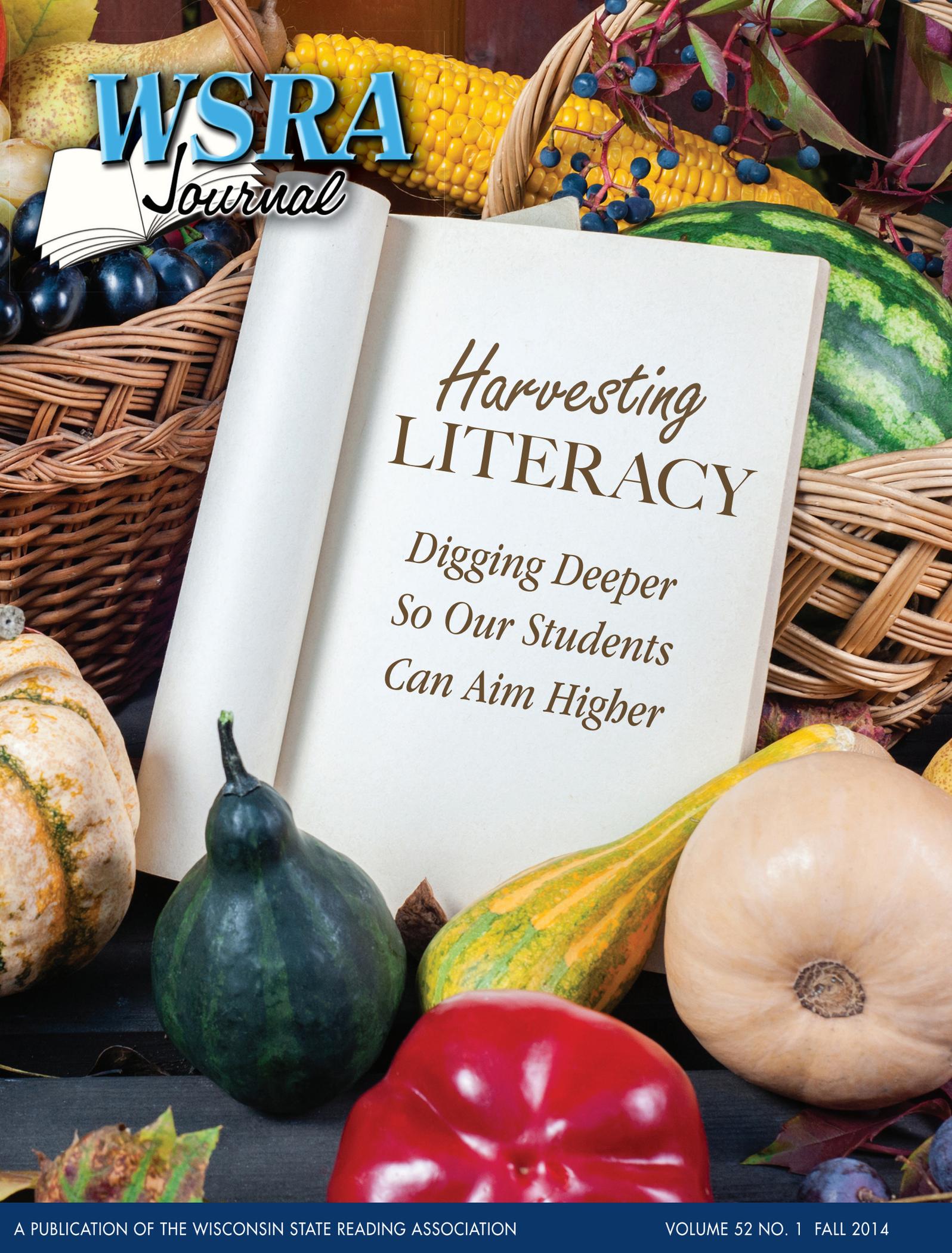




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Journal



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LITERACY

*Digging Deeper
So Our Students
Can Aim Higher*

Wisconsin State Reading Association

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WSRA Update is the official quarterly newsletter of the Wisconsin State Reading Association. For information contact the editor.

The WSRA website, located at www.wsra.org, includes current information about the state of reading in Wisconsin, WSRA's position statements and other information of interest to literacy professionals.

