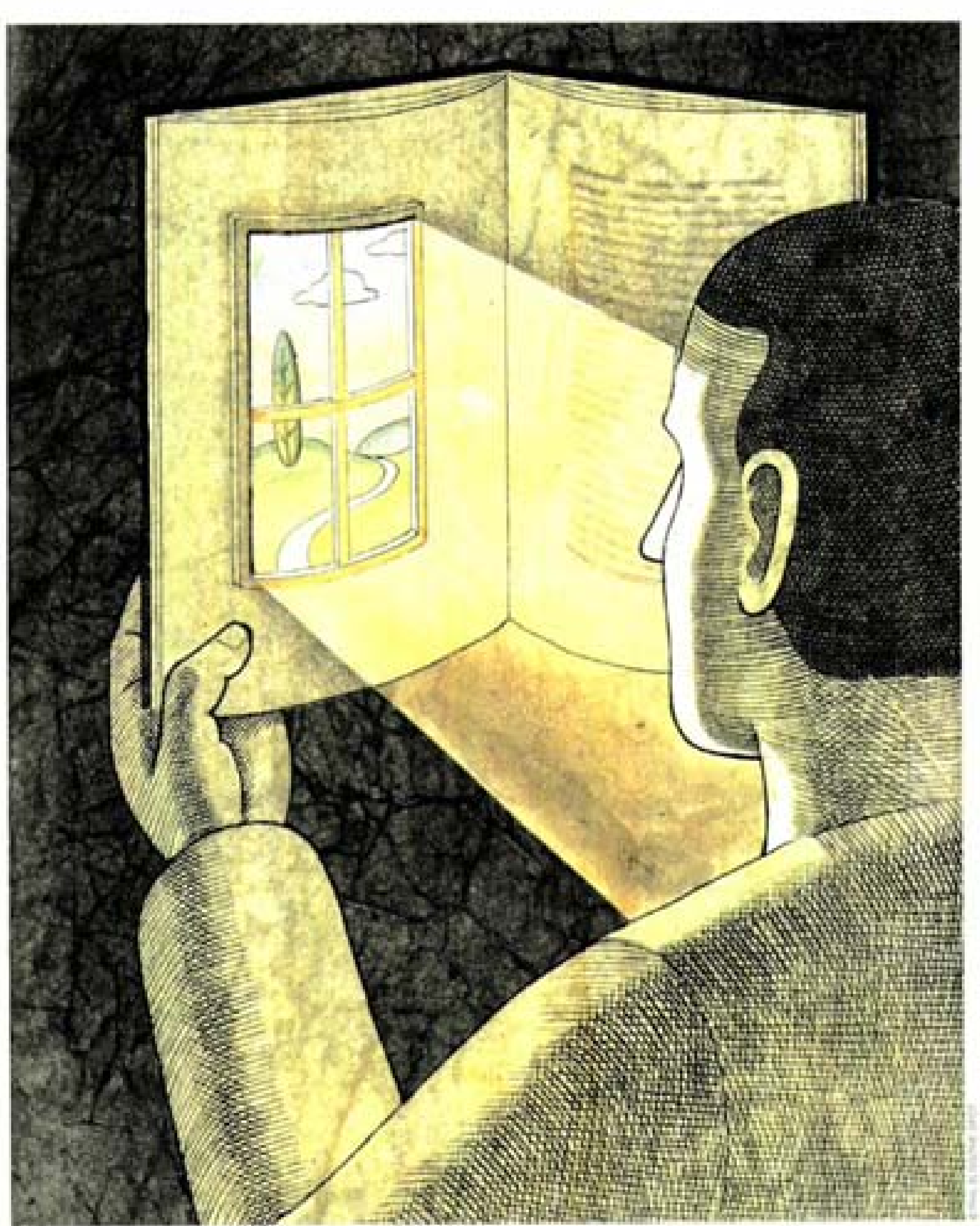
Discouraged but determined, I continued to stock my classroom library with books like *Go Ask Alice*; *My Darling, My Hamburger*; and *The Outsiders*; but I turned for curricular guidance to the work of Lev Vygotsky (1962). Reading that "the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it" (p. 104), I realized that I was confusing independent reading with literature study. If students can read a book on their own, it probably isn't the best choice for classroom study. For one thing, teachers run the danger of ruining novels like Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* with talk of foreshadowing and with reading-log assignments. Such books are best when swallowed whole and passed from reader to reader.

Young adult fiction offers mirrors wherein students see their own experiences and emotions reflected. These stories help young readers know they are not the first and won't be the last to feel as they do. Literature study, on the other hand, offers students windows to other worlds, other cultures, other times. It poses intellectual challenges, demanding that students stretch and grow.

In *The Anatomy of Influence*, Harold Bloom (2011) proposes three criteria for choosing works to be read, reread, and taught: aesthetic splendor, cognitive power, and wisdom. These seem to me an obvious improvement over short, easy-to-read, and funny. But literature teachers must do more than simply hand out copies of *Romeo and Juliet* and expect 9th graders to be enthralled by its aesthetic splendor.

The Right Instruction

Making complex works accessible to young readers requires artful instruction. But what does such instruction look like? I have a few ideas.



2. *Tap students' prior knowledge.*
An effective way to introduce the major conflict in Sophocles's *Antigone* is to have students write about a time they stood up to authority—preparing them for the argument between Antigone and her uncle, the king, Creon. On the other hand, it would not be particularly effective to prepare students for Lady Macbeth's "Out, damned spot!" speech in *Macbeth* by asking students to talk with a partner about a time they had a stubborn spot on their hands. Make sure that the prior knowledge students explore is relevant to an important issue in the text.

Deborah Wilchek, a teacher at Rockville High School in Montgomery County, Maryland, begins her unit on Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by showing students various covers for the novel and inviting them to analyze them. She asks students to consider the significant features of the cover, the key ideas that the images convey, and the possible audience for the book. Opening lessons like this point the way to the central ideas in the work.

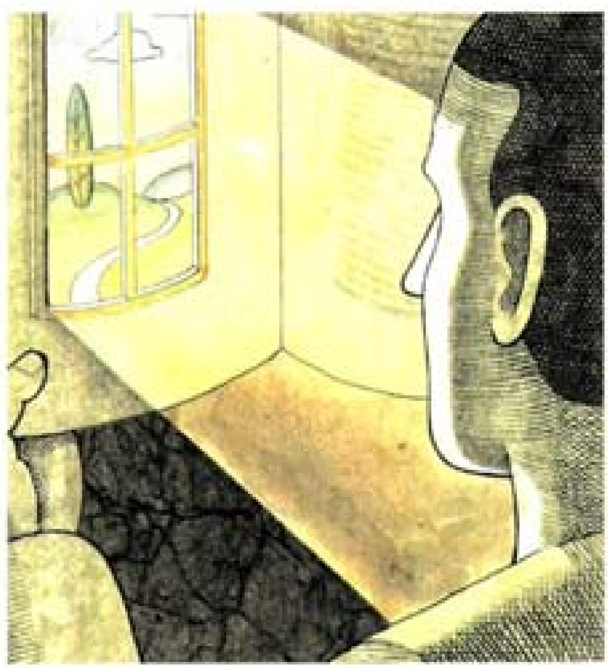
1. *Stop telling students that reading is fun.*
Reading can be fun, but constant declarations about it put books in competition with video games and other activities that students find easier and more obviously appealing.

If students groan, "I can't do it. This is too hard" as you distribute copies of a 300-page novel, agree with them that it may be hard, but reassure them that with effort and your help they will be able to do it. Experience has taught teenagers that if they complain loudly for long enough, the teacher will often abandon a difficult text for something shorter, simpler, and more fun. Don't fall for it.

3. *Address, don't avoid, academic vocabulary.*
Instead of looking for books without difficult vocabulary, complex syntax, or figurative language, teach students how to meet these challenges head on. As Isabel Beck, Margaret

McKeown, and Linda Kucan explain in *Creating Robust Vocabulary* (2008), new words should be introduced in a meaningful context, instead of as a list that students study in isolation. Rather than preteaching all the hard words in a chapter, teach a few that are crucial to understanding.

For example, I have found that when I am teaching *Julius Caesar*, it is crucial for my 10th graders to grasp Brutus's motivations. Teaching students the meanings of *stoic*, *gullible*, and *idealist* and then asking them to do a close reading of Act 1, Scene 2 looking for evidence of these traits in Brutus's speech to Cassius helps lay the groundwork for later events in the play and deepens their understanding of the new words they are learning.



4. Teach students how to negotiate complex syntax.

Reading long, complicated sentences is a challenge for everyone, but particularly for students in the habit of skimming and scanning Facebook updates. Teachers need to help students slow the pace of their reading for literature and develop the habit of rereading when a sentence doesn't seem to make sense. Rereading difficult passages doesn't have a cool acronym or fancy graphic organizer, but it is the technique experienced readers employ most often. When was the last time you reached for a K-W-L chart when struggling through a challenging text?

Writers like W. E. B. Du Bois don't use complex syntax in books like *The Souls of Black Folk* to annoy their readers but to express complex ideas. And artful instruction doesn't rewrite difficult passages, casting them into simpler prose for ease of digestion, but rather assists students in parsing each phrase to discover the nuances in Du Bois's message. We can't do the work for students. They must do it for themselves. Selecting important sentences for pairs of students to translate into everyday language can be effective for helping students develop confidence with complex syntax. Telling students what Du Bois is saying only reinforces their belief that such reading is beyond them.

It is not possible to read an Emily Dickinson poem once through and understand its cognitive power and aesthetic splendor. However, no student I have ever met would comply with the instruction to read a poem five times over for homework. Artful teachers trick students into rereading. Elizabeth Nelms (1988) had her seniors read the same poem, Ted Hughes's "Deceptions," for homework from Monday through Friday and keep a log of their emerging observations about the images they found. Nelms explains, "As the days passed, the students' observations of the changing weather began to merge with the poet's images as he sought to capture the elusive nature of spring." She created a reason for students to reread and a framework for them to record the development of their own comprehension. I've used this strategy with success for more than 20 years.

5. Hold students accountable for their reading.

In an ideal world, students are motivated to keep up with the reading in order to participate in our rich classroom conversations. In the real world, we sometimes need to hold their feet to the fire. Even the most diligent students sometimes need the threat of a quiz to remind them to keep up with assigned reading. Unfortunately, quizzes are time-consuming to create, duplicate, and correct.

In addition, students who fall behind depend on online resources like SparkNotes to catch up. Rob Thais, a colleague at Santa Monica High School, devised an efficient way to check that students were doing the reading. He goes to the SparkNotes website, prints out the summary of the chapter assigned for homework, and hands it out when students come to class. He then tells students to write three things that occurred in the chapter that don't appear in this paragraph. This simple ploy achieves two purposes: (1) Students now know you are aware that some of them have turned to SparkNotes, and (2) the quizzes are easy to correct.

In too many schools, teachers have stopped assigning homework reading altogether, principally because students have stopped doing it. This is the path to perdition for literature study. If a

teacher reads *Lord of the Flies* aloud to a class of 10th graders, the only person becoming a better reader is the teacher.

I sometimes hear that there aren't enough copies of the books to send home with students. In many one-to-one laptop or e-reader programs, the machines must remain at school. This is educational malpractice. Students need to develop the self-discipline and stamina necessary to read for extended periods of time on their own. How else will they be ready for college? In a College Board study of the class of 2010, 54 percent of students found their college courses more difficult than they expected (Hart Research Associates, 2011). This finding will come as no surprise to English teachers struggling to convince high school seniors to read 20 pages of assigned daily reading.

6. *Teach cognitively powerful works.* Sandra Stotsky's (2010) research in *Literary Study in Grades 9, 10, and 11: A National Survey* demonstrates that the literature taught in English classes has decreased in complexity over the past decade. In our effort to make literature study more contemporary and relevant, we have lost much of the rigor. It need not have been the case. Works by Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, John Edgar Wideman, Jorge Borges, and James Baldwin have all the cognitive power and aesthetic splendor of Charles Dickens, Robert Louis Stevenson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Henry David Thoreau. But because works by Morrison and others of her stature pose the very same textual challenges as the earlier works—difficult vocabulary, complex syntax, figurative language, and length—teachers often choose to teach simpler books.

The common core state standards attempt to remedy this downward trend by providing a list of text exemplars to represent the complexity, quality, and range of works students should be taught at each grade level. Critics decry the list as a *de facto* national reading list, but the Common Core State Standards Initiative (n.d.) states that the choices are meant only as guideposts to help educators select texts at a similar reading level.

Literature teachers must do more than simply hand out copies of *Romeo and Juliet* and expect 9th graders to be enthralled by its aesthetic splendor.

One exemplar from the grades 2–3 list is William Steig's *Amos and Boris*. Notice the vocabulary and syntactical challenges this sentence from the story poses:

> One night, in a phosphorescent sea, he marveled at the sight of some whales spouting luminous water; and later, lying on the deck of his boat gazing at the immense, starry sky, the tiny mouse Amos, a little speck of a living thing in the vast living universe, felt thoroughly akin to it all.

If students are reading such wondrous words at 8 years old, imagine what they will be capable of at 18.

Rigor for All

The United States needs a reading renaissance. Students need to stretch beyond what's comfortable to tackle challenging texts. They need to spend time reading material that requires focus and concentration, material that they might not attempt on their own. And they need the support and encouragement of teachers who help them open the literary window onto this new world. ■

References

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M., Kucan, L. (2008). *Creating robust vocabulary*. New York: Guilford Press.

Bloom, H. (2011). *The anatomy of influence: Literature as a way of life*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.). *Common core state standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects: Appendix B*. Retrieved from www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Nelms, E. (1988). Two Laureates in April: Lyrics of Wordsworth and Ted Hughes. *English Journal, 77*(4), 23–26.

Hart Research Associates. (2011). *One year out: Findings from a national survey among members of the graduating class of 2010*. Retrieved from the College Board at http://media.collegeboard.com/homeOrg/content/pdf/One_Year_Out_key_findings%20report_final.pdf

Steig, W. (1971). *Amos and Boris*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Stotsky, S. (2010). *Literary study in grades 9, 10, and 11: A national survey*. Retrieved from the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers at www.alscw.org/Forum4.pdf

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language* (E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar, Eds. and Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Carol Jago has taught middle and high school in Santa Monica, California, for 32 years. She is past president of the National Council of Teachers of English and author of *With Rigor for All: Helping Students Meet Common Core Standards for Reading Literature* (Heinemann 2011); cjago@caroljago.com.

Get Organized Around Assets

The steps community organizers use to help change people's lives can help teachers improve English language learners' reading.

Larry Ferlazzo

Nobody thought Juan was very capable. People didn't take him seriously when he said he wanted some land to farm. Finally, he was given a small plot, but everyone laughed because they believed it was poor soil and Juan wouldn't be successful. Juan, though, was a hard worker, and he had the knowledge that his friends the Zanate birds shared with him. Following their advice, he planted what are known as the "three sisters": corn, beans, and squash. The birds—and the indigenous people of Mexico—know that these three plants complement one another during the growing season. The townspeople were shocked to see the success of Juan's harvest. From that day forward he was known as Juan Zanate.

In this Mexican folktale, as told in the

picture book *The Harvest Birds* (Children's Book Press, 1995), people had a low opinion of Juan's ability. However, through his determination and his use of inner gifts—which most people didn't see he had—Juan succeeded beyond his neighbors' imaginations.

Organizing means helping people use their assets to reimagine themselves.

Educators often perceive English language learners the way that Juan's neighbors viewed him—through a lens of deficits. But what if we viewed them with a focus on assets? The word *assets* derives from the French word *assez*, meaning "very much, a great deal." Most English language learners (ELLs) bring *a great deal* of life experience and skills to the classroom, and teachers can help them apply those skills to reading. If we use instructional strategies to maximize these students' strengths, we can help them make tremendous strides in reading and higher-order thinking.

Assets and Community Organizing

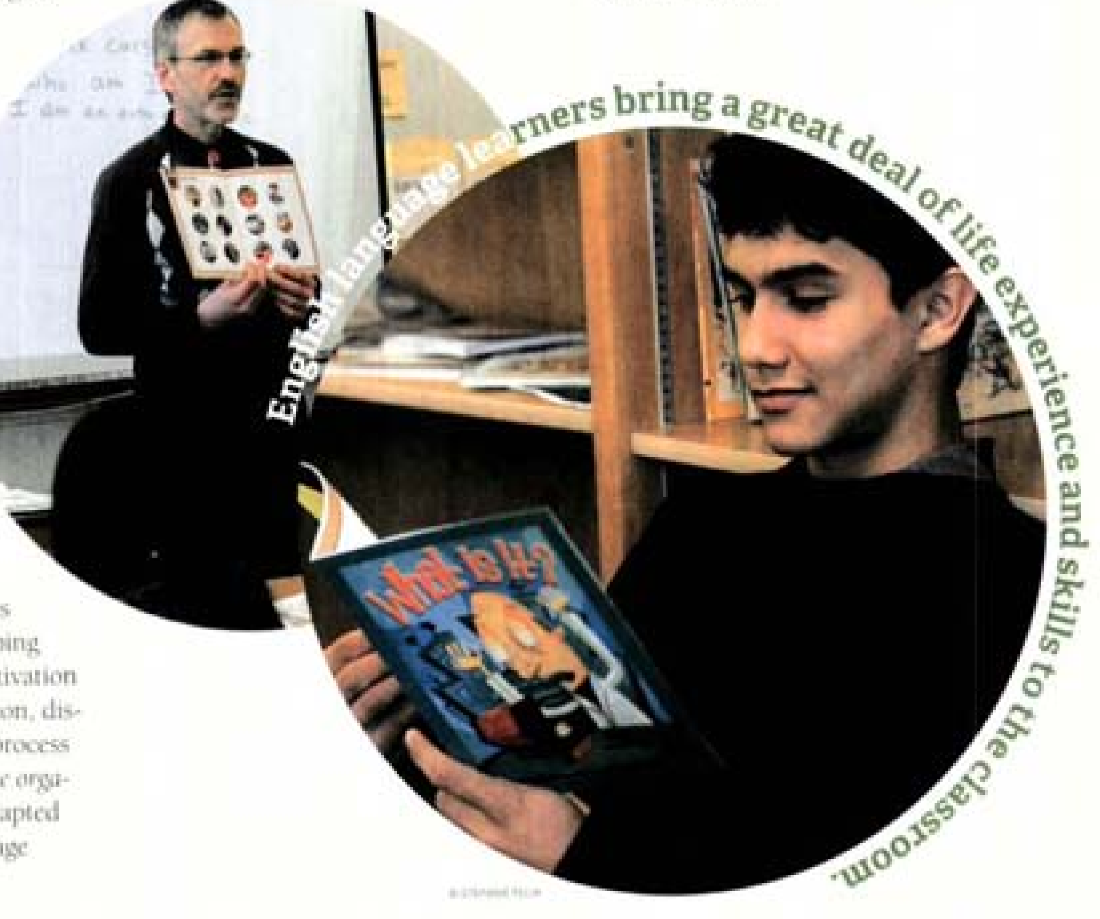
Before I became a high school English as a second language teacher 9 years ago, I spent 19 years as a community organizer, primarily in immigrant neighborhoods and with institutions focused on immigrants. Organizing is a process of helping people—many of whom might be reluctant to change—learn new skills and engage in the world in a way that improves their situation. Organizing means helping people use their assets—their experiences, traditions, and stories—to reimagine themselves and their dreams. It's about helping them tap into their intrinsic motivation and embark on a journey of action, discovery, and learning. I call the process that successful organizers use *the organizing cycle*. As a teacher, I've adapted this cycle to help English language learners become accomplished readers and learners.

The organizing cycle includes five actions: Build strong relationships with students; access prior knowledge through stories; help students learn by doing; identify and mentor students' leadership potential; and promote the habit of reflection.

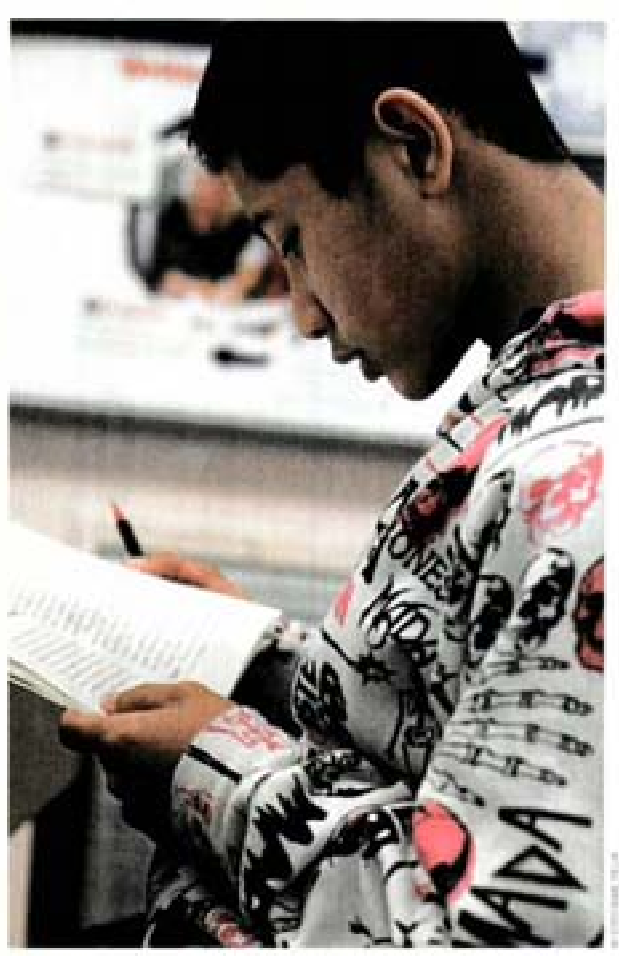
1. Build relationships.