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A graphic showing several overlapping sheets of paper with the words "Call for Manuscripts" printed on them. The text "Call for" is in a large, bold, white font, and "Manuscripts" is in a smaller, black font. The papers are slightly offset, creating a sense of depth.

Call for

Manuscripts

Call for Manuscripts and Submission/Review Process

The *WSRA Journal* (ISSN 0160-9270) is published three times a year and addresses literacy research, current literacy topics and presents educational strategies for classroom literacy instruction. There are themed issues as well as open issues. Each issue includes a Call for Manuscripts. *WSRA* members are encouraged to submit ideas on any topic. The general themes listed in the Call for Manuscripts are only suggested guides. The *WSRA Journal* is available to all *WSRA* members. Acceptance rate is 70%.

Call for Manuscripts: *WSRA Journal* welcomes well-written, original descriptions of research-based instruction that improves literacy learning. Manuscripts must provide an appropriate blend of practical classroom application and solid theoretical framework. High-quality articles, essays, and reports of different types on reading and literacy education are considered for inclusion in the *Journal*. Have you engaged in classroom research? Have you tried a new strategy with your class that has had good results? Do you have successful ways of connecting home-school-community? Have you read a new professional book or a great children's or YA book? Share the news! Separate features, such as non-peer-reviewed essays and poetry, are welcomed, as are papers that give us a glimpse of education in Wisconsin's history; all of these are printed as space allows. Literature reviews without actual application to classroom instruction will generally be rejected. Digital photographs of students and/or teachers engaged in literacy activities are welcomed, as are examples of student work. All photos and student work examples require proof of permission, including parent permission when applicable, for inclusion in the *Journal*.

Open Issue: We are currently seeking manuscript submissions that focus on a variety of topics and research projects across all grade levels.

Submission/Review Process: All *Journal* manuscripts will be blind peer-reviewed by a minimum of two reviewers. Authors will typically receive notice of manuscript status within one month of submission. At this point, reviewer comments, suggestions, and questions will be anonymously shared with authors. If the reviewers suggest the authors revise and resubmit, the authors will be given one month to make the revisions and then resubmit. The editor of the *Journal* will send the revised manuscripts back to the original reviewers for further review. Reviewers are asked to complete the second reviews within two weeks. Depending on the reviewer comments, the manuscript

could be sent back to the authors for final revision or accepted for publication.

***WSRA Journal* is divided into different sections:**

- **Articles:** Research-based, blind, peer-reviewed on literacy-related topics
- **Departments:** Teaching Tips/Classroom Considerations, Creative Corner, Children's/Young Adult Book Reviews, Reviews of Professional Books, and Literacy and Technology

Editorial Guidelines and Process

Submit your manuscript to Jacqueline Witter-Easley, *Journal* Editor at: jeasley@carthage.edu

All submissions for peer review should conform to the style outlined in the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Authors of accepted manuscripts must also provide written permission releases for use of material from another source (including student's writing samples, text or figures excerpted from another published work, etc.). Releases must also be provided for use of any person's words or likeness.

All manuscripts must be submitted electronically. Text should be presented double-spaced in 12-point font, preferably in Microsoft Word; images should be submitted in tif or jpg format. Prepare the following files for uploading.

- Cover letter, including your name and affiliation (as you would have them published) and your mailing and e-mail addresses. Any coauthors should be listed in preferred order, with name, affiliation, and contact information.
- Abstract of 150 words, written in the third person and without citations.
- One standard copy of the manuscript
- One blinded copy of the manuscript. To prepare this version, remove author names and affiliations from bylines, replace references to your own and to coauthors' published work simply with "Author (year)" in text and in reference list (that is, delete publication titles), and mask any city, state, institutional affiliation, or links to personal websites. Note that all in-text citations and corresponding references must be in standard APA format. Footnotes and appendixes should not appear. Instead, incorporate such material into the article text.
- Tables and figures in separate file(s).

who we are

WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION | FEB 5 - 7 , 2015
annual convention

thursday

Select the institute that best meets your learning needs and engage in a day of intense study about a single topic. Each institute includes two keynote addresses and two breakout sessions.

Who They Are: Addressing Achievement Gaps Through Literacy Practices

Featuring: Gloria Ladson-Billings

**Big Learning for Little Learners:
Universal Instruction for PK Through Grade 2**

Featuring: Debbie Miller and Ellin Keene

**Engagement, Understanding, and Collaboration:
Universal Instruction in Grades 3 Through 5**

Featuring: Donalyn Miller

**Let Go to Let Learners Flourish:
Universal Instruction for Grades 6 Through 12**

Featuring: Sarah Brown Wessling

**Disciplinary Literacy:
Growing Careful and Critical Users of Language**

Featuring: Harvey Daniels and Cynthia Greenleaf

Reading (and Conducting) Reading Research

Featuring: P. David Pearson

**What, Why, and How:
Thinking Critically about Literacy Assessment**

Featuring: Sheila Valencia and Peter Afflerbach

Expert Coaches for Expert Educators

Featuring: Cheryl Dozier

**Supporting Our Youngest Learners:
Reading Intervention in PK Through Grade 2**

Featuring: Nancy Anderson

**Engaging Struggling Adolescents:
Reading Intervention in Grades 3 Through 12**

friday

Friday is an opportunity to design a day of professional learning to address your unique needs.

**Professional Capital:
Transforming Teaching in Every School**

Keynote address by Dr. Andy Hargreaves

More than 70 sectional presentations including:

Peter Afflerbach	Barbara Marinak
Nancy Anderson	Anne McGill-Franzen
Samantha Bennett	Debbie Miller
Peggy Black	Donalyn Miller
Doug Buehl	Annemarie Palincsar
Linda Christensen	P. David Pearson
Julie Coiro	Meenoo Rami
Catherine Compton-Lilly	Donna Scanlon
Chip Donahue	Margo Southall
Cheryl Dozier	Cathy Toll
Mike Ford	Sarah Brown Wessling
Mary Fritz	Wisconsin DPI

saturday

Who We Are: Expert Literacy Educators

This session, framed by Stephanie Harvey, will feature Wisconsin expert literacy educators demonstrating how they teach students reading and thinking strategies to enhance their literacy development and move them to be independent, engaged, spirited, lifelong readers, thinkers, and learners.

Featuring:
Stephanie Harvey
Laurie McCarthy, Multi-age Grade 1 and 2 Teacher
Kathryn Champeau, Reading Specialist/Consultant
Sarah Breit, Grade 4 Teacher
Amy Swick, District Literacy Coach for Grade 3 – 6
Robyn Bindrich, Grade 7 Reading Teacher

www.wsra.org / wsra@wsra.org / facebook.com/WSRAread / [@WSRAread](https://twitter.com/WSRAread) / [#WSRA15](https://hashtag/wsra15)

Convention registration includes complimentary wireless Internet access throughout the Wisconsin Center. Visit www.wsra.org to download an app to maximize your conference experience (available January 2015).

WSRA 2015 CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

Registrations must be received on or before January 15, 2015.



LATE REGISTRANTS WILL RECEIVE A MEAL VOUCHER.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE.

Name: _____
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CITY STATE ZIP

Telephone: (____) _____ (____) _____
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E-mail: _____

School District or College: _____

Position(s):

- Elementary Teacher
- Middle School/Secondary
- College/Adult Education
- Special Education
- Administrator
- Title I/Reading Interventionist
- Reading Teacher/Specialist/Literacy Coach
- Library/Media
- ELL/Bilingual
- Reading Recovery
- Early Education/Kindergarten
- Technology Specialist
- School Psychologist
- Other: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

REGISTER ONLINE at wsra.org

See back of this page for instructions.

REFUND POLICY: Refund requests postmarked or filed electronically by January 18, 2015 will be honored for the full refund amount less a \$25 processing fee for each individual registration. After January 18, 2015 there will be no refunds. All refund checks will be issued by the WSRA Treasurer.

A WSRA MEMBERSHIP

WSRA Member Membership No. _____

Expiration Date from mailing label: _____

Membership application and **\$37** fee enclosed.

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B WSRA 2015 CONVENTION FEES

Circle registration amount for days attending.