When teachers develop relationships with students by learning about their lives, interests, and hopes, everyone benefits. Numerous studies have tied positive student-teacher relationships to increased student achievement (Johnson, Johnson, & Roseth, 2006). As Robert Marzano (2007) writes, "If the relationship between the teacher and the students is good, then everything else that occurs in the classroom seems to be enhanced" (p. 150). Such relationships are particularly important for helping English language learners develop a feeling of safety in the classroom and see possibilities for their own academic success (Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel, & Martin, 2009).

Teachers who actively pursue positive relationships also gain understanding of the kind of background knowledge students bring with them. We can then more effectively connect students' life experiences with classroom content, particularly in identifying texts that will engage them and strengthen their comprehension.



In helping ELLs choose what to read—or choosing for them—teachers must achieve the delicate balance of finding material that is engaging and challenging; that connects to students' background knowledge and attaches new understandings to that knowledge; and that anchors new learning to their interests, self-identity, and goals. Asking older students to read ABC-style books geared to English-speaking kindergartners might not be the most effective way to generate a love of reading. Fortunately, there are thousands of free "talking stories" available online, which offer audio support and animated illustrations to accompany texts of both fiction and nonfiction. Talking stories make high-interest and challenging texts accessible to ELLs. In addition, numerous education publishers have developed texts that meet these criteria, including graphic novels.



The way you introduce a reading may be as important as what text you choose. Before I assigned one class of predominantly Hmong immigrant students to read a text on American Indian tribes, I asked them to explain to me the structure of the 20 Hmong clans and each clan's culture, including its leadership style, loyalty expectations, and system of resolving conflicts.

Next, I asked students to look for connections between their knowledge of Hmong clans and the text on American Indians as they read. Once they began the reading, class engagement was off the charts. Students had difficulty restraining themselves from shouting out similarities they were finding.

I later asked students to reflect on whether they would have been as engaged with this text if they hadn't made connections to Hmong clans. The answer was a universal *no*. Students had seen vividly the difference it made to bring personal meaning to a text, and many of them applied the strategy of making connections during the rest of the year.

2. *Access prior knowledge through stories.*

Renate and Geoffrey Caine (1994) describe the brain's two types of memory systems: *taxon* and *locale*. Taxon learning consists of lists, basic skills, and habits. Locale memory, on the other hand, involves creating stories out of a person's life experiences—weaving taxon memories into a sophisticated sense of meaning. For example, our taxon memories enable us to know how to open the door to our home with a key. Our locale memories connect that skill with related experiences and skills so that we know how to proceed if we lose our key.

Many schools today focus on taxon learning, which responds more to extrinsic motivation and is resistant to change once a fact or habit has been learned. Locale learning is more responsive to intrinsic motivation and is always evolving. The Caines believe that teaching skills in the context of students' stories—their experiences and memories and the way they've internally organized them—taps locale memory.

I used my Hmong and Latino immigrant students' locale memories to strengthen their reading skills during a unit on feudalism. The textbook's authors listed several key facts about feudalism: People spent most of their time working in the fields, they didn't own the land they farmed, and their homes had one or two rooms. The book flatly declared that feudalism had ended with the Renaissance. Instead of having students memorize these facts (taxon memory), I asked students to think about them, write about whether they'd experienced any of these conditions in their home culture, and ask their parents and grandparents the same question (locale memory). Every student commented that they were either experiencing some of those "feudal" conditions currently or had done so very recently, either before their families emigrated or while they lived in refugee camps. The class concluded that the textbook was mistaken in saying feudalism had ended.

Examining parallels between their lives and the lives of people in the Middle Ages strongly engaged students. Many clamored to read more challenging texts about the Middle Ages. This unit provided countless opportunities for my students to learn reading strategies, academic vocabulary, and grammar. They embraced those opportunities because the lessons took place within the framework of their own stories and those of their families.

3. *Help students learn by doing.*

John Dewey (1916) popularized the phrase *learning by doing*, which means that students learn more from solving problems on their own than from just being told how to do so. Recently, this concept has been framed as creating learner-centered classrooms. Certain elements of a learner-centered classroom—such as inductive teaching methods, problem-based learning, or project-based learning—are ideal for strengthening English language learners' reading abilities.

Inductive teaching makes learners active agents in their pursuit of English language skills. Teaching inductively means providing students with several examples from which they detect a pattern and form a concept or rule. It embraces Jerome Bruner's (1996) definition of knowledge as the ability to "derive the unknown from the known" (p. 51). In deductive teaching, in contrast, a teacher provides a rule or hypothesis and students practice applying it.

One effective inductive strategy is the Picture Word Inductive Model (Calhoun, 1999). In this model, the teacher displays an enlarged photo showing various objects and people in the classroom, surrounded by white space. Students and teacher together label objects in the picture. Working in language notebooks or on a poster board, students create categories (such as *furniture*) and sort words from the picture (and others they find) into these categories. Eventually students use the words in fill-in-the-blank sentences, categorize and combine these sentences into paragraphs, and may ultimately work them into a longer piece of writing.

I tried this technique by taking a photo of students at work in my beginning English as a second language class, which is composed of Latino, Southeast Asian, and Arab immigrants who've been in the United States for periods ranging from one week to four months. After enlarging the photo, laminating it on a poster board, and hanging it on a wall, I asked students to join me up front. As students pointed out items in the photo for which they knew the word, we printed that word on the poster with an arrow pointing to the object. We also spelled each word aloud together and ended by pronouncing the whole word. The poster quickly filled with 25 English words.

Students individually copied these words onto a copy of the photo I had made for each learner. Each student then developed categories for the words (such as *people or words with an e in them*) and wrote several more words that fit those categories.

To extend this work into composition, students completed a sheet of 10 multiple-choice cloze-format sentences about the photo, such as *The* ________________ *sits at her* ________________. *(teacher, desk, student, dog)*

They grouped those 10 sentences into such categories as *sentences describing actions*, and each learner composed several new sentences for each category. The following day, these beginning English speakers learned about composing paragraphs and converted their sentences into paragraphs for a simple descriptive essay.

Text data sets are another teaching tool that helps language learners develop more sophisticated reading and writing ability. A text data set also uses categorization, but instead of completing cloze sentences, students work with a series of short expository sentences or paragraphs (see fig. 1). Learners generally categorize these short sentences, giving reasons that each sentence belongs in a specific category. Students then compose new sentences in the same format, which they then convert into paragraphs and an essay.

Teachers can use inductive strategies like these to help students learn about phonics concepts, common grammatical errors, and other key content.

FIGURE 1. Sample Text Data Set

A teacher might assign beginning ELL students to group these sentences into categories (such as numbers, colors, size, age, weather, and temperature); compose their own similar sentences for each category; and use the sentences in a short, descriptive essay.

1. There are 22 students in class.
2. Choua is wearing a black shirt.
3. Mr. Ferlazzo is an old teacher.
4. Walter is tall.
5. Luther Burbank is a big school.
6. Johanna has a blue pencil.
7. There are 26 desks in the classroom.
8. Ms. Smith has short hair.
9. Chue has a young sister.
10. Today is a sunny day.
11. The boy is wearing white shoes.
12. Tomorrow will be a rainy day.
13. The rice is very hot.
14. Ms. Vue has a little baby.

4. *Foster leadership potential.*

A good community organizer looks for signs that the leadership skills of people she or he is working with are emerging. A sense of self-efficacy and a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes are indicators that individuals are ready to lead. Self-confidence and risk taking are also qualities that help second language learners become successful readers. Language acquisition scholar Stephen Krashen (2002) cites H. D. Brown's conclusion that "the person with high self-esteem is able to reach out beyond himself more freely, to be less inhibited, and because of his ego strength, to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning."

Teachers can help ELLs develop

self-confidence and willingness to take risks by cultivating a supportive classroom community. Besides fostering good student-teacher relationships, another way to support students' leadership qualities is to strengthen their belief in their own competence by teaching them strategies they can use to attack any learning challenge. For example, the teacher might

- Coach students in self-reflective activities and encourage students to use these activities to monitor whether they have been successful or unsuccessful at a learning task—and why.
- Teach and reinforce reading-comprehension strategies, such as *monitor and repair*. Using this strategy, students first determine whether they believe an unknown word or phrase is important to understanding the passage in which they've encountered that word. If it is, the student tries various methods—using a dictionary, seeking context clues, rereading the passage, and so on—to comprehend the word and check their understanding of the surrounding passage. Of course, choosing engaging readings and lessons is important here; students need to care about understanding a text before they seek to comprehend it.
- Help students refine their skill at detecting patterns. Pattern identification—from seeing that sentences contain nouns and verbs, to detecting patterns like the consistent presence of a protagonist and a climax in fiction—can have a major impact on enhancing understanding.

Teachers can help ELLs develop a sense of self-efficacy as readers by knowing each student's personal interests and offering students the opportunity to read challenging books connected to these motivating interests. The often damaging system of book "leveling" can leave students feeling restricted. If a book addresses a topic of interest to the student, we might be surprised at the effort he or she will exert to comprehend the content.

Examining the parallels between their lives and the lives of people in the Middle Ages strongly engaged Hmong students.

5. Promote reflection.

The word *reflection* comes from the Latin *reflexionem*, meaning "a bending back." In reflection, people bend back to think about what they are doing and what they have done. We evaluate our thoughts and actions and come to conclusions about our strengths, weaknesses, and what we might do differently. For learners, the most important step is to take such conclusions and apply them to future thinking and action. Reflection can thus function as a means of formative assessment.

To help students reflect on their progress, teachers might involve them in activities like summarizing daily learning, self-assessing, and goal setting. We might help learners explore whether what they learned today was relevant to their lives outside the classroom—and how—or even evaluate the instructional strategies we or other teachers use.

Many teachers at my school have students, including ELLs, complete cloze assessments throughout the year to evaluate their reading comprehension and vocabulary development. We have students read out loud to us to evaluate fluency. Teachers share these assessment results with students, who reflect on them and use the results to identify their own reading goals and the strategies they'll use to accomplish them. The reflection component makes the process highly motivating. As one student told me, "There's something about my making a goal that pushes me harder to get to it."

The Balancing Act

A member of a community group once described to me the contrast between two organizers she'd worked with. She had learned a lot of information from one, she said, but she'd learned how to think from the other. As we work with language learners or other struggling readers, teachers must ask ourselves, When we teach, is our goal to impart information or to help students develop reading and thinking skills for a lifetime? It's not an either/or choice; an effective teacher keeps the two in balance. Holding the five steps of the organizing cycle in mind can help. ■

References

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Caine, R. N., & Caine, G. (1994). *Making connections: Teaching and the human brain.* Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley.

Calhoun, E. F. (1999). *Teaching beginning reading and writing with the Picture Word Inductive Model.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education.* New York: Macmillan.

Johnson, D., Johnson, R., & Roseth, C. (2006). Do peer relationships affect achievement? *The Cooperative Link, 21*(1). Retrieved from www.co-operation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Volume21.pdf

Krashen, S. (2002). *Second language acquisition and second language learning.* Retrieved from author at www.sdkrashen.com/SL_Acquisition_and_Learning

Marzano, R. J. (2007). *The art and science of teaching.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Suarez-Orozco, C., Pimental, A., & Martin, M. (2009). The significance of relationships: Academic engagement and achievement among newcomer immigrant youth. *Teachers College Record, 111*(3), 712–749.

Larry Ferlazzo (mrferlazzo@aol.com) teaches English and social studies at Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento, California, and blogs at http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org. His latest book, *The ESL Teacher's Survival Guide*, coauthored with Katie Hull-Sypnieski, is forthcoming from Jossey Bass.

SpringBoard®

The Official Pre-AP® Program from the College Board

A Rigorous English Language Arts and Mathematics Program for ALL Students in Grades 6–12

SpringBoard® starts with the end in mind — the belief that ALL students deserve a chance to be college and career ready.

By integrating the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards and College Board standards with instructional materials, formative assessments and professional development, SpringBoard challenges and prepares **every** student to succeed in AP® and college, ensuring that ALL students are given the opportunity for a bright future.

Recommended as a Curriculum of Exceptional Quality by Phi Delta Kappa International

To find out how SpringBoard promotes a brighter future for ALL students, visit the College Board at **collegeboard.org/springboard** or call us toll free at **877-999-7723**.

© 2012 The College Board.

12b-5110

New Assessment Solutions for

Riverside's premier data and assessment management system helps educators understand the needs of students at all levels, transforming data into actionable information.

NEW in *DataDirector*™ 4.0:

- A redesigned, user-friendly interface including folder-based assessment storage and sharing.
- Drag-and-drop assessment reorganization.
- Create custom true/false, yes/no, short answer and constructed-response items for use in assessments.
- Quick and easy access to all modules of *DataDirector* from anywhere in the program through the new Application Switcher.

Intuitive Assessment Creation
DataDirector makes building powerful, standards-aligned assessments efficient and user-friendly.

Impactful Reporting
Custom reporting clusters and performance bands adapt dynamic, meaningful reports to your district, highlighting student achievement gaps and growth.

Longitudinal Student Profiles
Store and report on all state, local, and published assessment and demographic data over time, making a meaningful, longitudinal profile possible for each student.

For more information, visit datadirector.com or call 877.993.2633

To learn more, call 800.323.9540 or visit www.riversidepublishing.com

Today's Educational Challenges

- Monitor growth for individuals and groups
- Evaluate college readiness
- Compare student performance with others locally and nationally
- Measure student mastery of standards-based skills, such as the Common Core State Standards

- Assess the abilities of all students, including English Language Learners
- Measure student reasoning abilities reliably and accurately
- Determine learning styles to help tailor instruction

For more information, visit riversidepublishing.com/iowaE
riversidepublishing.com/cogat7
or call 800.323.9540

Visit us at the ASCD Annual Conference in Philadelphia, Booth 655.

RIVERSIDE
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT

Teaching for Historical Literacy

When teachers mesh content-rich curriculum with good literacy practices, history lessons become meaningful.

Anne Goudvis and Stephanie Harvey

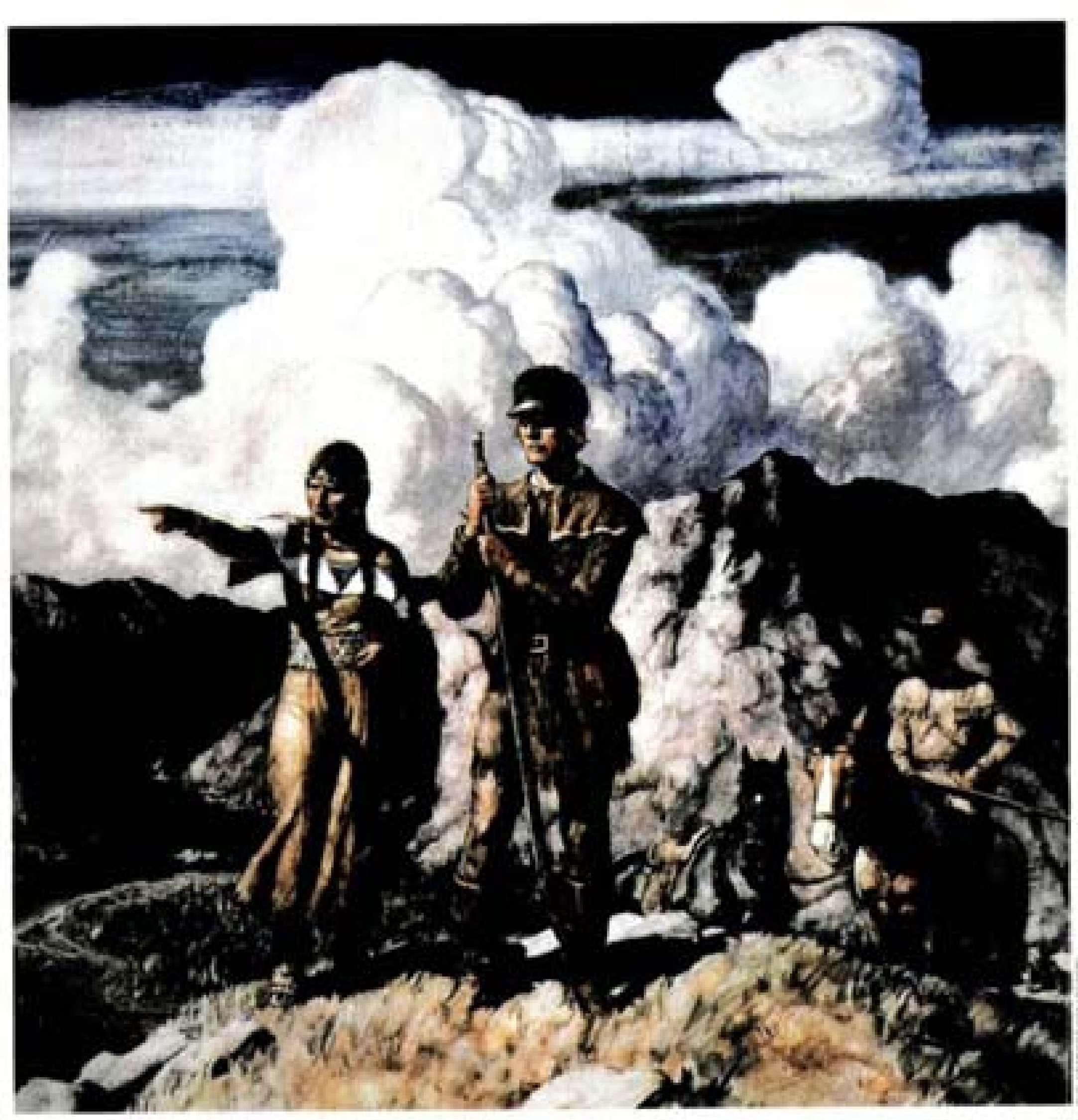
At the very moment when calls for a rigorous, content-rich curriculum reverberate from coast to coast in the United States, many elementary schools have put history and social studies on the back burner. Increasingly, these disciplines are being squeezed into an ever smaller corner of the school day or, astonishingly, abandoned altogether. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has morphed into MCLB—Much Curriculum Left Behind—as schools narrow their curriculums in the face of high-stakes tests in math and reading (Berliner, 2009). But in a democracy, history and social studies shouldn't be optional.

The problem is not just that we're cutting back on teaching history and social studies in elementary schools; it's also how we "cover" what we do teach. The curriculum has become a mile wide and an inch deep. Students too often experience social studies as a passive slog through the textbook. When these tomes become the default curriculum, students get what Diane Ravitch (2010) calls "boring, abbreviated pap in the history textbook that reduces stirring events, colorful personalities and riveting controversies to . . . a few leaden paragraphs" (p. 237). Instead, students should be reading a wide range of historical sources; they should be grappling with and constructing ideas for themselves.

We stand with the history enthusiasts and teachers who refuse to narrow the curriculum. How will U.S. students ever participate fully and thoughtfully in the democratic process if they have little time to learn about how that process has worked in the past? To build knowledge and understanding—to become literate in history—students need to read and learn about the stories, mysteries, questions, controversies, issues, discoveries, and drama that are the real substance of history.

Reading and Thinking About History

Teaching content literacy enables teachers to design a curriculum that students can sink their teeth into. This approach teaches students to use reading and thinking strategies as tools to acquire knowledge in history, science, and other subject areas. As P. David Pearson and colleagues (Pearson, Moje, & Greenleaf, 2010) assert,



> Without systematic attention to reading and writing in subjects like science and history, students will leave schools with an impoverished sense of what it means to use the tools of literacy for learning or even to reason within various disciplines. (p. 460)

It's important to teach students the difference between information and knowledge. For information to become knowledge, students need to think about it. It may not seem like rocket science to say that students need to think about what they're learning, but rote memorization has too frequently been part of conventional history instruction. Memorizing facts and birth-death dates without learning about the time period, the people themselves, and the challenges they faced dumbs down history. It limits young people's understanding of their role as citizens in a democratic society. As David Perkins (1992) notes,

> Learning is a consequence of thinking . . . Far from thinking coming after knowledge, knowledge comes on the coattails of thinking . . . Knowledge does not just sit there; it functions richly in people's lives so they can understand and deal with the world. (p. 8)

For many of us for whom history was merely memorizing facts and dates, knowledge *did* just sit there, remaining in place long enough for Friday's quiz but disappearing in time for weekend shenanigans. But when educators teach for historical literacy, they merge foundational literacy practices with engaging resources in a content-rich curriculum—and students draw on thinking strategies as they read (see fig. 1, p. 54). Reading and thinking about many historical sources help build skills connected to the common core state standards for reading informational text, such as citing text evidence to support important ideas, arriving at an understanding of a text by asking and answering questions about it, and evaluating the information and arguments in texts.