	WSRA Member	WSRA Nonmember
FULL CONVENTION	\$435	\$545
FEBRUARY 5, 6 & 7 – Includes LUNCH Thurs. & Fri. and BREAKFAST Sat.		
THURSDAY	\$190	\$235
FEBRUARY 5 – Includes LUNCH		
FRIDAY	\$190	\$235
FEBRUARY 6 – Includes LUNCH		
SATURDAY	\$125	\$165
February 7 – Includes BREAKFAST		

C MEALS AND ASSISTANCE

Please indicate your preferred lunchtime.

THURSDAY

11:45 am – 12:30 pm _____ OR 12:30 pm – 1:15 pm _____

FRIDAY

11:15 am – 12:00 pm _____ OR 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm _____

- Alternate Vegetarian Meal Requested
- Alternate Gluten Free Meal Requested
- Assistance Needed Under the American Disabilities Act

D SESSION REGISTRATION

*Institute and session choices can be found at wsra.org.
Please indicate your institute and session number choices.*

THURSDAY

Institute 1-10 _____	1st Choice	2nd Choice
Session A, B, or C _____	_____	_____
Session D, E, or F _____	_____	_____

FRIDAY

9:45 am – 11:15 am _____	_____	_____
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm _____	_____	_____
2:45 pm – 4:15 pm _____	_____	_____

Total Amount: \$ _____

• Make check payable to: **WSRA CONVENTION REGISTRATION**
 • Mail check and registration form to: **N7902 E. Friesland Rd. Randolph, WI 53956**

Welcome Readers

Ruth A. Short and Jacqueline Witter-Easley,
WSRA Journal Co-editors



Invitation

*If you are a dreamer, come in,
If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,
A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic bean buyer . . .
If you're a pretender, come sit by my fire
For we have some flax-golden tales to spin.
Come in!
Come in!*

— (Silverstein, 1974, p. 1)

Please accept our invitation to read a new volume of *WSRA Journal*, and welcome to a new, exciting, and challenging school year! By now, teachers and classrooms are well on their way toward a productive school year, digging deeper into literature and creating insightful readers and thinkers through our implementation of the Common Core State Standards (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). These standards not only enhance our classroom instruction, they also provide teachers and administrators with the academic language and content needed to enhance their exemplary teaching methods. Furthermore, by focusing on a particular standard for a lesson, teachers have improved their abilities to foster higher-level thinking skills among their students. This is what Heather Zimmerman found when she worked with her middle-school colleagues to integrate the first English-Language Arts

Standard for Reading Literature across all content areas. By attending to this standard, Zimmerman describes how teachers can instruct their students to read closely. Read her article to explore new ways of integrating this important standard across grade levels and content areas.

Throughout this volume, you'll find several articles that foster increased competence in our implementation of the Common Core State Standards. For example, the WSRA High School Literacy Committee shares new insights gleaned from interviews they conducted with teachers regarding their implementation of the Common Core. Additionally, Carrie Heck's Teaching Tip describes how her use of read-alouds has provided an authentic means of integrating elements of the Common Core into her daily routines. Patricia Rieman and Nicolina DeVroy each provide us with book reviews of practical resources for implementing the Common Core.

At the heart of all instruction in the Common Core lies the meaningful integration of children's literature across the curriculum. Melissa Stinnett and Abha Singh provide new insights into using literature to teach all students in culturally relevant ways. Furthermore, JeanaLe Marshall focuses on culturally relevant instruction of English Language Learners through the use of booktalks and "speed booking." Curious? Read their articles to learn more about these effective techniques! Even physical education time is reading time! Read Michael Opitz's article to learn about creative ideas for integrating fitness with literature.

While implementing the Common Core State Standards through literature, authors Leslie McClain and Mary Lou Harris-Manske remind us to provide mindful literacy practices throughout our instruction. Colleen Pennell nurtures this concept in her article by describing methods for creating intentional dialog opportunities in the classroom. Finally, Jeff Zwiers, Susan O'Hara, and Robert Pritchard describe the importance of using conversations in classrooms to enhance literacy and learning among all students.

In the midst of all the work we do to create effective lessons, provide meaningful assessment, and inspire our students of all ages, we need to remember that Wisconsin is home to many dedicated literacy professionals who are quietly going about their days, creating new, innovative, motivating, and state-of-the-art programs to promote literacy around our great state! To that end, we have created a new column: *Wisconsin's Very Own*. In this column, the editor will interview movers and shakers in Wisconsin's literacy scene and share their wonderful innovations with our readers. In the inaugural issue for this column, we have interviewed Dr. Marilyn Ward, Director of the Center for Children's Literature at

Carthage College, to learn about her new website, Omnilibros.com! Read the article to find out about this exciting site, dedicated to promoting translated works of international children's literature. We are very excited about this new column and look forward to discovering many Wisconsinites who are contributing new ideas and programs to the field of literacy education. Do you know about a person whose innovative work in literacy needs to be shared with our readers? If so, please contact the editor at jeasley@carthage.edu.

Finally, we invite you to sit back and enjoy this issue's *Creative Corner* article by Peggy Grafwallner, as she reminds us of our true calling as teachers. Come in! Come in!

References:

- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) & Council of Chief State School Offices (CCSSO). (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts*. NGA Center & CCSSO.
- Silverstein, S. (1974). *Where the sidewalk ends*. New York: Harper and Row.

Dear Readers,

I would like to thank WSRA for allowing me to serve as editor of the Journal for the past four-plus years. It has been a privilege to work with teachers, students, and researchers from across our state and neighboring states in an effort to disseminate research studies, teaching tips, and classroom reflections that have had positive impacts on student learning and classroom instruction. Rarely is a manuscript accepted on the initial submission, and the revision process requires dedication and conviction to making the writing clear and the content understandable. I have had the pleasure of working with many dedicated professionals, helping them through the revision process and I would like to thank each and every one of you who contributed articles for the *WSRA Journal*. Additionally, I would like to thank the reviewers who spent countless hours providing expert feedback to the authors. Your hard work made my job easier and provided stalwart service to our literacy community.

Sincerely,
Ruth A. Short

Save the Date!

2015 Wisconsin Reading Research Symposium



University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point

34th Annual Wisconsin Reading Research Symposium: Mindful Literacy

June 26-27, 2015

*Holiday Inn Hotel and Convention Center
Stevens Point, Wis.*

*Hosted by UW-Stevens Point with support from
Wisconsin State Reading Association.*

Keynote Speakers include:

- Doug Fisher, Professor of Education, San Diego State University
- Mary Jo Fresch, Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, The Ohio State University at Marion
- Peter Johnston, Professor Emeritus, Reading Department, SUNY-Albany
- Lester Laminack, Professor Emeritus, Birth-Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle Grades Education, Western Carolina University
- Debra Zarling, K-12 Reading Coordinator, Oshkosh Area School District

Open Minds • Create the Culture • Remember the Joy

Looking Closer at Close Reading: Coaches and Administrators Implement Common Core State Standard One

Heather Zimmerman

Literacy Coach, Oshkosh Area School District
heather.zimmerman@oshkosh.k12.wi.us.

Abstract

*This article discusses the close reading process as it unpacks Common Core State Standard (CCSS): Reading Anchor Standard One (National Governors Association [NGA] Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Offices [CCSSO], 2010). Many educators are confused by the current phrase, “close reading.” This phrase is actually not used in the CCSS. Reading Anchor Standard One requires students to “read closely.” The two terms, “read closely” and “close reading” are not interchangeable. Read closely refers to the idea of carefully reading a text for an idea, while close reading is a **specific process** students can use to develop their skill in reading closely. The close reading process by itself has many purposes that include sound comprehension strategies. This article describes the professional development seminars used in two different middle schools. Through their participation in these seminars, faculty members developed the expertise needed for implementing close reading practices in their own content-area classrooms.*