As consultants, we have worked in classrooms to integrate reading and thinking strategies with history and social studies instruction. Here we highlight one experience.

Historical Literacy at Work in the Classroom

In Matthew Reif's 5th grade classroom in Prince George's County, Maryland, student work covers the classroom walls and cascades out into the hallway. Some students talk quietly together in groups; others read independently at their desks or sprawled on the floor. One of the coauthors of this article, Anne, recently had the good fortune to work with Matthew to infuse reading and thinking strategies into the history

curriculum (Goudvis & Buhrow, 2011).

On a typical day in Matthew's class, everyone is reading, viewing, and thinking about the current history topic—in this case, westward expansion in the United States. To carve out room for history in a crowded day, Matthew has combined the time allocated for social studies and literacy. The classroom is awash with nonfiction articles, historical fiction picture books, maps, diaries, trade books, letters, photographs, and artifacts. Matthew, Anne, and the students have gathered these multiple-genre sources from libraries and websites. They have heeded Allington and Johnston's (2002) findings that classrooms linked to high achievement use a variety of materials and resources, not one basal reader or textbook. There's not a worksheet or end-of-chapter question in sight as the kids read, write, draw, view, question, debate, discuss, and investigate.

Teachers can't just implore students to ask thoughtful questions or draw reasonable inferences; we have to show them how.

But teachers can't just implore students to ask thoughtful questions or draw reasonable inferences; we have to show them how. Matthew and Anne model for students how to merge thinking with new information by annotating their thoughts in the margins or on sticky notes. They peel back the layers of their own thinking—demonstrating how a person reasons through a text to summarize what's important or to keep a lingering question in mind. As students use their growing repertoire of strategies in their own reading, there is plenty of time to talk about their new learning in pairs or small groups. The whole class gathers to engage in wide-ranging, and sometimes heated, discussions.

Four Generative Practices

In our work helping teachers revamp social studies instruction, we emphasize four practices that foster deep reading and learning about history. Each focuses on comprehension strategies as tools for learning. These practices can be adapted to use with many different topics and texts.

1. Interact with multiple texts to build knowledge.

Building students' knowledge store is essential if they are to deepen their understanding of ideas surrounding

FIGURE 1. Using Thinking Strategies to Learn About History

Comprehension/thinking strategy	Students use this strategy in history when they. . .
Monitor understanding.	• Learn new information by annotating texts and leaving tracks that show their thinking.
Activate background knowledge.	• Connect the new to the known; use background knowledge to inform reading.
Ask questions.	Ask and answer questions to • Acquire information. • Research and investigate. • Interpret and analyze information and ideas. • Explore essential questions.
Draw inferences and conclusions.	• Infer ideas, themes, and issues on the basis of text evidence. • Analyze and interpret different perspectives and points of view.
Determine importance.	• Sort and sift important information from interesting but unimportant details. • Evaluate the information and ideas in a text to determine what's important to remember.
Summarize and synthesize.	• Analyze, compare, and contrast information across different sources to build content knowledge and understanding.

topics like the westward expansion. To do this, Matthew Reif's students did some serious reading. They made that reading "thinking intensive" (Harvard College Library, 2007), merging their background knowledge with new information, jotting down questions, and annotating reactions.

Matthew's students couldn't wait to get their hands on stories of children traveling west on a wagon train or American Indian children living on the plains. Comments like "I don't believe this!" or "That's outrageous!" echoed around the room as they read about the experiences of defiant outlaws and courageous lawmen like Bass Reeves, who risked his life to provide law and order in his small corner of the West. Students devoured articles and historical fiction picture books about the intrepid Chinese workers who helped build the transcontinental railroad and the diaries of pioneers who survived a raging blizzard in the Rockies.

Students chose topics that interested them and formed small groups with others who wanted to read about and research that topic. These groups summarized and shared their new learning on a mind map (Buzan, 1993). Working on topics they chose enabled students to investigate questions that piqued their interest from the start. One group researched the dangers and obstacles pioneers encountered on their journeys; another read about the Trail of Tears. Students who read about building the transcontinental railroad investigated the question, How did the railroads change the Wild West? Each student had a different take on the question, so their dialogue encompassed a variety of perspectives. For instance, Nicholas wrote,

> I infer that it wasn't fair for the Indians because the Americans built the railroad on the Indians' land. There was a treaty with the Indians saying this is your land and we won't bother you, but they took back that treaty. I feel grief for the Indians.

2. *Ask questions for different purposes.*
Historical thinking, for elementary students, begins with authentic questions. As students interacted with high-interest personal narratives, articles, visual representations, and other sources, both primary and secondary, many questions emerged. Matthew listed students' questions on a continually updated chart, which provided a window into their background knowledge and thinking. As students gained more information from their reading, he added answers to the chart and noticed how students' thinking changed over time.

One student's question—The American Indians were here first, so whose land was it?—sparked more questions about the concept of land, such as, Did the government buy the land from the American Indians? What about the treaties? Some essential questions Anne and Matthew had identified ahead of time to guide instruction surfaced in our class discussions, such as, Why did people pull up stakes and settle the West? How did "Manifest Destiny" drive exploration and settlement? Throughout the study, we addressed these broader questions, exploring the notion of westward expansion from many different perspectives. We made sure to include people, events, and points of view that are often glossed over or left out of textbooks.

The students were bursting with queries after they read letters written in 1848 by Tabitha Brown, a 66-year-old woman who ventured west because she didn't want to be left behind. Tabitha traveled on a wagon train to Oregon with her grown children and 77-year-old brother-in-law, Captain John. Her letters provide a remarkable account of the journey, especially her nights alone in the wilderness and her experience losing her wagon and all her belongings in a rushing river. Matthew organized students' questions into a chart showing how different kinds of questions inform historical understanding (see fig. 2, p. 56). This graphic aid broadened students' question-asking repertoires and raised their awareness of the purposes of different kinds of questions.

As a follow-up, Matthew and Anne highlighted the differences between primary and secondary sources by comparing Tabitha's actual letters with a 1954 *Reader's Digest* article about her (Wolfe, 1954). One child astutely pointed out that someone probably used Tabitha's letters to write the magazine article. The kids began to grasp the idea that we learn history from the actual accounts, journals, and letters of real people.

There's a big difference between information and knowledge; if information is to become knowledge, students need to think about it.

3. *Evaluate authors' purposes and perspectives.*
Early in the unit, we noticed that students were taking information at face value. Part of the difficulty they had distinguishing between more and less reliable sources of information lay in their limited background knowledge. As their knowledge increased, students

used the information they acquired to evaluate sources by asking a series of questions that we taught them: Who wrote this source? Why? What is the author's perspective or point of view—and possible biases? How does the author spin the ideas and information?

For example, students examined the late-19th-century poster shown on page 57, bringing in their prior knowledge about California, the settling of the West, and the growth of the railroads. As they reasoned through the information on the poster together, they drew inferences about who created it and why:

GREGORY: What does it mean by "Millions of Immigrants"? There weren't millions of immigrants, were there? Maybe it means that there was enough land for millions.

ALICIA: It says "government lands untaken." They wanted people to know there was no one there so they could come live on the land.

JENNY: It says there are no blizzards, but what about earthquakes? I know there are earthquakes in California.

NAYELI: I think it's a false advertisement because the government's exaggerating about all the good things.

ALLAN: I was thinking that the government had nothing to do with it. Maybe somebody owned this land and wanted to sell it.

NICHOLAS: The railroad company needed people to ride on it and make money. Maybe this was from the railroads.

Students concluded that the half-truths and hype on the poster pegged it as an advertisement trying to persuade immigrants to move to California.

FIGURE 2. How Students' Questions Inform Their Historical Thinking

Question Type	Examples from Matthew Reif's Class	How Such Questions Inform Historical Understanding
Information-seeking questions	Did Tabitha meet American Indians on her journey west? What happened when she encountered American Indians?	Fill in gaps in our information. Clarify information. Address misconceptions.
Explanation-seeking questions (Why? How?)	Why would someone this old go west? How did she and her family survive these hardships?	Use information to focus on big ideas and issues. Address lingering questions and essential questions.
Questions of empathy	I can't imagine losing all my belongings in a river. How did they find food and shelter after that? How did they keep going?	Build awareness of other perspectives and viewpoints. Encourage interest and engagement.
Questions that encourage imaginative thinking and supposition	How might things have turned out differently if. . . ? What if Tabitha hadn't followed the "guide" who promised them a shortcut?	Encourage interpretation and thinking outside the box.
Questions that prompt historical investigation or challenge information	Her story was so amazing that I wondered whether she was telling the truth. How could we find out whether this really happened? What other sources would give us more information?	Analyze and interpret sources citing evidence. Evaluate conclusions on the basis of text evidence. Synthesize information and corroborate evidence across sources.

Source: Adapted from a chart that originally appeared in the chapter "History Lessons" by Anne Goudvis and Brad Buhrow in *Comprehension Going Forward*, edited by H. Daniels, 2011, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Copyright © 2011 by Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH. Adapted with permission.

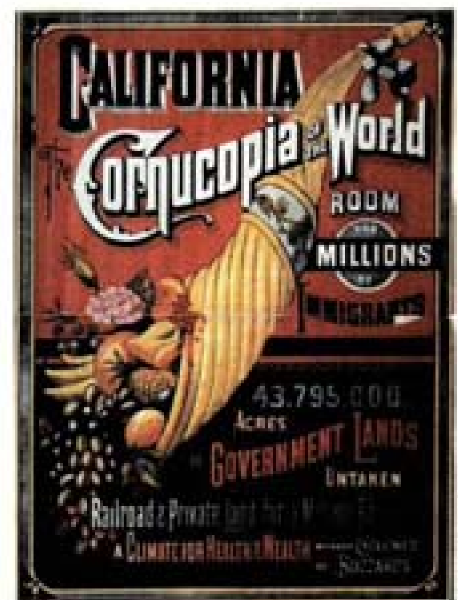
Students did further research and discovered that the poster was most likely propaganda from a land company. Having the tools to question and interpret texts encouraged students to take a more skeptical stance with all sources they encountered.

4. Use picture books to infer important ideas.

Historical fiction picture books immerse students in the stories of the past. Students can break out of their immediate frame of reference and gain a more complete understanding of what life was like. Well-written historical fiction picture books are complex, carefully crafted texts with vivid language and striking illustrations. Because these books are short, students can read a lot of them and engage in critical thinking about different points of view—understanding the journey west, for example, from the perspective of pioneers, American Indians, or traders.

Matthew's students worked in small groups to read *Sitting Bull Remembers* by Ann Turner, immersing themselves in Sitting Bull's recollections of his long life. Students made connections to information from a previously read picture book about Sitting Bull's childhood, *A Boy Called Slow* by Joseph Bruchac. The kids discussed nonfiction accounts of the American Indian victory at Little Bighorn, Sitting Bull's valiant efforts to keep his people free, and his final years on a reservation.

This moving story prompted students to synthesize and reflect on what they had learned about Sitting Bull and the Sioux. As they engaged in discussions about themes like courage, perseverance, injustice, and conflict, they pieced together a real-life puzzle with implications for the history and life of a people. These various perspectives enriched their



understanding far beyond what it would have been had they read one account.

Students Think for Themselves

Reading shapes and changes thinking. In teaching history, we take Eleanor Roosevelt's words as our mantra:

> Every effort must be made in childhood to teach the young to use their own minds. For one thing is sure, if they don't make up their own minds, someone will do it for them. (quoted in Beane, 2005, p. 75)

We believe that the reason Matthew's students brought so much enthusiasm and energy to this unit is that they came to understand the power and potential of their own reading and thinking. They learned that there are many compelling ways to understand people who lived far away and long ago.

But it wasn't just about the past. Students linked the past to the present by learning to think for themselves and connect history to their own lives. What better way to prepare them to be engaged, thoughtful citizens?

Books for Teaching for Historical Literacy in Elementary School

A Boy Called Slow: The True Story of Sitting Bull by Joseph Bruchac. (1994). New York: Philomel.

Children of the Wild West by Russell Freedman. (1983). New York: Clarion.

Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshall by Vaunda Nelson. (2009). Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

Sitting Bull Remembers by Ann Turner. (2007). New York: HarperCollins.

Coolies by Yin. (2001). New York: Philomel.

References

Allington, R. L., & Johnston, P. (2002). *Reading to learn: Lessons from exemplary fourth grade classrooms.* New York: Guilford.

Beane, J. A. (2005). *A reason to teach: Creating classrooms of dignity and hope.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Berliner, D. (2009). Much curriculum left behind: A U.S. calamity in the making. *The Educational Forum, 73*(4), 284–296.

Buzan, T. (1993). *The mind map.* New York: Penguin.

Goudvis, A., & Buhrow, B. (2011). History lessons. In H. Daniels (Ed.), *Comprehension going forward* (pp. 128–149). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Harvard College Library. (2007). *Interrogating texts: Six reading habits to develop in your first year at Harvard.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. Retrieved from http://guides.hcl.harvard.edu/sixreadinghabits

Pearson, P. D., Moje, E., & Greenleaf, C. (2010, April 23). Literacy and science: Each in the service of the other. *Science, 328,* 459–463.

Perkins, D. (1992). *Smart schools: Better thinking and learning for every child.* New York: Free Press.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system.* New York: Basic Books.

Wolfe, L. (1954, August). The independence of Tabitha Brown. *Reader's Digest,* 73–78.

Anne Goudvis (annegoudvis@gmail.com) and **Stephanie Harvey** (contact@stephanieharvey.com) are literacy consultants and authors. Their most recent resource is The Comprehension Toolkit series (Heinemann, 2007).

The Challenge of

When teachers understand what makes texts complex, they can better support their students in reading them.

Timothy Shanahan, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey

How is reading complex text like lifting weights? Just as it's impossible to build muscle without weight or resistance, it's impossible to build robust reading skills without reading challenging text. The common core state standards in language arts treat text difficulty as akin to weight or resistance in an exercise program.

This is in contrast to most past discussion of this topic, which emphasized how overly complex text may impede learning. Such discussion therefore focused on developing various readability schemes and text gradients to help teachers determine which books might be too hard for their students. The new standards instead propose that teachers move students purposefully through increasingly complex text to build skill and stamina.

What Makes Text Complex?

To help students learn to read complex texts, teachers need

Challenging Text

to answer the question, What do we mean when we say that a text is difficult? Readability formulas usually answer this question by measuring two factors: challenging vocabulary and long, complex sentences. Here we look at these factors along with several others that also affect readers' ability to comprehend text.

Vocabulary

If you ask students what makes reading hard, they blame the words. And they're right to place so much importance on vocabulary: Authors introduce their ideas through words and phrases, and if readers don't know what these mean, there's little chance that they will make sense of the text. Studies show that higher-order thinking in reading depends heavily on knowledge of word meanings.[1]

Often, textbooks and teachers focus their attention on teaching students the vocabulary words that describe central concepts in science, history, mathematics, or literature. Domain-specific terms, such as *erosion*, *Newton's third law of motion*, *rhombus*, and *metaphor*, are sure to receive instructional emphasis in today's classrooms. However, these words are usually surrounded by other essential but more general academic terms, such as *exerts*, *estimates*, *determines*, *distributed*, *resulting*, *culminates*, and *classify*. These words, every bit as much as those in the first list, are used in particular ways in the various disciplines and warrant instructional attention. Students' ability to comprehend a piece of text depends on the number of unfamiliar domain-specific words and new general academic terms they encounter.

Sentence Structure

Words are not the whole picture. Sentence structure matters, too, because it determines how the words operate together. Thus, understanding the sentence "*The stork was walking in the beautiful cornfield*" requires more than just being able to define individual words. The sentence must also tell the reader how the ideas expressed by these words fit together (Which stork? Where was the stork? What was it doing?). If the text instead said, "*Stork beautiful the walking in was the cornfield*," all the same ideas would have been presented, yet readers would not understand the meaning.

Other aspects of sentence structure can determine how hard it is for readers to make sense of text. Shorter sentences,

If you ask students what makes reading hard, they blame the words.

for example, tend to be easier to read than longer sentences; presumably, they put less demand on the reader's working memory. Longer sentences are likely to include multiple phrases or clauses, so they tend to include more ideas that have to be related to one another. They also have a greater density (longer noun or verb phrases) and more embedding (more complex relationships).

Authors construct such complicated sentences for a variety of reasons. In some cases, complex sentence structures are necessary to communicate the complexity of the information itself—thus the long noun phrases common in science. In literary passages, long-sentence writers like William Faulkner or Evelyn Waugh may be trying to get readers to slow down and explore the architecture of the thoughts and feelings

being expressed. In attempting to convey emotional complexity, we might write a sentence like this:

> The yellow snow blower that my father bought for my mother for their 15th wedding anniversary last year is now sitting in the garage, under a pile of old boxes and newspapers, where she left it that night, just before she threw her mobile phone, the one with my picture on it, at dad, and burst into tears.

The many layered phrases in this sentence express the complicated emotions connected with the events better than a series of shorter, clearer sentences would do. However, such sentences can be hard to untangle because of the demands they place on working memory: What happened just before the mother threw her phone? Who burst into tears? The verb phrase is so deeply embedded in this sentence that it can be hard, at first, to identify what is happening. If students are to interpret the meanings such complex sentence structures convey, they need to learn how to make sense of the conventions of text—phrasing, word order, punctuation, and language.

Coherence

Another challenge concerns how particular words, ideas, and sentences in text connect with one another, a feature referred to as *coherence*. Authors use pronouns, synonyms, ellipses, and other tools to connect the ideas across text. For example, take this simple passage:

> John and Mary went to space camp. They liked it there. Of course, boys often like rockets, but Mary, too, enjoyed it.

The first sentence tells about something two children did. To make sense of the second sentence, the reader has to recognize that the pronoun *they* refers to the two children who were named in the first sentence and that *there* refers to *space camp*. Similarly, to interpret the third sentence, the reader has to link *boys* to *John* and recognize that *it* means the same thing as *there* did in the second sentence.

Younger students often have difficulty making such connections, especially if the ideas are far apart or the referents don't get restated frequently. Distant or complex cohesive links can also be challenging for second-language learners or for older students reading about an unfamiliar topic.

Organization

Ideas can be arranged across text in many ways, some more straightforward than others. For example, some kinds of text—such as a science experiment or a recipe—order events in a time sequence. This would also be true of some fiction or historical stories, but not all of them. You will most likely never see a writer play around with a time sequence in presenting a science experiment, but flashbacks in literature and nonsequential presentations of events in historical writing are common and important.

Other organizational structures include compare-contrast and problem-solution. For example, in science texts, detailed comparisons between species like alligators and crocodiles or between concepts like meiosis and mitosis are common. Similarly, problem-solution structures are evident in both science and social studies; for example, an essay might explain multiple causes of water pollution and then explore multiple solutions for each of these causes. Some organizational structures are used to organize particular text features; for example, a social studies textbook may include particular categories of detailed information (history, geography, economics, and culture) in each chapter.

Students who are aware of the patterns authors use to communicate complex information have an advantage in making sense of text. For example, it's easier to follow *Moby Dick* if you know that it is a narrative of a voyage punctuated by a series of digressions—that one chapter might move the story forward, followed by another that describes the anatomy of whales, the history of whaling, or a sermon that one might hear in a whaling-town church in the 19th century.

Background Knowledge

Vocabulary, sentence structure, coherence, and organization can all be determined by closely analyzing the text itself. A final determinant of text difficulty, however, depends on the reader's prior knowledge.

For example, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* is often recommended for use with adolescents. Hemingway's language is spare and plain; he uses common words, and his sentences are often short, without

embedding or complexity. A text gradient analysis would place this text at a 6th grade reading level.

Yet many students at this age would have difficulty understanding this beautiful book. The reason is obviously not in the book itself but in the interaction between the reader and the book. Few preteens have had the emotional experiences that would prepare them to understand the old man's determination to maintain hope and dignity in the face of overwhelming odds. Students' background knowledge, including developmental, experiential, and cognitive factors, influences their ability to understand the explicit and inferential qualities of a text.

What Can Teachers Do About Text Complexity?

Knowledge of text complexity can help teachers design three important components of literacy instruction: building skills, establishing purpose, and fostering motivation.

Build Skills

Let's face it: Some students can't make sense of a complex text because they can't decode it. Any older student who still struggles with decoding needs intervention to address this difficulty.

But even students who have basic decoding skills sometimes struggle to deploy these skills easily and accurately enough to get a purchase on challenging text. To help these students develop reading fluency, teachers should give them lots of practice with reading the same text, as well as instruction to help them develop a stronger sense of where to pause in sentences, how to group words, and how their voices should rise or fall at various junctures when reading aloud.

Fluency instruction becomes more powerful when it's taught not as an end in itself, but rather in the context of students' attempts to make sense of a particular text. True fluency is not merely lining up one sentence after another and reading them aloud quickly; it's also maintaining understanding across a text. Therefore, fluency instruction should emphasize sentence structure and meaning. Teachers should have students pause to discuss the meaning of the text. They should pair repeated readings of the same text with questions that require the student to read closely for detail and key ideas.

Ongoing, solid vocabulary instruction is another essential component to help students develop skill in reading complex text. This instruction should focus not just on domain-specific words and phrases that describe the central concepts in the subject area, but also on general academic words. Effective vocabulary instruction usually provides a rich exploration of word meanings, in which students do more than just copy dictionary definitions—they consider synonyms, antonyms, categories, and specific examples for the words under study.

Students also explore the connections among words, considering other words in the same category, comparing and contrasting words with similar meanings, evaluating or constructing analogies, and building word webs. They also have opportunities to use the words in reading, writing, speaking, listening, drawing, and even physically acting them out. As students analyze the use of the vocabulary terms in text, teachers can guide them to think about the meanings that the authors intended to convey (for example, the differences in implication between *nosey* and *curious*, or *cheap* and *frugal*).

Fluency is not merely lining up one sentence after another and reading them aloud quickly; it's also maintaining understanding across a text.

Establish Purpose

Recently, we were asked to explain why a passage about deserts was challenging for readers. As we started to read the text, we noticed its beautiful language, vivid imagery, and well-wrought descriptions. Despite its beauty, however, we found it hard to make sense of this passage. The problem was that we couldn't tell whether it was meant to be a literary text or a scientific one. Without knowing what kind of text we were reading or what we were expected to do with the information, we had no idea what to attend to.

Students often find themselves in this kind of bind. Younger children frequently encounter hybrid texts that combine a narrative story with expository information. For example, in the Magic School Bus books, the characters take field trips to learn about electricity, weather, dinosaurs, and other topics. When reading these books, children need to determine whether to focus on the story of the field trip or the information about the concepts. Until they figure it out, they may feel confused.

Older students are confronted with texts from science, history, mathematics, and literature; and they have to grasp the purposes for reading each of these texts so that they can focus their attention appropriately. For example, science texts focus heavily on causation. These texts convey information about what causes what, but they are not typically concerned with the intention behind these events. Students reading a science text may learn that apples grow on trees and that birds eat them, which plays an important role in spreading the seeds around, which creates even more apple trees; however, readers will not be expected to question whether apples grow on trees intentionally so that birds may eat them. In contrast, in reading history and literature, readers need to be concerned with not just the causes of

events, but also the human intentions behind these causes.

In clearly communicating the purpose of reading to students, teachers should not convey so much information that it spoils the reading or enables students to participate in class without completing the reading; rather, they should let students know what learning to expect from the reading. For the text about deserts, for example, establishing the purpose, "Determine the difference between desert and tundra biomes" would direct the reading differently from establishing the purpose, "Examine the author's use of imagery and consider how you could apply it in your own writing." Although both of these purposes are worthwhile, reading for one purpose while performing a task for another would likely result in confusion and even failure. When students struggle to understand the task, they pay less attention to the text itself.

Over time, as students read with purpose, they develop background knowledge and a deeper understanding of the organizational structures authors use to convey information. This understanding gives students access to increasingly complex texts.

Foster Motivation and Persistence

Learning to read challenging text is similar to undergoing physical therapy. Initially, such therapy is often painful and exhausting, and it's tempting to cheat on the exercises a bit. Physical therapists have to focus not only on the muscle groups that need to be strengthened or stretched, but also on the patient's motivation. They need to keep the patient's head in the game, because working past the pain is beneficial.

Similarly, it can be tough for students to hang in there and stick with a text that they have to labor through, looking up words, puzzling over sentences, straining to make connections. Teachers may be tempted to try to make it easier for students by avoiding difficult texts. The problem is, easier work is less likely to make readers stronger. Teachers need to motivate students to keep trying, especially when the level of work is increasing. The payoff comes from staying on track.

A good physical therapist knows what good teachers know: You need to create successive successes. Students experience success in the company of their teacher, who combines complex texts with effective instruction. They apply their growing competence outside the company of their teacher by reading texts that match their independent reading ability. Over time, they engage in close reading of texts of their own choosing, as well as assigned texts that build their subject-area knowledge. All the while, they set goals with their teachers so that they can gauge their own progress. Forward motion toward a goal matters.

No More Guesswork

Gone are the days when text was judged as difficult solely on the basis of sentence length and syllable count. We now know that many factors affect text complexity. With this increased understanding, teachers do not have to rely on intuition to figure out which books their students can handle. Instead, teachers can select texts worthy of instruction and align their instructional efforts to ensure that all their students read complex, interesting, and important texts. ■

[1]Stahl, S. A., & Fairbanks, M. M. (1986). The effects of vocabulary instruction: A model-based meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 56*, 72–110.

Timothy Shanahan is a professor and department chair, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Illinois, Chicago; shanahan@uic.edu. **Douglas Fisher** (dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu) and **Nancy Frey** (nfrey@mail.sdsu.edu) are professors in the Department of Teacher Education at San Diego State University, California.

Earn your >> Master of Science in Education Law (M.S.) Online

Fountas & Pinnell

Benchmark Assessment System & Sistema de evaluación de la lectura

ASSESSMENT

One-on-one, comprehensive assessment centered on original fiction and nonfiction books

"The interpretation and use of benchmark assessment data are more important than the scores themselves."

— Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

* Determine independent and instructional reading levels for ALL students
* Place students on the F&P Text Level Gradient™
* Analyze data on oral reading and comprehension using the comprehensive Recording Form
* Connect assessment to instruction with *The Continuum of Literacy Learning* and the *Continuo de adquisición de la lectoescritura*

The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades 3–8

The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK–2

The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK–8

Continuo de adquisición de la lectoescritura Grados PreK–2: Guía para la enseñanza

800.225.5800 I www.heinemann.com

ASSESSMENT **TEACHING** INTERVENTION **MONITORING** PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Heinemann

DEDICATED TO TEACHERS

Making Textbook

Many middle school students view textbooks with alarm. These five practices can motivate them to read informational text.

John T. Guthrie and Susan Lutz Klauda

As students enter middle school, they often find that textbooks dominate the landscape in their social studies, science, mathematics, foreign language, and language arts classes. Learning from these texts—so essential to success in middle school—requires not only basic reading skills, but also higher-order reading comprehension and reasoning.

Yet teachers face several substantial challenges in helping students cope with complex informational texts. The most overwhelming obstacle is boredom; even students who enjoy reading nonfiction often find informational text dry and uninteresting, and many students actively avoid it when possible. Another problem is students' lack of skills; although they may be able to read aloud fluently, understand the literal meanings of sentences, and make simple inferences, many middle school students struggle with higher-order literacy skills—for instance, forming connections to integrate information from multiple, disconnected sections of text.

A third problem in helping students cope with informational texts is the textbooks themselves. Most textbooks are narrowly geared toward the 20 percent of students in the middle of the ability spectrum. Students at the high end

Reading Meaningful

may already know the information in the text; students at the low end may have trouble even decoding the words and recognizing the vocabulary. Middle school teachers, as subject-area experts, understandably prefer to focus on teaching students the content in their discipline rather than teaching them literacy skills.

During the last four years, with our colleagues at the University of Maryland, we have explored ways to overcome these challenges. We have surveyed more than 3,000 students and conducted extended interviews with more than 250 students of diverse ethnicities and achievement levels to learn about their motivation and engagement in reading. Drawing from this research and that of others, we have found five crucial practices that motivate adolescents to read informational texts (Guthrie, 2011).

Develop Dedication

Research suggests that students gain most of their knowledge of world history, basic science, economics, literature across cultures, and so on through extended reading. Such extended reading requires dedication—time, effort, and persistence. In fact, some studies have found that this kind of self-discipline is more important than IQ in predicting high school grades (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007).

Textbooks alone rarely motivate students to develop dedication. To foster student dedication, effective teachers use a variety of texts. They go beyond the textbook, incorporating the Internet, relevant trade books, and articles from science or history journals. Instead of offering a curriculum that is a mile wide and an inch deep, they provide in-depth units of study in which students have a chance to read extensively and deeply about topics.

One leading 8th grade science textbook covers *symbiosis*—which

includes the complex concepts of *mutualism, commensalism, parasitism*, and other forms of plant-animal relationships—in just one page. Contrast this approach with a 7th grade instructional unit developed by our Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) project at the University of Maryland (www.corilearning.com). This unit spends one week on the concept of *mutualism* alone and integrates many trade books, videos, and Internet sites, as well as *Scientific American* articles, on this topic.

Reading multiple and extended texts helps students develop higher-order reasoning as they integrate information within and across texts to develop a coherent understanding of the topic at hand. Students commonly notice apparent inconsistencies across texts that prompt them to ask complex questions about the topic. Coming out of their own curiosity, these questions motivate them to do more reading. As students integrate the big ideas by connecting information from different texts, they learn to think in the discipline.

Build Self-Efficacy

To develop dedication, students must believe that they can comprehend informational text. But we've found that nearly one-half of middle school students find science and history textbooks intimidating (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Klauda, 2012).

When students struggle with reading the textbook, teachers sometimes sideline the book and teach the content directly. Avoiding the textbook, however, is a mistake. Students need repeated experiences of successfully learning from their textbooks and other informational texts to build their overall self-efficacy as readers and learners. When students gain expertise in a topic by engaging with informational text, they develop a belief in themselves as readers.

A crucial step in motivating students to read content textbooks is to match the text to students' levels. When the available textbook is too difficult for individual students, effective teachers provide supplementary texts, such as trade books or online materials. For struggling readers, teachers must ease into difficult texts by providing more manageable texts and ensuring initial success with them. Different media, such as videos, can also support students' understanding by supplying background knowledge that students can link to informational texts.

Just as important as text selection is task selection. To help students gain confidence in higher-order thinking with complex text, effective teachers gradually increase task complexity, moving from lower-level to higher-level tasks. They may begin with literal comprehension tasks in which students simply state the obvious meanings of key text elements, such as topic sentences or conclusions. Progressing to inferential reading, they ask students to connect headings to conclusions in the text. Stepping forward into integration tasks, teachers may require students to link knowledge from one section of a text to another section of a similar text—for example, to link a section from an online article to a section of a trade book. Finally, teachers may ask students to explain their text-based knowledge in their own words to peers, in spoken or written form. During all of these activities, teachers increase students' confidence by providing encouraging feedback.

Finally, effective teachers help students gain confidence by assisting them in setting and accomplishing their own reading goals. For example, teachers can help students set a goal for how many pages they will read in one class period. Students can then increase that goal daily. As students improve in setting and reaching goals, their sense of efficacy grows, which empowers them to expand the scope of their reading.

Show Students the Text's Value

When students believe text is important, they read it. Unfortunately, this belief is rare. In our interview study, 45 percent of 7th grade students reported that reading informational text was "a waste of time" (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Klauda, 2012). This devaluing was most common among higher achievers, who enjoyed their literary reading but found informational text

dull and unrelated to their lives.

Too often, students believe they can learn what they need to know by simply listening in class and following procedures without referring to the textbook. A first step for teachers in increasing the perceived value of reading is to help students understand how reading the text benefits them across a range of situations.

For example, in one study, teachers asked students to write a paragraph about how the material they were learning in a section of their mathematics or psychology textbook was relevant in their personal lives. After students completed this task for five different textbook sections, their belief in the value of the book increased. They saw the relevance of the text, and their achievement in the course also increased (Hulleman, Godes, Hendriks, & Harackiewicz, 2010).

Effective teachers give students opportunities to apply the informational text they read to concrete classroom tasks—for example, they may ask students to read a two-page section of a textbook and then use the information they obtain to draw a diagram or to explain the topic to a classmate. Or students may read several texts to prepare for a team debate and then reflect on how the information they learned through their reading gave them the expertise they needed to perform well.

Use Social Motivation

Every middle school teacher is aware of the power of social dynamics for students in this age group. Yet teachers rarely tap into these social processes to strengthen informational text reading. Social motivation can inspire dedication to text reading if students want to impress their peers and not let them down by failing to fulfill their role in the group.

Effective middle school teachers set up frequent opportunities for collaboration to support students' social motivation for reading informational text. Social interaction around text has to be well managed to ensure that students listen to one another, but it is neither complex nor impossible. A wide range of interactive and collaborative arrangements can work in classrooms.

One simple way to support collaboration is to arrange desks in pairs and incorporate two-minute paired activities into each lesson. For example, students may read one page of text silently and then briefly share with their partner the most important point made on that page. In these interactions, students clarify their own thinking by expressing their views to someone else; they may also be spurred to reflect on the key information from the text in a new way when they hear their partners interpret it. Thus, in a brief read-and-share activity, students become active learners and deepen their text comprehension—and enjoy the social interaction.

Another successful approach is *collaborative reasoning*, in which a group of students discusses a story or an informational text (Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001). Students build on one another's thoughts to explain the major theme of the text by successively adding key elements as they take turns contributing to the synthesis. This activity can help students become more skillful in interpreting complex text.

Some form of collaboration is possible in any classroom with any text. To be productive, collaborative or cooperative student work should be accountable, interactive, and text-based. For example, teachers may ask students to collaborate in writing a summary, drawing a graphic representation of a text, or building an argument for a position they will explain to others.

In all such interactions, effective teachers provide appropriate degrees of structure depending on class size, as well as students' cognitive skill and comfort with social interaction. Some students will do best when given a simple, clear, concrete goal and a short time to complete the task. For example, the teacher may say, "Read this paragraph silently and then reach agreement within your group on the three most important words in the paragraph. Be prepared to defend your choices to the class. You have three minutes." More advanced student groups can handle multiple goals, looser interaction requirements, and more choices about how to express the knowledge they learned from the text.

When students struggle with reading the textbook, teachers sometimes sideline the book. Avoiding the textbook, however, is a mistake.

Give Students Choices

Middle school students need to feel in control of their world. Making simple choices is a rewarding form of control. Thus, teachers who give students choices in their informational reading help them develop an interest in reading.

We are not recommending that teachers let students choose whether to read a textbook or whether to complete assignments. Rather, we are suggesting that teachers provide more limited choices—which paragraph to emphasize in drawing conclusions, or which examples to read closely, for example. Students may be allowed to choose which portions to emphasize in a science chapter that includes more topics than the teacher can fully cover. Choice helps adolescents find materials relevant to them, which increases their delight in reading.

Options in learning can extend beyond the text. For example, teachers

can give students the choice of showing their understanding by either writing a paragraph or drawing a diagram. They can allow students to choose a partner to work with in a text-based project. They may give students 10 minutes to discuss a text with a partner anywhere in the classroom. Such options do not dilute the curriculum, undermine the teacher, or reduce the students' cognitive responsibilities. On the contrary, such choices during a lesson increase students' investment in performing well. Making a choice is its own reward, but it also enables students to make reading relevant to themselves.

Students Can Master Informational Text

As part of the Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) project at the University of Maryland, we have trained middle school teachers to use these five essential practices. We have found that when teachers implement the practices fully for at least four weeks, students increase their motivation to read informational texts as well as their achievement.

To succeed in secondary school, students must be able to tackle informational text—especially today, when the common core state standards have raised the bar for the difficulty of texts that students are expected to read. By providing engaging, supportive classroom instruction, effective teachers can help middle school students overcome their initial reluctance and master the art of learning from informational text. EL

References

Chinn, C. A., Anderson, R. C., & Waggoner, M. A. (2001). Patterns of discourse in two kinds of literature discussion. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36, 378–411.

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M., & Kelly, D. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 1087–1101.

Guthrie, J. T. (2011). Best practices in motivating students to read. In L. Morrow & L. Gambrell (Eds.), *Best practices in literacy instruction* (4th ed., pp. 177–198). New York: Guilford.

Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & Klauda, S. L. (2012). *Adolescents' engagement in academic literacy*. College Park, MD: corilearning.com.

Hulleman, C., Godes, O., Hendriks, B., & Harackiewicz, J. (2010). Enhancing interest and performance with a utility value intervention. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102, 880–895.

John T. Guthrie (jguthrie@umd.edu) is professor emeritus and **Susan Lutz Klauda** (susan3@umd.edu) is a postdoctoral research associate, Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology, University of Maryland, College Park.

CONTINUES

First published in 2001, *Classroom Instruction That Works* revolutionized teaching by linking classroom strategies to evidence of increased student learning. Now this landmark guide has been reenergized and reorganized for today's classroom with new evidence-based insights and a refined framework that strengthens instructional planning.

Included in this new edition is a completely rethought **Instructional Planning Guide** that makes it easier for you to know when to emphasize each of the instructional strategies.

Get an authors' video, sample chapters, and more online! Use the QR reader on your smartphone or tablet to go to a webpage with special features about *Classroom Instruction That Works, 2nd Edition.*

Order online at shop.ascd.org.
Or call 800-933-ASCD (2723), then press 1.

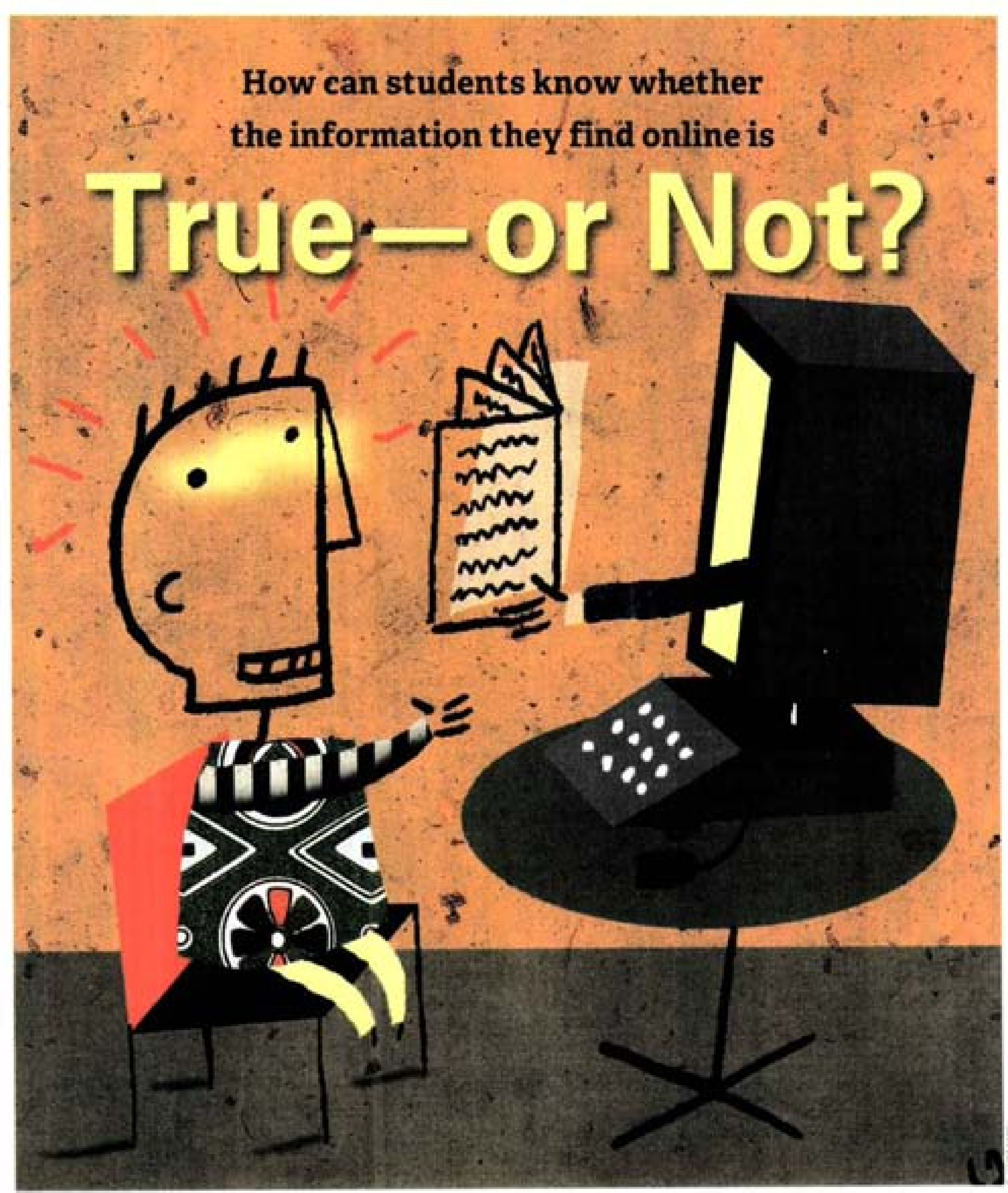
Get pumped up about your RTI screening.

Ensuring that every student's performance is improving is not always fun or easy. AIMSweb changes that. This industry-leading, web-based system gives you the tools you need to benchmark all students, set goals to help close the gap and monitor progress every step of the way.

See what's new! Like us on facebook for exclusive content and check out the updated AIMSweb.com.

ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON



How can students know whether the information they find online is

True—or Not?

Debbie Abilock

We choose everything—from toothpaste to health care, from education research to instructional strategies—by evaluating information. How do I gauge the effectiveness of our one-to-one laptop program? Which presidential candidate will get us out of this economic slide? Is watching SpongeBob SquarePants bad for my child?

We also make daily decisions about whom to trust with our information. Does this company sell my information to third-party advertisers? Should I share my concerns about a colleague with an administrator? When I'm out of town, should I alert the post office to hold my mail or just ask my neighbor to retrieve it from my mailbox?