Introduction

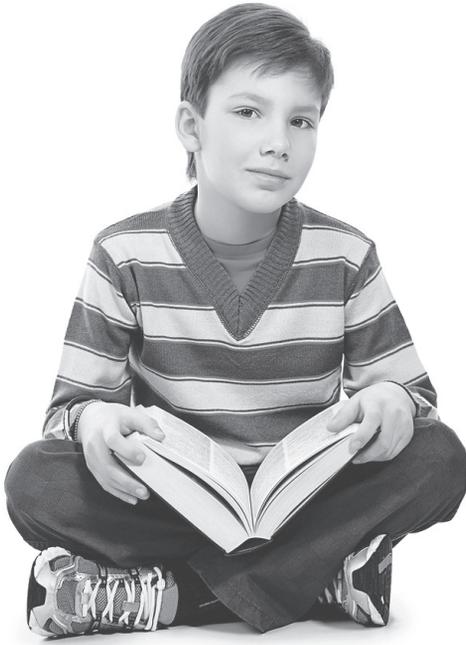
Are you questioning if the pendulum is swinging back to the world you left years ago when there was more of an emphasis on the text than the reader? This might be after you shredded the packets of discussion questions in your file cabinet and avoided the review at the end of the textbook chapter. Are you confused about the new buzz phrase, “close reading,” and why it is such a big deal? You may find yourself asking questions, such as: Why should students reread? Isn't this idea just a new way to look at Bloom's taxonomy of questions (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956)? Is this another new thing teachers have to do?

As more districts are implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (NGA Center & CCSSO,

2010), more educators are unpacking the standards and trying to interpret the meaning of the first CCSS: English Language Arts—Literacy (College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Reading) (ibid, 2010).

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

As educators start to explore this standard, literacy coaches and administrators are looking for ways to help teachers bring this standard alive in the classroom. In this article, I define “close reading” and provide a description of my district's process in implementing this reading method into the curriculum.



Close Reading vs. Reading Closely

“Close reading” has created quite a buzz and, ironically, it is not found in the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). Rather, Anchor Standard One begins with the words, “read closely” (ibid, 2010, CCRA.R.1). The two terms, “read closely” and “close reading” are actually not interchangeable. “Read closely” refers to the ability to carefully read a text for an idea, while “close reading” refers to a specific process students can use to accomplish this standard. While students read closely they might use the close reading process, however they might use other comprehension strategies as well.

The goal of close reading is for students to dive deeper into a text. As educator and researcher Alan Sitomer (2014) points out, sometimes students need to intellectually sweat while digging into a text. Many texts require not only a deeper reading but also more than one reading.

Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (2012) share two important purposes for close reading.

- Synthesize prior knowledge and new knowledge gained from the text
- Develop the skills and stamina needed to handle a complex text

In order to incorporate best practices of close reading (Fisher and Frey, 2012; Beers and Probst,

2013; Schmoker, 2011), the following components became the framework of the close reading processes that were implemented in our schools.

- Setting a purpose
- Identifying key vocabulary
- Reading a text using annotations
- Multiple reads of a text
- Text-dependent questions
- Writing or discussion to follow-up

Sometimes teachers will hear the phrase “close reading” and rattle off a few strategies they are using, such as previewing a text and looking at visuals, and ask if these are examples of close reading. What they are doing is not technically the “close reading” process. However, they are reading closely, which is an integral reading strategy that teachers should continue to implement when using texts. It is important to remember that CCSS English Language Arts Standard One (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) involves much more than just the close reading process.

There are many ways to implement close reading in the classroom. Close reading has several main components. The ways they are implemented should be at the discretion of the teacher. Teachers must provide their students with a clear purpose for rereading a given text. Teachers will need to model the close reading process and scaffold appropriately in order for students to experience the benefits of multiple reads of a text.

Not every text needs a close reading. Critics of close reading worry this process will kill the joy of reading. Close reading holds a purpose when we want students to dig in beyond the surface level in a complex text. Short pieces of complex text work best with close reading. Using the right picture, article, or chapter can be more than enough to find a deeper meaning with close reading.

Text-dependent questions help guide the close reading process. Kyleene Beers and Robert Probst (2013) remind us of a little history in their book *Notice and Note*. In the early 1900s to mid-1970s the New Critics focused on the text and only the text. This created a society dependent on CliffNotes®. In the 1980s, Louise Rosenblatt’s (1938) ideas of the

reader creating meaning started to unfold. However, teachers' questions soon became focused on opinions and personal connections more than making meaning of the text. For example, questions such as, "How would you feel if the big bad wolf came to your house?" can be answered without referring back to the text. Now, through the new focus on the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010), teachers' questions are emphasizing the construction of meaning of the text. Such questions are referred to as text-dependent, because students must center their answers on information found in the text. Teachers should use a mixture of text-dependent questions and opinion questions. Though this is not explicitly stated in the CCSS (ibid, 2010), educators realize that both are important to be effective and to engage readers. Both the reader and the text should be involved in the reading process. Sometimes asking the same question and guiding students deeper in the text can help students extract the meaning. Students will start by using the teacher's text-dependent questions. Eventually students should create their own questions. After the close reading of a text, text-dependent questions will drive a discussion or a writing prompt. This piece is important to fulfill the purpose of close reading.