The staggering volume and speed with which information is presented and the sophisticated ways in which facts and figures are represented make

it practically impossible for an average adult to single-handedly judge accuracy and credibility without guidance. Why are we surprised to learn that bogus communications purporting to be from banks or credit card companies dupe smart adults into supplying personal or account information to scammers? Or to find that a high school senior's essay cites a 5th grader's slick-looking web page on the Greek gods? Or to learn that teens are making important life decisions on the basis of seemingly reputable health websites that contain inaccurate reproductive health information (Tolani & Yen, 2010)?

In this participatory digital world, we're all novices at some point when judging whom to trust. Appearance, credentials, and other indicators of quality that used to serve as shorthand tests of credibility don't readily transfer online. Our students may acknowledge that Wikipedia is unreliable, but they use it anyway—and so do we.

Smarter "Satisficing"

Many educators erroneously claim that students lack the capacity to evaluate information. On the contrary, even when they're geeking around, students wonder why some peers are seen as experts (Why are they listening to him?) and question how decisions about trust are made (Why does her argument appeal to me?). Indeed, youth are *less* trusting than their elders of sites that host their information. Young adults (ages 18–29) are more likely than older adults (ages 50–64) to customize their privacy settings to limit what others see, remove their name from tagged photographs, and delete comments that others have made on their profiles (Madden & Smith, 2010).

Skepticism requires effort. Realistically, we have neither the time nor the patience to analyze every source or fact thoroughly. We rely on rules of thumb—routines that have worked in the past—to arrive at quick trust judgments. As an education consultant, I have watched teachers parade out an information evaluation lesson as part of the discussion around the obligatory high school research essay. However, one lesson a year on the topic won't transfer to lifelong learning.

Embedded in every subject are natural tasks—locate a news article, select a photograph, read a map or graph—that lend themselves to evaluation using rules of thumb that work online. Just as we learn to get good-enough answers to our own quick reference questions—How do I get to that restaurant? Which cereal is cheaper?—students can learn to marshal effective rules of thumb to find answers that "satisfice" (both satisfy *and* suffice). These rules of thumb will prepare students to more deeply evaluate claims and arguments.

In this participatory digital world, we're all novices at some point when judging whom to trust.

How We Evaluate Data

We define credibility variously as truthfulness, trustworthiness, expertise, objectivity, relevance, reliability, or even believability (Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008); and these criteria interact as a series of judgment calls. For example, during the period of corporate scandals and bank failures, we learned that auditors, lawmakers, and regulators were experts, but their credentials weren't necessarily a good rule of thumb for truthfulness or reliability. Or, when investigating incidents of bullying, an assistant principal may well take the victim's story as truthful, but certainly not as objective.

We should recognize that our gut may judge something authoritative because it confirms our beliefs or values. Or that we may find a report by the American Medical Association objective merely because we associate science with a lack of bias.

Cultural background also colors our evaluation decisions. During research for a debate on the U.S. military presence overseas, Yi-Min, a second-generation Chinese American student, confidently uses a government report, whereas Lupe, who is worried about the possible deportation of a family member, might discount a government report as suspect.

Technology has a role to play, too. Both Yi-Min and Lupe may accept Google's search engine at face value because they usually find answers to their questions on the first page of results. Just asking those two students to try a second search engine, like Bing, or an answer engine, like Wolfram Alpha, may induce them to question what they find because people tend to be more critical of results from a less familiar engine.

What About Wikipedia?

We tend to treat print as a determinant of information quality; we trust books, journals, mainstream news, and, by extension, e-books, e-journals, and subscription databases over blogs, tweets, and ephemeral digital information. Although we've read about manufactured and plagiarized information by a variety of people writing for well-known publications, such as *New York Times* reporter Jayson Blair, we still expect this medium to deliver accurate information

because we know that magazine and newspaper editors typically require writers and reporters to corroborate their sources.

You might be surprised to learn that Wikipedia, vilified by many educators, concurs with these criteria for information quality. According to its guidelines, articles written for Wikipedia should cite "reliable, third-party published sources . . . credible published materials with a reliable publication process [and] authors [who] are generally regarded as trustworthy or authoritative" (Wikimedia Foundation, 2010). (For suggestions on how to assess credibility in Wikipedia, see "Weighing Truth in Wikipedia," p. 74.)

Rules of Thumb for Online Reading

In our dizzying world of click-and-go wikified information, everyone uses fast and frugal skimming strategies to evaluate information daily. Our challenge is to teach students to devise accurate rules that take advantage of new technology to quickly judge the quality of the information they want to use.

Here are some quick and dirty rules of thumb—digital reading strategies, in fact—that will intrigue students, spark their curiosity, and serve as sensible entry points to more sophisticated analyses of ideas.

Judging Importance: Who's Weighing In?

Articles submitted to journals are often peer reviewed; reviewers scrutinize methodology and claims for accuracy, evaluate the writer's expertise, and may return the manuscript for further revision before publication. However, most information on the web is published without such vetting, under the assumption that it will be evaluated and judged by many eyes afterwards.

On the web, voting mechanisms allow readers to weigh in on the value of a source. Aggregated mouse clicks and tags vote, in effect, on an individual's reputation or the importance of the information. James Surowiecki, a business columnist for the *New York Times*, calls this process "the wisdom of crowds." He argues that when a large number of people with diverse perspectives from different geographical locations evaluate information, their "votes" identify important individuals and ideas—but only if these voters don't know one another and can't influence one another's opinions. Many websites, from Amazon to Zillow, include recommender systems by which people can star or vote for everything from authors to real estate.

In science, because the traditional peer-review process often delays publication up to a year, scholars are seeking ways to publish important scientific discoveries more quickly. One such online experiment in open-access journal publishing, the Public Library of Science (www.plos.org), invites submissions of scientific papers *before* peer review. For every article, the site shows social metrics, such as the number of people who view, download, bookmark, or cite the article, as well as comments, notes, blog posts, and stars (readers can award one to five stars). Students could quickly judge the importance of an article on, say, chronic fatigue syndrome by noting the number of citations and links to the article, its online usage, and the accrued ratings by named scientists or researchers who have expertise in the topic.

By analogy, Google's page ranking algorithm is built on a similar premise—that clicks and links to a source are votes of confidence in its relevance and importance. In practice, although we tend to accept the top results of a Google search as both relevant *and* credible, clicks and links do not guarantee these qualities. A search for information on Martin Luther King Jr., for example, always brings up Stormfront's hate site on the first page of results because many schools link to it to show students how to evaluate biased information. Rules of thumb are shortcut evaluation measures, and they only work in certain situations; it's healthy to become skeptical when gut feelings or deeper scrutiny raise questions about a source.

Judging Trustworthiness: Who's Setting the Record Straight?

Unlike articles in print journals, which can take months or years to be vetted and published, content can be posted instantly online, albeit by an unnamed author whose assertion of authority could rest more on persuasive rhetoric than on credentials. Noticing how authors and publications handle errors is a quick way to check on their trustworthiness.

When Hwang Woo-suk's scientific claims of major breakthroughs in stem cell research were discredited, *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of

Science, reestablished credibility by announcing in their blog that they were retracting his papers. They provided full documentation of the issues, with direct links to their evaluating committee's report, their publication's response, and an accompanying editorial on their website.

Error correction behavior is a rule of thumb for truthfulness. Although wikis archive all editorial revisions, blogs and other digital publications can make changes invisibly, deleting or editing content without comment. The blogger or author who publicly acknowledges mistakes is more trustworthy than one who deletes errors without a trace.

We rely on "rules of thumb"—routines that have worked in the past—to arrive at quick trust judgments.

Judging Accuracy: What Do Other Sources Say?

Significant problems accompany the competitive, round-the-clock scramble for new content. The basic facts of a disaster—the number of survivors of a mine explosion or the number of gallons from an oil spill—may be wildly inaccurate in early reports, but then be corrected later on. Therefore, simply comparing the dates and times of related news stories can serve as a rough rule of thumb for accuracy. Unfortunately, the deluge of retweets of initially compelling but inaccurate information may bury later retractions.

In July 2007, just before the International Medieval Congress, historian Marco Mostert, one of the event's organizers, was widely reported to have claimed that "underwear created literacy." Responding to a series of questions about the development of literacy in the Middle Ages, he had written,

> The 13th century saw a growth in the number of towns all over Europe, a commercial revolution, and an unprecedented growth in the number of schools, especially in towns, which suggests literacy rates grew apace. . . . The development of literacy was certainly helped by the introduction of paper, which was made of rags. . . . In the 13th century, so it is thought, the use of underwear increased. This caused an increase in the amount of rags available for paper-making. So even the wearing of underclothes, it could be argued, was a factor in the development of medieval literacy!

Within hours, *part* of his response appeared in more than 12,000 blogs and news reports—and you can guess which part. After reading his comments in a *Guardian* news article and elsewhere, I e-mailed the author directly—a rule of thumb for corroboration that we should use more often than we do. He replied that his words had been taken out of context, distorted by the omission of his final qualifying sentence: "*But seriously*, there was a definite link between the development of urban centers and the development of literacy." Troubled by how his remark might blemish his scholarly work, he planned to write an article on the topic with proper documentation. But he never did. The written record remains uncontested: Underwear created literacy.

An effective rule of thumb is to find three *different* viewpoints about the original content, rather than three reiterations of the same content. Effective triangulation might mean contacting the primary source of the information, tracing down an original report rather than using a summary with an extracted quote, or consulting different types of sources (for example, a government entity, corporation, foundation, nonprofit organization, journalist, or eyewitness) to check the facts or ideas expressed.

Judging Infographics: Who's Behind the Chart?

Powerful computers with virtually unlimited storage capacity provide us with the ability to access and analyze vast quantities of data. Visual displays of information in graphs, charts, maps, tables, and infographics can help consumers make choices among products and help citizens discern trends or analyze complex issues.

Any thoughtful analysis of aggregated data from multiple sources must be grounded in an assessment of each of the sources that feeds into the visualization, a process that is neither quick nor easy. However, an initial rule of thumb might be to determine the motivation and vested interests of the producer: Who created this visualization and why? For example, a politician wishing to convince voters to vote a particular way might use an infographic to persuade rather than to inform.

Once you determine the creator of the visual, you need to locate an *evaluation ally*. This might be a nonpartisan research organization that publishes reports or has developed tools to help journalists, citizens, and students analyze information in areas related to its mission. Take MapLight.org, for instance, which, according to its website, is funded by "organizations who favor greater transparency for our elected officials' actions." The organization has developed software that queries legislators' voting records as well as campaign contribution data to determine the influence that money might have on the voting patterns of elected officials. For example, one can ask for the data on a legislator's voting record on deepwater drilling and compare it with the size of contributions that the official has received from oil companies.

Taking It Schoolwide

The 21st century challenge for education and democracy is teaching us and our students to assess credibility in a systematic, sustained, and scalable

way. One school's approach has been to build a climate in which asking questions like, How do you know that? and Where is the evidence? has become a routine way of approaching information evaluation.

One school librarian has institutionalized credibility assessments by gaining the faculty's agreement that all students would add critical annotations to their bibliographies for any research conducted in any class. Below each reference, students must include a sentence or two that addresses each

An initial rule of thumb might be to determine motivation: Who created this visualization and why?

of four areas: author (What makes this author credible?); currency (How old is the source type, and has it been updated?); subject (How thorough is the coverage of the topic?); and balance (Is the coverage biased in any way?). Four years later, students have learned how to define what credible information is, identify attributes that signal credibility, and state the rules of thumb they've used to determine credibility.

Teachers know that students' reading comprehension is affected by their interest in the text and task. When students are serious about an assignment, they're likely to evaluate a source thoroughly and systematically. However, for their day-to-day reading, when such intentional evaluation may not be called for, these four rules of thumb provide enough guidance to get a "good enough" result quickly and jump-start more analytical digital reading strategies. ■

Author's note: For further reading on this topic, see www.citeulike.org/user/dabilock, where I store and share articles I've found insightful.

Weighing Truth in Wikipedia

How can students evaluate the accuracy of articles in Wikipedia, arguably the most important source of objective information on the web? Here are some rules of thumb:

- **Look for length.** Longer articles with more citations and more contributors are typically more accurate than shorter ones.
- **Look for text revisions.** When you click on the WikiTrust tab, the software calculates the extent of revision for an article. Text that is highlighted in orange is newly written, whereas white text has been extensively revised by authors who have a reputation among Wikipedia editors for contributions and edits that remain unchallenged. Therefore, that text is likely to be more accurate. Also, you can scan the archive of comments and revisions to see how neutral contributors' tone and language are.
- **Look for editorial ratings.** A small bronze star on the upper right-hand side of the article signals that Wikipedia editors consider this a polished article of high standard, whereas a small lock indicates that the article's content is controversial and is now protected from contentious revision after being edited for objectivity and neutrality.
- **Look at patterns of editing.** Another software overlay on Wikipedia articles displays each contributor's pattern of editing. For example, when we search the "*Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill" article through WikiDashboard (http://wikidashboard.appspot.com), we see a record of the contributions of a self-described fisherman named Michael Westbrook, who "loves the environment and wants to protect it." We can follow his edits during the Gulf of Mexico oil spill side-by-side with other editors' suggestions on how he could moderate his strident tone, source the facts he supplies, and remove speculation about BP's future stock value. When he fails to observe Wikipedia's editorial norms, they block him from editing. The record and reasoning for edits enable us to quickly judge the neutrality of individual contributors and the objectivity of the article at that point in time.

References

Hilligoss, B., & Rieh, S. Y. (2008). Developing a unifying framework of credibility assessment: Construct, heuristics, and interaction in context. *Information Processing and Management, 44*(4), 1467–1484.

Madden, M., & Smith, A. (2010). *Reputation management and social media: How people monitor and maintain their identity through search and social media.* Washington, DC: Pew Internet and American Life Project, Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Reputation-Management.aspx

Tolani, A., & Yen, S. (2010). *Many websites fail to dispel myths about IUDs, emergency contraception, birth control, and proper timing of pap smears.* Retrieved from Lucille Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford at www.lpch.org/pdf/clinical/adolescent-medicine/yenPosterWebsitesInfoTeens.pdf

Wikimedia Foundation. (2010). Wikipedia: Identifying reliable sources. Retrieved from Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/wikipedia:Reliable_sources

Copyright © 2012 Debbie Abilock

Debbie Abilock is cofounder of NoodleTools (www.noodletools.com) and coauthor, with Kristin Fontichiaro and Violet H. Harada, of the forthcoming book, *Growing Schools: Librarians as Professional Developers* (Libraries Unlimited, 2012); debbie@abilock.com.

Reading Remixed

Far from killing reading, digital technologies are helping young readers become more engaged in books than ever.

Joyce Kasman Valenza and Wendy Stephens

According to Nicholas Carr (2010), "For some people, the very idea of reading a book has come to seem old-fashioned . . . like sewing your own shirts or butchering your own meat" (p. 8). Experts like Carr decry what they perceive as a movement away from books. But as librarians and teachers, we notice a parallel movement in another direction. The reading experience, the relationship between author and reader, and the book itself are evolving. And these shifts mean that many young people are embracing books and reading as never before.

As far back as 1999, Eliza Dresang and Kate McClelland observed that books for young people were beginning to diverge from traditional expectations to appeal to a new generation of readers, incorporating interactivity and other digital elements:

> We do not believe this is a passing phase. We believe authors, illustrators, and those with whom they work will find more creative ways to promote interactivity, connectivity, and access in handheld books. We believe children will continue to expect these qualities in their books, just as they do in the digital resources they encounter. (p. 166)

In an October 2011 conversation, Dresang remarked on the accuracy of her earlier prediction, noting that "a decade and a half later, this perspective continues to ring true. . . . There is no end in sight." But these changes need not mean an end to reading and writing. In fact, as Henry Jenkins (2006) notes, "before students can engage with the new participatory culture, they must be able to read and write" (p. 21).

Thanks to online communities, readers like Jelli now have unprecedented access to their favorite authors.

Reimagining Books

Many young people are as attached to books as we were when we were children. Some, perhaps, are even more attached. They talk about books with enthusiasm. They sprawl on the floor, completely absorbed in their reading. But the experience of reading is no longer confined to traditional text on

a printed page or books on the library shelves.

Many of today's authors are experimenting with new forms designed to appeal to young readers who have grown up surrounded by multimedia content. Published more than a decade ago, Walter Dean Myers's novel *Monster* pulled young readers in with a combination of first-person narrative, news clippings, and transcripts of court proceedings. Graphic novels, a newly respected form, occupy a remarkable share of shelf space in bookstores and libraries as well as their own sections in review journals. Brian Selznick defied genre with *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, a 550-page Caldecott Medal–winning hybrid picture book. His recently published *Wonderstruck* weaves together two stories—one in text, the other in images.

Authors of otherwise traditional novels often use instant message transcripts, e-mail exchanges, and Facebook-style status updates to introduce chapters and characters. Sonja Sones and a host of other young adult writers employ prose poetry and short chapters familiar to students who are used to reading pithy status updates and texts. Sixteen-year-old Kathryn explains the appeal of this style:

> My favorite author is Ellen Hopkins. Hopkins's books are different. She writes verse, and the sections have different voices. I can get to know characters because I can hear their voices. The themes are about troubled teens—about suicide, anorexia. I also like to read Jodi Picoult. She also writes books with different voices—you can hear the characters talking.

The growth in popularity of e-books has expanded our definition of what constitutes a book. The iconic Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org), a collection of more than 36,000 public-domain e-books, inspired a growing movement of e-book portals. Available free on the web and as an iPad app, the

Students Lana and Lauren are enthusiastic about reading.

International Children's Digital Library (www.childrenslibrary.org) presents more than 4,000 children's books from 64 countries in 54 languages. Commercial services like Tumblebooks (www.tumblebooks.com) and Scholastic's BookFlix (http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/bookflixfreetrial) offer schools and libraries substantial online collections of animated, narrated, and readalong titles. Students can also search Google Books (http://books.google.com) and read sample chapters or the full text of an almost infinite number of books.

The earliest e-books replicated text in its most bare-bones incarnations, but increasingly, digital versions accomplish what print could not. The enhanced Penguin iPad edition of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and the Touch Press version of T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" incorporate multimedia files. The digital novel *Inanimate Alice* (http://inanimatealice.com) includes text, sound, images, music, games, and an imaginary digital buddy.

Patrick Carman's multiplatform 3:15 series (http://315stories.com) directs readers to listen to audio content, read a short story across a few dozen mobile screens, then view a culminating video. Neither the video nor audio versions replicate the text; cross-format consumption is necessary for full comprehension, as no element stands alone. *The Amanda Project* (www.theamandaproject.com) is a story told through both an interactive website and a book series. Readers become part of the story as they help search for missing high school student Amanda Valentino.

Publishers are reaching beyond the limits of print with quick response (QR) codes that link to online resources. When included in a physical book, QR codes can lead the reader to mobile-friendly background information; media about or created by the author; updated content; playlists of music that enhance the reading experience; or related maps, photos, or video. Today's younger readers, growing accustomed to increased interactivity built into applications for picture books like *Pat the Bunny* and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* and chapter books like the 39 Clues series, will only expect more cross-platform content.

Yet for many teen readers, a physical book is a talisman. Some teens will buy a favorite title in multiple formats so they always have access to it. For 17-year-old Lana, her e-reading device is nice but not a perfect substitute for the *real* books she prefers to hold:

> I love my Nook. It's so convenient. And e-books are so much cheaper. On the

Nook, a really expensive book would be only $10. It's very convenient for trips because I don't feel like bringing 50,000 books with me. But it's not exactly the same.

Creating Buzz

Massive amounts of buzz now precede publication of many young adult (YA) titles. John Green recently fed anticipation for *The Fault in Our Stars* by reading the first chapter on his blog. Last year, Suzanne Collins did the same for *Mockingjay*, the final title in the Hunger Games trilogy. Teens stay on top of trends in young adult literature at sites like YAContemps (www.thecontemps.com) and readergirlz (www.readergirlz.com). For teachers and librarians, edgy blogs like Reading Rants! (www.readingrants.org) and Guys Lit Wire (http://guyslitwire.blogspot.com) can aid in selecting the most anticipated new books. Promotional events like Twitter's Book Birthday Parties (www.twitterbookparties.com) increase readers' awareness of new content.

Buzz from fans is tremendous in the world of series fiction. The release of covers and titles for the next volume are greeted with the bated breath formerly reserved for Hollywood blockbusters. In response to this increasing awareness of forthcoming titles, many teens won't try the first book in a series if the next installments aren't yet on shelves, and publishers are compressing the time lines for publication to get subsequent volumes to readers more quickly. Suspicious of the commercial motives behind stretching what could have been a single, fully realized novel across multiple volumes, some teens eschew series entirely.

Teens' online conversations about upcoming titles sometimes reveal that publishers' plans are going wrong. In one incident, the cover design of Justine Larbalestier's novel *Liar*, which featured a racially ambiguous model who did not match the author's characterization of the protagonist, became fodder for controversy. In response, the publisher changed the cover to feature a black model (Larbalestier, 2009). Outrage about Simon and Schuster's plan to end Rick Yancey's award-winning Monstrumologist series led the publisher to continue the series beyond the third book (Boog, 2011).