The Implementation Process

I am a Literacy Coach and during the 2013–14 school year, I worked for two middle schools. Both schools decided to focus on close reading during this past school year, specifically emphasizing the element of "close reading" as implied in CCSS ELA Standard One (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). To implement this standard into the schools' curricula, the faculty participated in a variety of professional development sessions.

Professional Development

There are a variety of effective resources about close reading available for professional development. I used some of these resources at both schools, and I selected some resources for use with each individual school, depending on each school's academic needs. I have listed and described each professional development session below.

- Blog – During professional development sessions, staff began the year looking at a blog by a teacher who provides insights and examples into many of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (Stuart, 2013). The teacher described close reading using various examples. It was an effective way for all content-area teachers to start exploring methods for implementing this standard in their classrooms. For example, one idea from the blog, the "bounce pass", described a way to visualize the close reading process. This became a visual aid used for future discussions on close reading.
 - Blog – <http://www.teachingthecore.com/non-freaked-out-common-core-close-reading/>
 - Graphic Organizer – https://docs.google.com/a/oshkosh.k12.wi.us/document/d/1QSb_UleSxIbxY6jggEw9CRO385wxBjRVDWrYDreomYo/edit
- Article – Faculty members looked at the article, "Close Reading in Elementary Schools" (Fisher & Frey, 2012). Questions created ahead of time guided the discussion. The article was effective because it described the elements of close reading that pertain to the high-school level, as well as how teachers can implement close reading at the elementary level. To ensure the staff would be open to looking at a text that did not match the grade-level taught, I shared with them that I appreciate seeing the foundation laid at the elementary level, and the expectations at the high school level. This article provided both angles for the middle school teachers, and inspired a healthy discussion about the role of close reading in middle school content classrooms.
- Sectionals – During another professional development session, the teachers rotated through three sectionals in small groups. The speakers at each sectional were teachers in the building, which other teachers truly appreciated. The three sectionals included:
 - Sectional 1: Annotating strategy – Facilitators shared techniques for students to use in coding a text (such as: ?, !, etc.) and the BUCKS strategy. This strategy was derived from

Fisher (2013, August). It is an acronym for the following steps in coding a text:

B–Box out facts or key terms

U–Underline the essential question

C–Circle what I don’t understand

K–Kick-out what isn’t important

S–Start your response

- Sectional 2: Videos – Using Fisher and Frey’s video tutorials, facilitators chose a close reading video they wanted to share with the group and discuss. The tutorials were downloaded from the following website: [youtube.com/user/FisherandFrey](https://www.youtube.com/user/FisherandFrey)
- Sectional 3: Lesson Planning Tool – Dobbertin (2013) has a format for implementing close reading that another teacher described for the participants. The facilitator and participants engaged in a lively discussion about the methods for implementing these plans into their content areas.
- Grade-Level Team Professional Development – This consisted of a 45-minute block for the literacy coach to work with content-area teachers. While working with grade-level teams, the “bounce pass” visual aid from the initial blog was used to set a purpose and guide the professional development.
- Setting a Purpose – Tovani (2004) provides practical advice her book, titled *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* This book was used to facilitate discussion. The teachers responded positively to her ideas and her engaging writing style.
- Introducing Vocabulary – Teachers brainstormed vocabulary instruction ideas. A workable document allowed the group to add ideas and collaborate across content areas.
- Text-Dependent Questions – Ideas were used from *Notice and Note* (Beers and Probst, 2013), and Fisher and Frey’s (2014) website, where they posted resources on text-dependent questions. Another resource utilized was the DPI Literacy Suitcase (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d). This resource has

information on both text-dependent questions and close reading in general. Alan Sitomer’s (2014) idea of the importance of wait time in the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) classroom also added to the conversation. Sitomer shared that when teachers ask deep questions they must embrace silence while students think. The discussion on text-dependent questions also fits well into Charlotte Danielson’s (2011) framework 3b, “Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques,” which my district just implemented this year for evaluating teachers.