Authors Beyond the Book Jacket

From Twitter, to Facebook, to online fan communities for specific books and authors, young readers have unprecedented access to authors. An author's online presence creates a dialogue with readers. Authors solicit suggestions for character names, verify plot points, and seek informed advice on contemporary teen life. The information available through online interviews, book trailers, contests, forums, and associated content transcends the author persona once contained in a photo on a book jacket.

Authors develop their own mechanisms for creating buzz and connecting with their readers. Using social media and other online utilities, many suggest their own books as read-alikes when a teen enthuses over a similar title. John Green enlists his readers in producing films to promote charities with the Project for Awesome (www.projectforawesome.com). On Twitter, author Maureen Johnson coordinated contributions for ShelterBox housing for disaster relief. The Speak Loudly campaign mobilized authors and readers against censorship after Laurie Halse Anderson's young adult novel *Speak* was in danger of being censored because its story involved date rape (Anderson, 2010).

The Skype-an-Author network (http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com), initiated by Mona Kirby and Sarah Chauncey, is an invaluable directory of writers willing to arrange virtual visits with classrooms. Skype allowed Wendy Stephens's rural high school in Alabama to bring in authors without the cost of physical travel. Margaret Lazarus Dean's visit put the author in touch with the children of NASA technicians, a demographic she had written about but not met. Melissa Walker's visit resulted in a friendship between one particular student and the author, with the teen eventually guest blogging on websites Walker helps manage.

Social Reading

Online communities like LibraryThing (www.librarything.com), Goodreads (www.goodreads.com), and Shelfari

---

Explore the Online World of Young Adult Literature

These sites represent only a small sampling of online resources and communities. For a more complete list, see the online version of this article at www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/Reading-Remixed.aspx#resources

The Future of Publishing Video by DK Books
www.dk.co.uk/static/cs/uk/11/about/future.html

Fanfiction Net
www.fanfiction.net

Guys' Lit Wire
http://guyslitwire.blogspot.com

James Kennedy's 90-Second Newbery
http://jameskennedy.com/90-second-newbery

John and Hank Green's Nerdfighters
http://nerdfighters.ning.com

Readergirlz
www.readergirlz.com

Reading Rants!
www.readingrants.org

Skype-an-Author Network
http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com

Teresa Schauer's Book Trailers for All
http://booktrailersforall.com

(www.shelfari.com) offer readers a place to share what books they're reading and want to read, network with others with similar reading interests, and discover new content. Some online communities center on specific books and authors. Members of John Green's Nerdfighters (http://nerdfighters.ning.com) and J. K. Rowling's Pottermore (www.pottermore.com) join with other readers to discuss and build on the fictional characters and worlds.

Many students independently seek to extend their reading experience by creating their own content. A growing number of teens either read or write fan fiction, expanding their favorite stories and characters, filling in gaps, suggesting new plots, and creating alternate endings, often with the aid of a beta reader who reads early drafts and offers suggestions.

Book trailers, multimedia teasers used to advertise new titles, are as likely to be created by young people as they are by publishers. Teresa Schauer's Book Trailers for All website (http://booktrailersforall.com) includes works by students as well as librarians and teachers. Increasingly, such products are replacing traditional book reports in English classrooms.

Teacher librarians are exploring the elimination of walls between book clubs. The Springfield Township High School Library Club recently began to use Skype and Google Plus Hangouts to connect and read with clubs around the United States in what we call the Somewhat Virtual Book Club. The most recent meeting included five schools, as well as a student studying abroad in Austria. The clubs now use their Twitter hashtag (#swvbc) for discussions between meetings.

New Ways of Reading

In an October 2011 conversation we had with author James Kennedy, he summarized what we've observed among young readers today:

> The new reader is vocal and social. Not simply content to merely love a book, the readers want to actively celebrate what they read. So, if they find a title they love, they'll not only recommend it to a friend, they'll also discuss it online via a social networking site. They'll likely also create fan art or write fan fiction. They'll dress up as a beloved character [a practice commonly referred to as *cosplay*, for costume play]. Stories can grow beyond the page and transform because of new reciprocal relationships between authors and reader. Fans can approach the role of collaborator—to co-create in the author's fictional world. Though reading continues as a personal and idiosyncratic experience, social networking promotes fan communities.

We have no metric for determining the precise size of this movement, although we do know that John Green, as one example, has more than a million followers on Twitter. We also know that somewhere—beyond *The Great Gatsby* and *Hamlet* and *Lord of the Flies*—young people read. They connect and interact with authors and books in new ways.

We can celebrate traditional reading and readers. We can embrace new and emerging reading formats. Battle lines are unnecessary. As 16-year-old Jelli, short for Angelica, attests, reading still matters to many teens:

> Reading is a large part of what ties my peers together. It's an everyday part of our lives. Books provide us not only with an escape, but also with something to talk about when we're together. We recommend books to each other constantly, and one of us can be found in the library at any given hour of the day. Even outside my circle of friends, a love of reading pervades my school. Lots of people think that between Facebook and Twitter, and the constant reading we have to do for school, it is easy to believe that teenagers might not want to read. However, I am constantly surprised in class to find out that I'm reading the same book as someone else who I thought would never read for pleasure at all. Teenagers still love to read, and social media has only enhanced that. ■

Online Bonus

A Young Reader Speaks

Want to hear more about online reading communities? The online version of this article includes comments from 16-year-old Lauren about connecting with authors and other readers, e-readers, fanfiction, and social action sparked by reading. You can find her remarks at www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/Reading-Remixed.aspx#youngreader.

References

Anderson, L. H. (2010, September 22). The power of speaking loudly. Retrieved from Laurie Halse Anderson's blog at http://madwomanintheforest.com/the-power-of-speaking-loudly

Boog, J. (2011, August 22). Mostrumologist series to return after fans complain [blog post]. Retrieved from *Galleycat* at www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/monstrumologist-series-dropped-by-simon-schuster_b36480

Carr, N. (2010). *The shallows: What the Internet is doing to our brains*. New York: Norton.

Dresang, E. T., & McClelland, K. (1999). Radical change: Digital age literature and learning. *Theory into Practice: Expanding the Worlds of Children's Literature, 38*(3), 160–167.

Dresang, E. T. (2008). Radical change revisited: Dynamic digital age books for youth. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 8*(3), 294–304.

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media elements for the 21st century*. Chicago: MacArthur Foundation.

Larbalestier, J. (2009, July 23). Ain't that a shame (updated) [blog post]. Retrieved from Justine Larbalestier's blog at http://justinelarbalestier.com/blog/2009/07/23/aint-that-a-shame/

Copyright © 2012 Joyce Kasman Valenza and Wendy Stephens

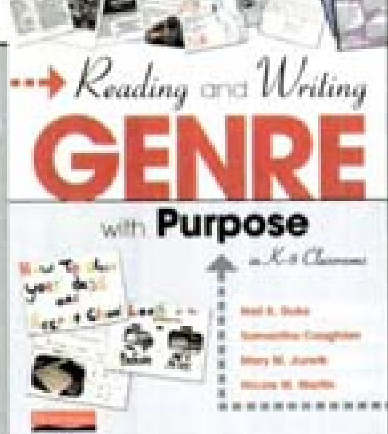
Joyce Kasman Valenza is the teacher-librarian at Springfield Township High School in Erdenheim, Pennsylvania; joycevalenza@gmail.com. **Wendy Stephens** is a school librarian at Buckhorn High School in New Market, Alabama; wendysteadmanstephens@gmail.com.

Reinvigorate

READING, WRITING, SPEAKING & LISTENING INSTRUCTION

in K–8 Classrooms

Genre is a key element of the CCSS



"*Reading and Writing Genre with Purpose in K–8 Classrooms adds a new dimension to genre studies that will engage students and re-invigorate teaching.*"

—**Sharon Taberski**, author of Comprehension from the Ground Up

"*Make room on your professional bookshelf for a much needed book!*"

—**Laura Robb**, author of Teaching Middle School Writers

Look in this issue for researchers Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, and Martin's "Teaching Genre with Purpose."

K-8 / 978-0-325-03734-9 / 2011 / 208pp / $23.00

Heinemann

Dedicated to Teachers

CALL **800.225.5800** • VISIT **Heinemann.com** • FAX **877.231.6980**

When it comes to education, you have your pick.

National top 10 producer of professional educators* - a wise choice.

Aspirations in Educational Leadership? Doctorate, masters, and specialist
Passionate about Teaching? Early Education or K-12
Eager for more? Elementary Education BA or Professional Teacher Certificate

At WMU Take Your Pick

With locations in Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Muskegon, Southwest (Benton Harbor/St. Joseph) and online – where ever you are, we'll meet you there.

Visit **www.wmich.edu/offcampus/educator** for more information.

Western Michigan University

Regional Locations and Online Education

Choose wisely. Choose Western.

*As ranked by The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Research Says

Address Reading Problems Early

The good news is that with early detection and intervention, we can get students back on track.

Student reading difficulties can be like many forms of cancer: relatively easy to treat if detected early, but more and more difficult to remedy if allowed to persist. By the late elementary grades, what started as minor reading deficiencies often metastasize to all areas of student learning. At that point, it's an overwhelming challenge to get students back on track, even with strong interventions.

The good news is that studies over the last few decades offer important insights into the early diagnosis and treatment of reading problems.

Where Do Reading Difficulties Begin?

Students must develop many different competencies when learning to read—from understanding print conventions (for example, that pages turn right to left); to becoming aware that speech consists of different sounds; to understanding that letters symbolize the sounds of speech. Students must also develop large enough working vocabularies to, among other things, become proficient at discerning phonemes—for example, hearing the difference between *elevator* and *alligator* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Sadly, many students enter kindergarten already behind in these crucial precursors to reading. Researchers have documented large gaps, for example, between incoming kindergartners' ability to recognize letters or identify beginning sounds of words, as well as gaps in the number of words they have encountered verbally and in print, resulting in stark differences in vocabulary development (Neuman, 2009). These factors slow some students' reading progress.

A Downward Spiral

Education researchers have long observed what they call a *Matthew effect*—drawn from the passage in the Gospel of Matthew that refers to the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. In reading, students who enter school rich in alphabetic and phonemic awareness progress more quickly through the laborious stages of early reading toward *automaticity*, when reading becomes enjoyable. As a result, they begin reading more, learning more concepts and vocabulary, and becoming better (richer) readers (Stanovich, 1986). Conversely, poor readers tend to read less and thus become, in relative terms, ever poorer.

Over the course of their academic careers, students must learn tens of thousands of words—too many to be taught directly. Through repeated exposure to these words in reading materials, students learn the vocabulary and general knowledge they need to succeed in school (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001). As a result, differences in independent reading volume drive the Matthew effect.

For example, a student in the 90th percentile of reading volume (who reads 21.1 minutes per day) encounters 1.8 million words a year, whereas a student in the 10th percentile (who reads less than one minute per day) sees only 8,000 words a year. Put another way, the first student sees more words in two days than the second reads all year (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001). It's no wonder that students with limited practice in reading (and thus, limited vocabularies and general knowledge) often struggle when they are expected to progress from reading relatively easy passages to increasingly difficult texts that require larger

Bryan Goodwin is vice president of communications, McREL, Denver, Colorado; goodwin@mcrel.org. He is the author of *Simply Better: What Matters Most to Change the Odds for Student Success* (ASCD, 2011).

vocabularies, greater fluency, and more prior knowledge.

On top of this, struggling readers may begin to internalize their lack of reading ability and develop *learned helplessness* (Stanovich, 1986). They may become unmotivated as learners and fall into what Torgesen (2004) has called a "devastating downward spiral."

This combination of factors helps explain the disappointing results of reading programs aimed at the upper elementary grades and beyond. A consistent body of research (Shaywitz et al., 1999; Torgesen & Burgess, 1998) has found that very few students who are poor readers at the end of 1st grade catch up by the end of elementary school. Even the best interventions are only able to help older students acquire reading basics (such as decoding phonemes and comprehending individual words), but not to bring their reading fluency or comprehension up to grade level (Torgesen, 2004).

For example, in one study of 60 3rd to 5th grade students with severe reading deficits, researchers found that an intensive, eight-week intervention brought students' phonemic decoding skills from the 2nd to the 39th percentile, yet their fluency skills only inched up from the 3rd to the 5th percentile and then slid back to the 4th percentile two years later. (Although the intervention students did increase their fluency, higher-achieving students made even more gains.) (Torgesen et al., 2001).

Early Detection and Intervention

The good news is that with early detection and intervention, we *can* get students back on track. A meta-analysis of 20 studies, for example, revealed two key predictors of kindergartners' future reading difficulties: their ability to identify letters and their knowledge of associated letter sounds (Scarborough, 1989). Subsequently, a meta-analysis of 52 studies found strong evidence that explicit instruction in phonemic awareness can improve students' later reading abilities (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Although phonemic awareness instruction alone does not make a complete reading program, research makes a strong case for testing all students' knowledge of letters and phonemes midway through kindergarten; identifying those students who fall below a certain point (say, the 30th percentile); and targeting them for intense, small-group or one-on-one tutoring to bring their decoding abilities up to par (Torgesen, 1998).

Years ago, Hartsfield Elementary School, a high-poverty school in Tallahassee, Florida, adopted a battery of assessments to identify struggling readers early so they could receive targeted small-group instruction. Over a four-year period, the reading performance of the school's 2nd graders rose from the 58th to the 82nd percentile, and the proportion of students below the 25th percentile dropped from 14.5 to 2.4 percent (King & Torgesen, 2006).

Research makes a strong case for identifying lagging students early.

Research and the experience of schools like Hartsfield suggest that when it comes to reading problems, we currently have the information we need for early diagnosis and treatment. We have at our fingertips not only the telltale early markers of students who are falling behind in reading, but also the interventions that can, with a reasonable level of effort, help nearly all students avoid the downward spiral of reading failure and instead experience the exciting journey toward reading success. ■

References

Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (2001). What reading does for the mind. *Journal of Direct Instruction, 1*(2), 137–149.

King, R., & Torgesen, J. K. (2006). Improving the effectiveness of reading instruction in one elementary school: A description of the process. In P. Blaunstein & R. Lyon (Eds.), *Why kids can't read: Challenging the status quo in education.* (pp. 151–174). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Neuman, S. (2009). *Changing the odds for children at risk: Seven essential principles of educational programs that break the cycle of poverty.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Scarborough, H. S. (1989). Prediction of reading disability from familial and individual differences. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*(1), 101–108.

Shaywitz, S. E., Fletcher, J. M., Holahan, J. M., Schneider, A. E., Marchione, K. E., Stuebing, K. K., Francis, D. J., et al. (1999). Persistence of dyslexia: The Connecticut longitudinal study at adolescence. *Pediatrics, 104*(6), 1351–1359.

Snow, C. E., Burns, S. M., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 21*(4), 360–406.

Torgesen, J. K. (1998). Catch them before they fall: Identification and assessment to prevent reading failure in young children. *American Educator, 22*(1&2) 32–39.

Torgesen, J. K. (2004). Avoiding the devastating downward spiral: The evidence that early intervention prevents reading failure. *American Educator, 28*(3), 6–19. Retrieved from www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/fall2004/torgesen.cfm

Torgesen, J. K., Alexander, A. W., Wagner, R. K., Rashotte, C. A., Voeller, K., Conway, T., & Rose, E. (2001). Intensive remedial instruction for children with severe reading disabilities: Immediate and long-term outcomes from two instructional approaches. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 34*(1), 33–58.

Torgesen, J. K., & Burgess, S. R. (1998). Consistency of reading-related phonological processes throughout early childhood: Evidence from longitudinal, correlational, and instructional studies. In J. Metsala & L. Ehri (Eds.), *Word recognition in beginning reading* (pp. 161–188). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Robert J. Marzano

Art & Science of Teaching

An Easier Way to Score Tests

Proficiency scoring is more precise and less time-consuming than the traditional method of assigning points to test items.

When teachers construct tests, they typically assign different points to different items, depending on the level of difficulty. For example, they might assign 1 point to easier items that require students to recall content, 5 points to more difficult items that require students to explain principles, and 10 points to complex items that ask students to apply knowledge.

The items worth 1 point are easy to score—they're either right or wrong—so they receive either 1 point or no points. But it gets more complicated with items worth 5 or 10 points. Although it's still easy to assign a score of 0 if an item is completely incorrect or 5 or 10 if an item is completely correct, how does a teacher differentiate among all the scores in the middle?

Teachers usually attempt to construct scoring schemes using an incremental approach. For example, for a 10-point item, a teacher might reason that a student got the majority of the content correct and assign a score of 7. However, after scoring a number of tests, the teacher might realize that he or she has begun assigning a score of 9 points for other students' responses to that same item even though the responses have about the same level of accuracy. The teacher would then deliberate as to whose score to change: Should the 9s be 7s or the 7s be 9s? This back-and-forth deliberation becomes even more complicated for items assigned more than 10 points.

Proficiency Scoring

These deliberations make scoring tests with multipoint items time-consuming, frustrating, and imprecise. Proficiency scoring is a much more efficient and accurate approach.

Establish Levels of Proficiency

Proficiency scoring begins by writing items (or selecting them from an item bank) that reflect three levels of proficiency: *Basic* refers to simple content that is foundational to understanding more complex elements, *proficient* refers to complex content that is the desired outcome of instruction, and *advanced* refers to tasks that require students to go beyond what was addressed in class.

Basic, proficient, and advanced content are usually articulated as learning goals. For example, consider the following three levels of learning goals for the topic of heredity:

- *Basic:* Students will be able to recognize or recall accurate statements about and isolated examples of heritable and nonheritable traits.
- *Proficient:* Students will be able to differentiate heritable traits from nonheritable traits in real-world scenarios.
- *Advanced:* Students will be able to explain how heritable and nonheritable traits affect one another.

When writing or selecting items, the teacher might use selected-response items for basic content, such as, "Circle the traits you can develop over time: shoe size, gender, knowledge of history, fear of snakes." For proficient content, the teacher might use short constructed-response items, such as, "Name three traits you like about yourself and explain whether each is heritable or nonheritable." For advanced content, the teacher might use constructed-response items that focus on students generating and defending claims, such as, "Identify one heritable trait you have and support your contention that it has had a more positive (or negative) effect on your life than a nonheritable trait has."

Robert J. Marzano is cofounder and CEO of Marzano Research Laboratory in Denver, Colorado. He is the author of ***The Art and Science of Teaching*** (ASCD, 2007) and coauthor, with Tony Frontier and David Livingston, of ***Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching*** (ASCD, 2011).

Code Each Response
Rather than assigning points, the teacher codes each response item to reflect one of four levels of accuracy: completely correct (CC); incorrect (I); high partial accuracy (HP); and low partial accuracy (LP).

This narrows the range of decisions a teacher has to make. Instead of determining whether to assign 8 or 9 points as opposed to 6 or 7 points for a student's response to a 10-point item, the teacher must determine where the student's response falls within a continuum of four categories only. In the case of a student being in that 6–7 or 8–9 range, the teacher would probably code the item as HP—high partial understanding.

Compute the Score
Computing a final score when using proficiency scoring is also quite different from the traditional approach. Instead of adding up the scores across all items on the test, the teacher examines the pattern of responses across the three levels of proficiency.

For example, if a student has consistently received CC (completely correct) or HP (high partial accuracy) scores on the basic items but has not received consistently high scores on the proficient and advanced items, the student has demonstrated the basic level of competence on the assessment. If a student has a strong pattern of accurate responses on both the basic items and proficient items, but not on the advanced items, the student has demonstrated the proficient level on the assessment, and so on.

A Possible Glitch
But what if students score CC and HP on the proficient and advanced items, but not on the basic ones? What final score should the teacher assign?

If the teacher has designed or selected the items so that understanding of basic items is necessary to correctly answer the proficient items and understanding of proficient items is necessary to answer advance items, then this shouldn't happen.

However, in the event that it does, the teacher might assign a tentative score of basic to the test as a whole but change that score to proficient when students demonstrate awareness of the mistakes they made on the basic items. The students might submit an explanation of the errors along with a more detailed explanation of the correct answer or discuss with the teacher why they missed the basic items. There are a number of ways that students can demonstrate competence for items initially missed, all of which require them to take some responsibility for raising their scores.[1]

A Better Way
Proficiency scoring is more precise and less time-consuming than the traditional method of assigning points to test items. In addition, it clarifies for students the type of content—basic, proficient, or advanced—that they must master to improve. ■

[1] Marzano, R. J. (2010). *Formative assessments and standards-based grading.* Englewood, CO: Marzano Research Laboratory.

Innovative Solutions for Diverse Needs

ERB offers admission and achievement assessments for students in Pre-K to Grade 12. All of our solutions are available online, giving ERB member schools around the globe fast, convenient access to a variety of resources:

- Writing Assessment Program (WrAP) and the online Writing Practice Program (WPP) for evaluating and strengthening skills
- Comprehensive Testing Program Online (CTP Online), a rigorous assessment of student achievement of essential standards and learning domains in English language arts and mathematics, plus science for select grades
- Children's Progress Assessments (CPAA), a computer-adaptive assessment of essential academic skills in English language arts and mathematics that's informative for teachers and fun for younger students
- Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE), an admission assessment that evaluates both reasoning and achievement for student applicants
- ERB Pathways, a resource for school and student support services for math and writing. Some are available **FREE with your ERB membership!**

Visit **www.erblearn.org** today and discover the benefits of being a member school!

Thomas R. Hoerr

Principal Connection

Got Grit?

Every child needs to encounter frustration and failure to learn to step back, reassess, and try again.

Should an educator ever cause a student to feel frustrated, or even to fail?

You may have raised your eyebrows or reread my first sentence just to be sure that you didn't misunderstand. After all, an affirmative answer to that question runs counter to so much of our training. Don't we always work to help our students succeed? Designing for student frustration and failure is unheard of. And that's unfortunate because the answer to my question is yes.

As important as scholastic preparation is (and it is important), it is only part of what students need to succeed in life. Howard Gardner's personal intelligences, Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence, and Carol Dweck's mindsets all reflect the fact that our attitudes are even more important than our skills.

We know and understand some of this, of course. We work to help our students have a positive attitude about school, be good citizens, and accept others. Every teacher values student effort and responsibility. Yet an overlooked quality—one that is crucial in achieving success in the real world—is grit.

My faculty has been talking about grit since fall, after we read a *New York Times* article by Paul Tough called "What If the Secret to Success Is Failure?"[1] Tough argues that success in the real world depends on far more than scholastic preparation. He argues—and my faculty agrees—that learning to respond to failure is essential to success.

Granted, we have students who struggle and whose school experiences are difficult. We create opportunities for success for those students and help them see that they can achieve. Every child needs to feel that learning is possible and probable.

For some of our students, however, learning comes easily. These are the children who are on the honor roll, play on athletic teams, participate in drama or debate, and hold offices in student government. These students come to school expecting to succeed because, well, that's what they do. We have a different obligation to these students. We need to be sure that they sometimes encounter frustration and failure.

Those are loaded terms. No one likes to be frustrated, and no one wants to fail. But every child needs to encounter frustration and failure to learn to step back, reassess, and try again—and again. It surely seems odd and perhaps heartless to create scenarios in which students are not successful, but how can they learn to overcome adversity if they haven't experienced it?

As educators, part of our job is to ensure that every child finds success, and an important part of finding success is knowing how to respond to failure. As soccer star Mia Hamm said, "Failure happens all the time. It happens every day in practice. What makes you better is how you react to it." People who have not learned to respond well to frustration and failure are likely to choose paths without much risk or challenge and thus destine themselves to a life of predictability, safety, and mediocrity.

Researcher Angela Duckworth, cited in Tough's article, showed what a predictor grit is for success in any setting, from elementary school to West Point Academy. She says that grit "entails working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress."[2] Indeed, within a group of equally

Thomas R. Hoerr is head of school at the New City School, 5209 Waterman Ave., St. Louis, MO 63108; trhoerr@newcityschool.org. He is the author of *The Art of School Leadership* (ASCD, 2005) and *School Leadership for the Future* (NAIS Press, 2008).

talented students, athletes, or artists, the level of grit may be the single best predictor for success. Hillary Clinton, Steve Jobs, Michael Jordan, and Maya Lin might not have had much in common to discuss over dinner, but they are each known for having an extraordinary amount of grit. (You can see Duckworth talking about grit in a TED presentation at www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaeFnxSfSC4.)

How and when to help students develop grit has been an exciting topic among my faculty. We begin by ensuring that every student confronts his or her limitations, often through rethinking how hard and where we challenge our students. For example, in addition to using multiple intelligences theory as a tool to help children learn through their strengths, we recognize that we can also require students to work in areas that are unfamiliar and less comfortable for them.

Parent education also plays an important role. We want parents to understand our rationale, and we need them to support us in our efforts to take their children out of their comfort zones.

Finally, if we want our students to develop grit, we need to do so, too. We need to take ourselves out of our own comfort zones and learn how to respond to frustration and failure. And just maybe we'll develop grit, too! ■

[1]Tough, P. (2011, September 14). What if the secret to success is failure? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/2011/09/18/magazine/what-if-the-secret-to-success-is-failure.html

[2]Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2004). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 1087–1101.

Empowering Educators with Meaningful Data

Get the information you need to inform instruction.

DATAWISE is more than an assessment and data management platform—it supports the teaching and learning cycle, providing you with actionable data.

Visit measuredprogress.org/datawise to learn more and request a free demonstration.

Visit Booth 1206 at the ASCD Annual Conference.

DATAWISE

measuredprogress.org | Toll Free: 877.678.3787

One to Grow On

Creating Flashlight Readers

Learning to read is a fundamental rite of passage—as powerful as learning to speak or walk.

Carol Ann Tomlinson is William Clay Parrish Jr. Professor and Chair of Educational Leadership, Foundation, and Policy at the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia in Charlottesville; cat3y@virginia.edu. She is the author, with Marcia B. Imbeau, of *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom* (ASCD, 2010).

In my third year of teaching, I realized that I was teaching some 7th graders who could not read the materials I handed them. The reality was that, even though language arts was my content area, I had no idea how to teach reading. To fill that gap, I went back to school to study reading. The coursework taught me theories, skills, and a sense of the complexity of the act of reading. It did not teach me how to help kids *want* to read.

Tapping Intrinsic Desire

Learning to read is a fundamental rite of passage—as powerful as learning to speak or walk. The child who learns to walk more or less on schedule is ready to explore and gain dominion over his or her surroundings. It says something compelling about the human drive to explore that children who have impediments to communicating or walking so often overcome those barriers. They invent language, learn sign language, move about in inventive ways, and become skilled in using prostheses. It's as though they are fueled by an energy of the spirit.

Perhaps the teacher's role is to tap into the intrinsic desire of struggling readers to read and connect with a broader world. That's not to say it isn't important to teach them to sound out words, use context clues, or understand the structure of texts. Rather it's to suggest that, at least for some students, those skills might emerge from, rather than precede, their interaction with captivating reading material.

Children's author Katherine Paterson suggests that teachers have erred in creating "stoplight readers." We tend to ask students to read a sentence and stop to define a word, read another sentence and stop to answer a question, read another sentence and ponder the punctuation. Reading becomes fragmented, losing meaning and power. Far better, Paterson suggests, is to create "flashlight readers"—kids who want to read under the covers at night because they can't wait to see what comes next. I think she's on to something.

Commending Reading

So what do we do to increase the population of flashlight readers? Consider the following ideas.

1. Know your students. In *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys*, Michael Smith and Jeffrey Wilhelm (2002) examined the lives of a group of male adolescents who couldn't or didn't read in school. When the authors asked the students what advice they'd give their teachers regarding reading in school, the number one response was that teachers needed to know and care about them in order to commend reading to them.

Similarly, author Gary Paulsen was a virtual nonreader during his miserable trek through school. No teacher knew him well enough to address his emptiness. A librarian in the public library where he often went to escape the cold noticed him, got to know him, and gave him books that seemed like a match. He recalls sitting alone at night in a tiny bedroom struggling to make sense of their words.

2. Find what's relevant to students and start there. Considered nonreaders in school, the boys Smith and Wilhelm (2002) studied all read outside school. They read books that helped them fix things, news stories that enabled them to discuss politics with their fathers, materials from church. What was worth reading varied

from person to person. What remained constant was that the boys felt such a disconnect with "school reading" that they believed they *couldn't* read.

3. *Allow kids to reach high.* Alfred Tatum (2005) found that black adolescent males who'd been unsuccessful readers in school often eagerly read when offered college and adult-level books on complex issues that connected to their lives. We saw the same thing with the Harry Potter books. Kids with learning disabilities, kids who were "too young" to read such hefty fare, kids who refused reading in school begged for a copy of each newly released title and read eagerly through the night to enter Harry's world.

4. *Try everything.* Susan Ohanian (1999) recalls an adolescent who refused to admit he could not read. Each time she approached the issue with him, overtly or covertly, he responded, "I can read just fine." One day he saw a copy of Dr. Seuss's *Hop on Pop* on his desk. He picked it up and for the first time in his life was able to read what was on a page. Time stopped for him as he sounded out the simple words. It stopped for his classmates who realized what was happening. When he finished the book, sweating from the effort, he looked at his teacher and said, "I read it, Mrs. O!" She replied, "I know you did!" To which he responded, "No. I don't think you understand. I *really* read it!" This was not "denial reading" but "real reading." If teachers feel constrained to use only prescribed school materials with kids who struggle to read, such a breakthrough may never happen.

5. *Read to your students.* Their age doesn't matter. When Mrs. Parker read to us in 12th grade, classics that were remote and stale when we read them to ourselves became vivid with possibility. In college, the poet X. J. Kennedy taught me sophomore English. I developed a love affair with Old English and Middle English poems when he read them to us. The voices of people in love with the ideas captured in print were invitational in a way that homework assignments never were.

Reading is about school success, of course, but it's about much more. It's a portal to full participation in life. Every teacher needs to invest heavily in making sure every student opens that door! ■

References

Ohanian, S. (1999). *One size fits few: The folly of educational standards.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinenmann.

Smith, M., & Wilhelm, J. (2002). *Reading don't fix no chevys: Literacy in the lives of young men.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tatum, A. (2005). *Teaching reading to black adolescent males: Closing the achievement gap.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Tell Me About . . .

What You've Learned About Teaching Reading

It's Never Too Late

Several years ago, our school decided to focus on building literacy skills across the curriculum. As a science teacher, I was now expected to teach reading strategies to my students as part of my science instruction. I quickly realized that when I was in school I had never used the skills and strategies I was now teaching. As a result of my experience teaching my students nonfiction reading skills, I began to use them myself. I immediately noticed that my retention and comprehension improved. This experience showed me that these skills are important for the student to master early on—and it's never too late for me to learn them, either.

—Ray Leonard, science teacher, Glasgow Middle School, Alexandria, Virginia

Model the Thinking

I was reading aloud to my 5th graders when I came to parentheses in the text. As usual, I lowered my voice as an audio clue to the structure of ideas. Then I wondered—maybe they don't know why I'm doing that. So I paused and explained how the punctuation signaled meaning that I was trying to convey through my changed tone of voice. That's when a student said, "Oh! Really?" and I knew I had struck a learning need. My modeling of good reading wasn't enough. Students also needed me to model the thinking behind the reading.

—Scott Hayden, director of curriculum and instruction, International Community School, Bangkok, Thailand

Excitement Doesn't Have to Fade

The unfortunate reality is that the excitement and enthusiasm that define a new reader at age 4 or 5 often turns to dread, embarrassment, and self-doubt by high school. I am certain that as educators we can help all students grow in their reading capacity, but at my core I believe that improving adolescent reading has as much to do with the student's mind-set and self-confidence as it does the instructor's methodology. A top-tier adolescent reading program needs to address both needs.

—PJ Caposey, principal, Oregon High School, Oregon, Illinois

Students' Interests Come First

As an avid reader since childhood, I was eager to share my love of reading with my students. I assumed they would fall in love with the same good books that I had loved. However, I quickly encountered reluctant readers who thought of reading as a chore. I learned to engage them by choosing books representing their cultures and interests. By offering books about sports and popular culture, I was able to ignite a passion for reading that eventually transferred to classroom reading. It also helped me to learn that even in the classroom, students need to have a purpose for reading and teachers need to look for ways to engage students in the material.

—Cathy Hix, K–12 social studies specialist, Arlington Public Schools, Virginia

Teen Readers Need Continuing Support

I've learned that we stop instruction on learning to read just when kids need it the most. We pour resources into the primary grades with the assumption that a student who can read well at grade 3 will read well throughout school, but that just isn't the case. Many students who were great readers in elementary school aren't successful in middle and high school because we don't continue to teach kids how to read more sophisticated and complex nonfiction texts. Politicians love photo ops with little ones learning to read, but they are seldom seen with the teen who reads at a 3rd grade level and is in danger of dropping out.

—Ramona Lowe, secondary literacy specialist, Lewisville Independent School District, Texas

We Should Expand the Definition of Literacy

I'm interested in what literacy skills today's students need to be successful in tomorrow's world. Reading a paper-based, static document is vastly different from reading a multilinear, digital document full of hyperlinks. We often provide our teachers with professional development that simply teaches them how to teach traditional reading and writing skills when that isn't what students will need. Although there is value in traditional literacy skills, we must expand that definition so our students are prepared for the future.

—Cary Harrod,
instructional technology specialist,
Forest Hills School District, Cincinnati, Ohio

Phonics Isn't Enough

I remember vividly the professor who stood in front of a classroom of future teachers and said, "If you know your phonics, you can teach 'em how to read because that's all they'll need." As a young, naive college student, I put my heart and soul into learning phonics rules. But although phonics is a crucial component of reading, there is much more to the complex skill of literacy instruction. If I knew then what I know now about the power of asking questions, making connections to the text, and building fluency to enhance comprehension, my teaching would have looked entirely different. Reading the professional literature, collaborating with peers to discuss current pedagogy, and learning through technology (videos, websites, webinars, blogs, and so on)—all these opportunities help me keep abreast of what the current research says about literacy instruction and how I can implement that research effectively in the classroom.

—Amy K. Lockhart, 4th grade instructor,
Price Laboratory School,
University of Northern Iowa

Students' Fears Can Hold Them Back

Students who struggle to read have a deep-rooted desire to read better. But that deep-rooted passion is often paired with equally strong feelings of fear and inferiority. Recognizing these feelings is essential to coaching students to be stronger, more confident readers. When linked with engaging material that the student finds appealing, the passion to improve will gradually overcome the fear of failure.

—Jeffrey McCoach, teacher,
Methacton School District,
Norristown, Pennsylvania

Children Must Feel Safe

Years ago, a student who had been in my multi-categorical classroom for four years became my foster son. He had been identified with a learning disability and was not learning to read in spite of the fact that I had tried various approaches that were successful with other children. When he came to live with me, he was an angry, frustrated, and defeated learner. Finally, in 7th grade, when his basic needs for stability and security were met, he was able to calm down and learn to read. His desire had always been there. What I learned is this: To learn, children must feel safe and loved.

—Debbie Fish, director of professional learning,
Central Indiana Educational Service Center,
Indianapolis, Indiana

I assumed that my students would fall in love with the same books I had loved.

Kids Need to Play with Language

When I began teaching in the early '80s, I did not know the importance of phonemic awareness. I certainly understood phonics, language-experience activities, and how important it was to convey a love of books, but I didn't understand the primary place that the ability to distinguish sounds plays in learning to read. After I began a graduate school program in educational therapy, the importance of nursery rhymes and language play in general leaped out at me as a central part of early literacy.

—Polly Mayer, clinic director,
Raskob Learning Institute and Day School,
Oakland, California

For more readers' stories about teaching reading, scan this QR code on your smartphone or go to www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/What-You've-Learned-About-Teaching-Reading.aspx.

Grades K-12

Scientific Learning®

reading assistant™

A reading tutor for every student, on demand!

Make Every Minute Count

1:1 guided oral reading practice - anytime, anywhere.

A reading tutor for every student

With the Reading Assistant™ program, students receive individualized reading coaching every time they use the software, making the most of each instructional minute. On demand availability makes the software easy to implement for school or home use.

Unrivaled literacy support

Reading Assistant is the only online reading program that listens to students as they read out loud, intervenes when they falter, and automatically scores their oral reading. No other program or e-book provides comparable real-time guidance and feedback.

Proven to get results

Students using Reading Assistant software can improve their reading grade level up to 50% more than students receiving classroom instruction alone, in the same time period. Reading Assistant has already been implemented in thousands of classrooms across the United States. When will it become part of your classroom?

For more info contact:

Phone: 888-830-4122

Email: info@scilearn.com

www.scientificlearning.com

© 2012 Scientific Learning Corporation. All rights reserved.

TALKING BACK On Privatization

School Choice Distorted

I'm writing to express my dismay at the decision to publish James Harvey's article "Privatization: A Drain on Public Schools" (December 2011/January 2012) with no counterpoint commentary. Harvey's article is short on meaningful data and long on rhetoric that distorts the position of school choice advocates, promoting fear and misinformation instead of thoughtful debate and discussion.

The first failure of Harvey's argument is his suggestion that, because education is a public good, school choice options like charters and vouchers must be bad. But Harvey makes no effort to explain why the only way to deliver public goods is through *government-run* schools. This is like saying that because health is a public good, only government-run hospitals can provide it.

As the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, the Cleveland voucher program was constitutional because the money provided for educational vouchers followed the *student*. The public good of education can be provided with government support; that doesn't mean that only government agents can deliver the service. Just as veterans may use the G.I. Bill to pay for tuition at private colleges and patients may use Medicare or Medicaid at private hospitals, education is indeed a public good that does not require a state-run monopoly for schools.

Harvey cites data suggesting that achievement of students in charter schools and voucher programs isn't consistently higher than their counterparts in traditional public schools. But school choice advocates do not suggest that every charter or private school will naturally do a better job. Like every entrepreneurial enterprise, some will succeed, and others will fail. The difference is that if families are dissatisfied with the education their child receives in a charter or private school, they may exercise the option to enroll elsewhere. Poor families without school choice options have no such opportunity, and if their local public school is failing, their children must fail with it.

The most disheartening aspect of Harvey's article was his characterization of school choice advocates as libertarians obsessed with private property (and, we may infer, devoid of interest in human beings—as if those two things are mutually exclusive), or perhaps worse. Harvey equates choice advocates with the ruthless Chinese dictator Mao Zedong. Such comparisons are not only inaccurate (choice advocates do *not* believe vouchers and charters are a quick fix that will cure all of education's ills), but also inflammatory, misleading, and unfair.

Harvey's article distorts the message of school choice proponents and derails the chances of a meaningful public debate over the topic.

Gary Houchens is associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Leadership, and Research at the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

RESPONSE

School Choice, A Fix That Fails

Gary Houchens ignores the research I presented, glosses over the distinction between funding of schools and other public services, and misses the point of the Mao Zedong analogy.

With respect to the research on charters, it is not a case of "some will succeed and some will fail." It is a case of only 17 percent being better than public schools. As I explain in the article, a landmark study from a pro-charter think tank concluded that 83 percent of charters are either worse than or no better than public schools. Meanwhile, in case after case, vouchers have not delivered on their promise of improved achievement.

Contrary to Houchens's claim, financing K–12 education is not akin to financing health care or higher education. States

THE MAYERSON ACADEMY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT is a private, non-profit organization providing sustainable, needs-based, and targeted professional development services to schools and districts.

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Second Language Acquisition
- Orton Gillingham
- Positive School/Classroom Culture
- Student-centered, Active Learning
- Olweus/Bullying Prevention
- Standards-based Instruction/Common Core State Standards
- Co-teaching/Collaborative Practice
- Differentiated Instruction

MISSION STATEMENT
Advance and support the skills and performance of education professionals to improve student achievement.

For additional information on services provided by Mayerson Academy, contact Edward Green at 513.478.5551 or green.ed@mayersonacademy.org or visit our website at www.mayersonacademy.org.

Connect With Character

State standards-aligned

7 lesson plan modules

Reproducible handouts and rubrics

Stop by booth 734 and learn more about our curriculum products and professional development. We'll have a free gift for you.

Learn more at www.CharacterCounts.org or call 800-711-2670.

©2012 Josephson Institute. "CHARACTER COUNTS!" and "Connect With Character" are registered trademarks of Josephson Institute.

compel attendance at public schools for students up to the age of 16; no government compels anyone to get medical treatment or attend college.

Finally, Houchens mischaracterizes the Mao Zedong analogy. My argument was that Mao's disastrous policies illustrated how ostensibly sensible policy initiatives can lead to disastrous results. My point was that even well-meant policy fixes often fail due to unintended consequences.

Since my article was published, the evidence against privatization has grown. Florida charters came out badly in a statewide investigation by the *Miami Herald*. Philadelphia's Office of the Controller questioned $290 million in charter school expenditures. The CEO of one Philadelphia charter school pled guilty in January to 28 counts of fraud totaling $861,000. One senses an unregulated charter system that is rife with sweetheart contracts, nepotism, conflicts of interest, and bonuses that would make a Wall Street banker blush.

Charters and vouchers have indeed proven to be fixes that fail.

James Harvey is executive director of the National Superintendents Roundtable in Seattle, Washington.

What Do You Think?

To offer your own comments, please join the conversation at Inservice, the ASCD blog, at www.ascd.org/blog.

Francisco Ayala, Alumnus 2008, Regional Supervisor, Options for Youth

Accessible. Flexible. Meaningful.

Be an agent of change. Help create the schools needed for our nation's diverse community of learners. For over 35 years, Pepperdine University has been empowering school leaders with the knowledge, resources, and confidence to transform today's schools and effect positive change.

In as little as ONE year, you can earn your Master of Science in Administration and Preliminary Administrative Services Credential while advancing your career.

Start classes in the fall 2011 and graduate in June 2012!

Pepperdine's Educational Leadership Academy offers:

- Accessible 60:40 technology-blended format provides face-to-face interaction with online instruction
- Faculty scholar-practitioners who are dedicated to your life-long success
- Effective leadership training with close integration of fieldwork and coursework
- Collaborative cohort learning community to expand your professional network
- Development of an original Action Research Project customized for your school site
- Flexible class schedules designed for the working professional

Attend an information meeting. RSVP at gsep.pepperdine.edu or call (866) 503-5467 to schedule a consultation with your program admissions manager, Michelle Awadalla.

WEST LOS ANGELES • ONLINE

WANTED!

ASCD seeks two highly accomplished young educators for recognition and $10,000 award.

Join ASCD in celebrating 10 years of honoring excellence in the next generation of educators—submit a nomination for the Outstanding Young Educator Award at **www.ascd.org/oyea**

For the past decade, ASCD's Outstanding Young Educator Award (OYEA) Program has recognized creative and committed teachers and administrators under the age of 40 who are making a difference in the lives of children.

Who will win the next Outstanding Young Educator Award?

Do you know an emerging education leader who exemplifies excellence and equity in teaching and learning? Do you have a colleague that should be recognized for his or her outstanding work?

Share their spirit and successful strategies and skills with the education community by nominating them for ASCD's prestigious Outstanding Young Educator Award Program.

Anyone can nominate a colleague or you can nominate yourself. Go to **www.ascd.org/oyea** and complete an online application today!

a proven PATH to a CENTRAL OFFICE POSITION.

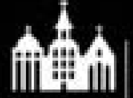
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY'S EXECUTIVE ED.D.

- This nationally recognized doctoral program for practicing K-12 administrators has prepared over 450 education leaders representing 28 states and 6 countries.
- Complete your studies in just two years, with 10 weekends and two summer sessions.
- Now accepting applications for the April 2012 cohort.
- Loans available to cover the entire cost of the program, regardless of financial need.
- Start work on dissertation from day one.

"The knowledge and skills acquired at Seton Hall and the network of cohort colleagues were essential elements to my career advancement."

Jason E. Glass, Ed.D. '11
Iowa's State Director (Commissioner) of Education

For more information, call 1-800-313-9833, email execedd@shu.edu, or go to www.shu.edu/go/excedd.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

DOES YOUR SCHOOL HAVE THE
BEST TEACHERS IN AMERICA

SEND YOUR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF TO:
www.VoteForTeachers.com

THE SCHOOL WITH THE MOST VOTES WINS A $25K TECHNOLOGY GRANT. AND, THE TEACHER WITH THE MOST VOTES AT THAT SCHOOL WINS AN IPAD AND AN IPOD TOUCH LAB FOR THEIR CLASSROOM.

SPREAD THE WORD!
1. Visit www.VoteForTeachers.com
2. Enter your school and teacher's name.
3. Voting starts on Dec. 1st and goes until March 31st.

CALL US AT 1-855-834-7660 FOR MORE INFORMATION

Index to Advertisers

ASCD ... 68, 93
800-933-2723 www.ascd.org

Charles C Thomas, Publisher ... 95
800-258-8980 www.ccthomas.com

College Board ... 49
www.collegeboard.org/springboard

DeVry MSED ... 33
http://devry.edu/studentconsumerinfo

ERB ... 83
www.erblearn.org

Heinemann ... 1, 63, 79
800-225-5800 www.heinemann.com

Josephson Institute (Character Counts) ... 92
310-846-4800 www.charactercounts.org

Knowing Science ... 87
914-273-1879
www.knowingscience.com

Leadership and Learning Center ... 4
866-399-6019 www.leadandlearn.com

Mayerson Academy ... 92
513-478-5551
www.mayersonacademy.org

Measured Progress ... 85
877-678-3787
http://measuredprogress.org

NSU Education Law (NOVA Shepard Broad Law Center) ... 62
800-541-6682 www.nsulaw.nova.edu

Pearson ... C3
800-328-5999
http://PearsonDiagnostic.com

Pearson - AIMS Web ... 69
866-313-6194 www.AIMSweb.com

Pearson - NNAT ... 6
800-328-5999 http://Stanford10.com

Pepperdine University ... 93
866-503-5467
http://gsep.pepperdine.edu

Riverside Publishing ... 50–51
800-323-9540
www.riversidepublishing.com

Safe and Civil Schools ... C2
800-323-8819
www.safeandcivilschools.com

School Improvement Network ... C4
888-572-1153
www.CommonCore360.com

Scientific Learning ... 90
888-816-0010 www.scilearn.com

Seton Hall ... 94
800-313-9833 www.shu.edu/go/execedd

Western Michigan University ... 79
269-387-2000
www.wmich.edu/offcampus/educator

Worth Ave Group ... 94
855-834-7660
www.VoteForTeachers.com

Charles C Thomas
PUBLISHER • LTD.

P.O. Box 19265
Springfield, IL 62794-9265

BOOK SAVINGS* Save 10% on 1 Book, Save 15% on 2 Books, Save 20% on 3 Books!
(*on separate titles only)

COMING SOON!

- Duran, Elva—**SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION IN READING FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS. (2nd Ed.).** '12, 368 pp. (8 1/2 x 11), 20 il., 12 tables.

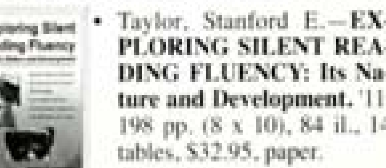
NOW AVAILABLE!

- Bakken, Jeffrey P. & Cynthia G. Simpson—**A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS: Outlining the Keys to Success for Promotion and Tenure.** '11, 258 pp. (7 x 10), 3 il., 43 tables, $55.95, hard, $35.95, paper.

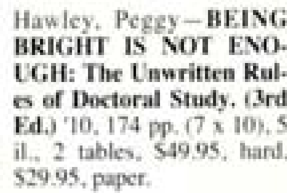
- Cipani, Ennio—**DECODING CHALLENGING CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS: What Every Teacher and Paraeducator Should Know!** '11, 240 pp. (7 x 10), 9 il., 72 tables, (and a CD-ROM containing answers to fill-in-the-blank and true/false test items), $34.95, paper.

- Rumrill, Phillip D., Jr., Bryan G. Cook & Andrew L. Wiley—**RESEARCH IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: Designs, Methods, and Applications. (2nd Ed.)** '11, 278 pp. (7 x 10), 2 il., 9 tables, $58.95, hard, $38.95, paper.

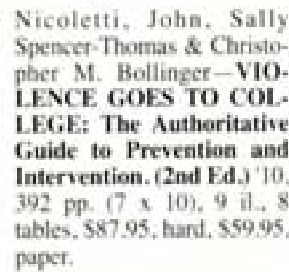
- Sandeen, Arthur—**ENHANCING LEADERSHIP IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: A Case Approach.** '11, 236 pp. (7 x 10), $54.95, hard, $34.95, paper.
- Storey, Keith & Craig Miner—**SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION OF FUNCTIONAL SKILLS FOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES.** '11, 250 pp. (7 x 10), 14 il., 31 tables, $49.95, hard, $33.95, paper.



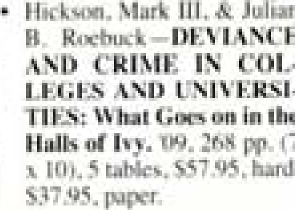
- Taylor, Stanford E.—**EXPLORING SILENT READING FLUENCY: Its Nature and Development.** '11, 198 pp. (8 x 10), 84 il., 14 tables, $32.95, paper.



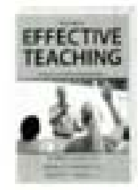
- Hawley, Peggy—**BEING BRIGHT IS NOT ENOUGH: The Unwritten Rules of Doctoral Study. (3rd Ed.)** '10, 174 pp. (7 x 10), 5 il., 2 tables, $49.95, hard, $29.95, paper.

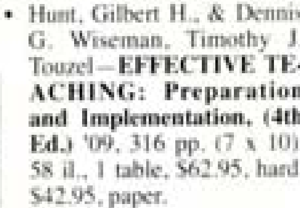


- Nicoletti, John, Sally Spencer-Thomas & Christopher M. Bollinger—**VIOLENCE GOES TO COLLEGE: The Authoritative Guide to Prevention and Intervention. (2nd Ed.)** '10, 392 pp. (7 x 10), 9 il., 8 tables, $87.95, hard, $59.95, paper.

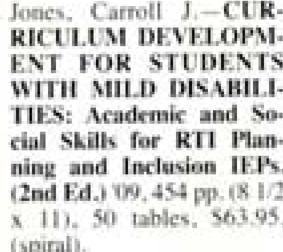


- Hickson, Mark III, & Julian B. Roebuck—**DEVIANCE AND CRIME IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: What Goes on in the Halls of Ivy.** '09, 268 pp. (7 x 10), 5 tables, $57.95, hard, $37.95, paper.





- Hunt, Gilbert H., & Dennis G. Wiseman, Timothy J. Touzel—**EFFECTIVE TEACHING: Preparation and Implementation. (4th Ed.)** '09, 316 pp. (7 x 10), 58 il., 1 table, $62.95, hard, $42.95, paper.

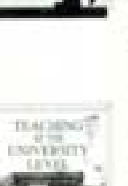


- Jones, Carroll J.—**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES: Academic and Social Skills for RTI Planning and Inclusion IEPs. (2nd Ed.)** '09, 454 pp. (8 1/2 x 11), 50 tables, $63.95, (spiral).

- Milner, H. Richard—**DIVERSITY AND EDUCATION: Teachers, Teaching, and Teacher Education.** '08, 288 pp. (7 x 10), 4 il, 1 table, $61.95, hard, $41.95, paper.

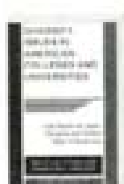
- Wiseman, Dennis G. & Gilbert H. Hunt—**BEST PRACTICE IN MOTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM. (2nd Ed.)** '08, 316 pp. (7 x 10), 10 il, $62.95, hard, $42.95, paper.

- Gordon, Virginia N.—**THE UNDECIDED COLLEGE STUDENT: An Academic and Career Advising Challenge (3rd Ed.)** '07, 254 pp. (7 x 10), 4 il., $53.95, hard, $35.95, paper.



- Wiseman, Dennis G. & Gilbert H. Hunt, Vassiliy I. Zhukov, Lev V. Mardahaev—**TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL: Cross-Cultural Perspectives from the United States and Russia.** '07, 196 pp. (7 x 10), 1 table, $49.95, hard, $34.95, paper.

- Siljander, Raymond P., Jacqueline A. Reina, & Roger A. Siljander—**LITERACY TUTORING HANDBOOK: A Guide to Teaching Children and Adults to Read and Write.** '05, 204 pp. (8 1/2 x 11), 71 il., 16 tables, $32.95, spiral (paper).



- Flowers, Lamont A.—**DIVERSITY ISSUES IN AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: Case Studies for Higher Education and Student Affairs Professionals.** '04, 252 pp. (7 x 10), $34.95, paper.

5 easy ways to order!

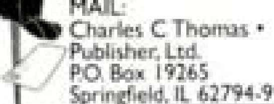
PHONE: 1-800-258-8980 or (217) 789-8980

FAX: (217) 789-9130

EMAIL: books@ccthomas.com

QR code for updated catalog information

WEB: www.ccthomas.com



MAIL: Charles C Thomas • Publisher, Ltd. P.O. Box 19265 Springfield, IL 62794-9265

Complete catalog available at www.ccthomas.com or email books@ccthomas.com

Books sent on approval • Shipping charges: $7.75 min. U.S. / Outside U.S., actual shipping fees will be charged • Prices subject to change without notice

*Savings include all titles shown here and on our web site. For a limited time only.

When ordering, please refer to promotional code EDUC0312 to receive your discount.

ASCD Community in Action

Looking for Emerging Leaders

ASCD is seeking education professionals with 5 to 15 years of experience who are interested in becoming active in ASCD for the first time. Emerging leaders pursue a variety of leadership paths throughout the two-year program, including getting more involved in education policy, writing for ASCD, pursuing leadership positions with ASCD governance and constituent groups, and supporting the Whole Child Initiative.

ASCD is accepting applications until April 1, 2012; accepted applicants will be notified in May. For more information and to apply, visit www.ascd.org/emergingleaders.

New EL Themes Are Out!

Educational Leadership has recently released its themes for 2012–13:

- September 2012: Feedback for Learning
- October 2012: Working with Challenging Students
- November 2012: Teacher Evaluation: What's Fair? What's Effective?
- December 2012/January 2013: Common Core: Now What?
- February 2013: Creativity Now!
- March 2013: Technology-Rich Learning
- April 2013: The Principalship
- May 2013: The Faces of Poverty

For complete descriptions of the themes, go to www.ascd.org/Publications/Educational-Leadership/Upcoming-Themes/Upcoming-Educational-Leadership-Themes.aspx. For information on the article submission process and guidelines for writers, go to www.ascd.org/writeforel.

@Ed_Leadership Is Moving!

You can now find @Ed_Leadership in the @ASCD channel on Twitter. Tweets about *EL* content and articles will now be included in the ASCD feed, where you'll also be able to receive updates on important policy issues, education news, and more. Join us today by following @ASCD on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ascd.

Attention ASCD Members

In early May 2012, ASCD members will be asked to vote on a set of proposed changes to ASCD's constitution. Additional information about the changes and how to access the online ballot will be available on the ASCD website in March and in the April issue of *Educational Leadership*.

Resources

Books

Teaching the Brain to Read: Strategies for Improving Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. (2008). By Judy Willis. Stock No. 107073. Price: $18.95 (member); $23.95 (nonmember).

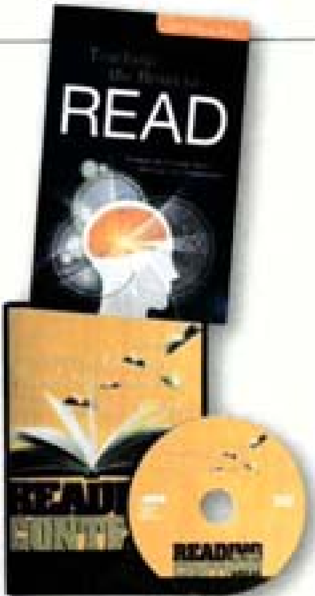
Research-Based Methods of Reading Instruction, Grades K–3. (2004). By Sharon Vaughn and Sylvia Linan-Thompson. Stock No. 104134. Price: $18.95 (member); $23.95 (nonmember).

Action Tool

Reading Strategies for the Content Areas, Volume 1: An ASCD Action Tool (2003). By Sue Z. Beers and Lou Howell. Stock No. 703109. Price: $99 (member); $119 (nonmember).

DVD

Reading in the Content Areas Video Series (2002). One 90-minute DVD with an online Facilitator's Guide. Stock No. 602029. Price: $440 (member); $540 (nonmember).



1703 N. Beauregard St.
Alexandria, VA 22311-1714

Service Center: (703) 578-9600
or 1-800-933-2723, then press 2

Permissions: www.ascd.org/permissions

Fax: (703) 575-5400
E-mail: info@ascd.org

Advertising: 571-527-1714;
jason@capitolmediasolutions.com

Online Store: http://shop.ascd.org

ASCD'S MISSION STATEMENT

ASCD is a membership organization that develops programs, products, and services essential to the ways teachers learn, teach, and lead.

ASCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PAUL HEALEY, PRESIDENT; DEBRA HILL, PRESIDENT-ELECT; SARA MAGAÑA SHUBEL, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT; GENE R. CARTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASCD; HARRIETT ARNOLD, COLIN CAMERON, LARRY W. CARTNER, KATHY CLAYTON, SANDY CLIFTON, JANE COBIA, MARC J. COHEN, NANCY GIBSON, JUDITH GOLDEN, JOSEPH GOODNACK, MARY KAY KIRKLAND, DEANA LOPEZ, LAURIE MCCULLOUGH, GABRIEL RSHAID, PASI SAHLBERG, JEFF STEPHENS, DONALD VIEGUT

ASCD EXECUTIVE STAFF

GENE R. CARTER, Executive Director
ERIC BELLAMY, Deputy Executive Director
JUDY SELTZ, Deputy Executive Director

DUPLICATING POLICY: Readers of *Educational Leadership* are authorized to make up to 50 photocopies of up to three articles of any one issue of *Educational Leadership*. This authorization does not apply to articles or photos copyrighted by individual authors, who must be contacted directly. If you want to copy more than the quantity listed above, please submit your copying request to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Dr., Danvers, MA 01923; (978) 750-8400; fax: (978) 646-8600. Charge is 25 cents per page plus an administrative charge.
Individual copies of *Educational Leadership* cost $7.

Providing the Information You Can Trust to Build a Foundation for Learning

David is in the fourth grade and dreams of working at a magazine. His reading ability is not on par with his classmates, however, and he particularly struggles with new material.

His teacher, Mrs. Garza, reviewed his scores on the Stanford 10 Total Reading subtests. While David performed well in Word Study Skills and Reading Vocabulary, she discovered that he needed help with Reading Comprehension.

She developed instructional aids to strengthen his skills in those areas so that he could continue pursuing his dream.

Trust Stanford to guide your decisions.

Stanford 10 is valid, reliable, aligned with national standards, and rigorously reviewed to eliminate bias. With Stanford 10, you have confidence that this technically excellent assessment will help you make the best instructional decisions.

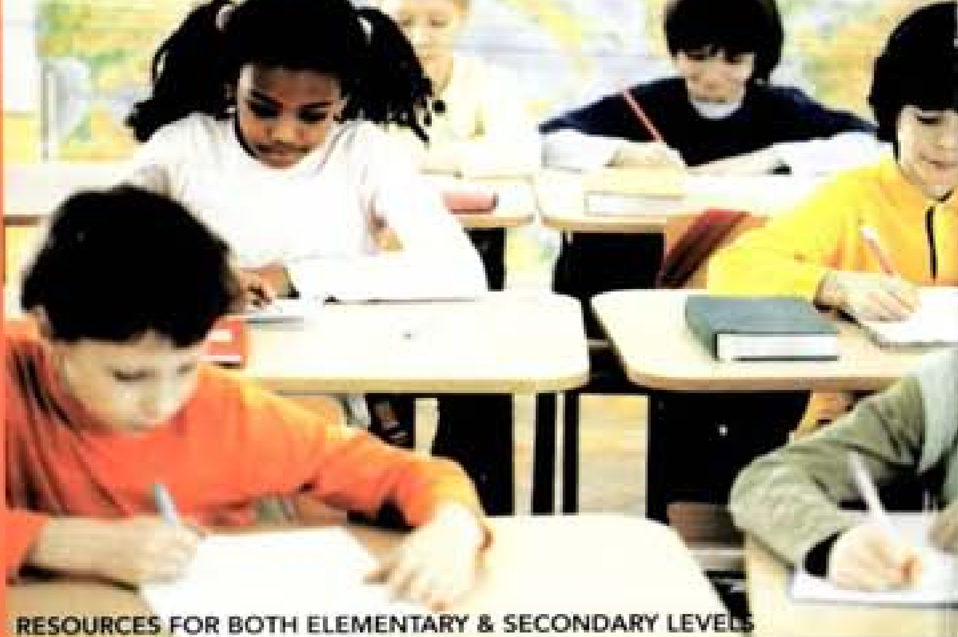
Stanford 10. The One to Trust.

800.328.5999 | Stanford10.com

ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION *starts with* BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT.



RESOURCES FOR BOTH ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY LEVELS

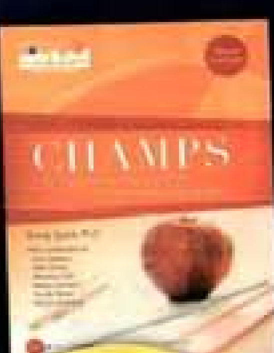
Use CHAMPS to help your staff:

- Increase on-task behavior
- Reduce disruptions
- Improve student motivation
- Develop a positive classroom climate

Take your instructional leadership up a notch!

- Reduce unnecessary office referrals
- Increase academic engagement
- Build more positive relationships with students and staff
- Spend more time working to improve the effectiveness of your staff and less administrative time on student behavior

Student achievement improves when classrooms, schools, and districts are safe and civil—where students respect each other and school staff, understand expectations for success and consequences for misbehavior, and engage in learning. Start your cycle of continuous improvement today with a free DVD and catalog.



Create long-lasting positive change with our cycle of continuous improvement.

TRAINING

RESOURCES

DATA

Practical and proven: A continuous improvement cycle for comprehensive behavioral change

Achieving real and lasting change means using proven, research-based practices every day in your school or district. It means paying close attention to thousands of details that go into creating a positive school climate and culture. It's a big job and a vital commitment. Our Cycle of Continuous Improvement will help you every step of the way:

- **Training:** Highly experienced *Safe & Civil Schools* trainers tailor a program to target improvement goals and guide you through change.
- **Resources:** Evidence-based, proactive tools from Pacific Northwest Publishing provide substantive support for your entire staff.
- **Data:** Track results with the revolutionary web-based TRENDS' Data Managment System to ensure that no student falls through the cracks.

30+ YEARS OF PROVEN EXPERIENCE

Start today with a free dvd & catalog.

TRAINING
Safe & Civil Schools
safeandcivilschools.com
(800) 323-8819

RESOURCES & TRENDS
Pacific Northwest Publishing
pacificnwpublish.com
(866) 542-1490