- Book Club – A group of literacy teachers and I formed a book club where we read and discussed Beers’ and Probst’s (2013) *Notice and Note*, which provided ideas, mentor texts, and strategies for the close reading of fiction texts.

Closing Thoughts

Part of CCSS: Reading Anchor Standard One (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) involves reading a text closely. In order to accomplish proficiency in this standard, teachers must provide students with a variety of experiences in close reading. The close reading of texts will develop students’ natural abilities to read closely. Different strategies can be used to engage students in close reading.

The close reading process is an important strategy, because teachers challenge students with complex texts that deserve to be examined in depth. While implementing the close reading process, teachers encourage students to focus on the purpose/meaning of the text, and to read the text multiple times as they dig for the deeper meaning. Though this process is effective for analyzing a text, not all texts need to undergo the close reading process. Other successful strategies involving reading closely are just as important when looking at texts.

I have been so impressed and excited by the staff’s work on the literacy goal this year. During an early staff meeting a social studies teacher, a student teacher, and a choir teacher all shared how they tried close reading in their classroom. I have been in various classrooms modeling close reading to encourage teachers of all subject areas implement it. For example, I modeled a lesson in a team-taught

social studies class. The students looked at primary sources about Attila the Hun that were quite complex. Through the modeling of close reading and scaffolding, all the students in the class were engaged in reading the texts. Furthermore, the use of repeated readings enabled the students to understand the main idea and most of the details contained within a very complex text.

As a health teacher pointed out to me during one of our professional development sessions, the process takes some time, especially in the early stages where more modeling for students is needed, but the frontloading is worth the time. The discussions and writing students produce from close reading are well worth it. Through their repeated exposure to the close reading process, students will begin to transfer these skills to all texts, thereby developing their ability to read closely.

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the field. Now more than ever, we have to incorporate diverse reading to give our students the tools they need to understand how to think through the lens of each content area.

Reading does not include just a textbook but also books, articles, and graphs. For instance, scientists seek evidence in the world around them, but this evidence is also found in text or graphs as well as a laboratory. Students need to know how to glean information in what they read so that they can understand their medical forms, medication labels, food labels, safety warnings, job contracts, etc. At the same time, we must also teach content-specific vocabulary.

Teachers must be careful not to separate reading and writing from content learning. Literacy strategies have always been separate in the minds of teachers, something that teachers have occasionally used but have not seen as the best vehicle to learn content. Learning content through reading and writing with supportive strategies is imperative to the deeper understanding of content.

Another shift is an increased awareness of literacy deficits. Teachers are more aware of the need to scaffold and support student learning. As one high school science teacher stated, “At [our school], assessment data shows that 50% of students are two grade levels or more behind in reading. Now we are learning resources and strategies that help students increase their literacy, which helps them directly and indirectly increase their content knowledge and skills. Our biggest challenge is to untether ourselves from content teaching and to embrace the slower pace required for deeper learning.”

As a high school social studies teacher states, “Content teachers love their content, so it’s very easy to get wrapped up into the conceptual knowledge that you want kids to understand and don’t look at the skill base that kids need in order to illustrate those concepts. You can’t get that deep understanding through multiple choice the same way we can from a debate, a writing or through difficult reading.” While this teacher expresses the love of her content, she also validates the need for further literacy development in her students.

Why is literacy important to teaching within your content area/with your content area teachers? How do you go about doing this?

“Literacy is the foundation for understanding processes.”

While the importance of literacy revolves mainly around students’ ability to successfully access and interpret a variety of texts, various respondents have also brought forth the importance of variety within the text. Four of the five respondents focus on the importance of this variety of texts not only in their content areas, but as one science teacher states: “Our society is heavily based on advancing science and technology, and to be critical consumers of media, politics, products, educational initiatives, and so on—students need to be able to process and critique science in the media.” This critique is a foundation of what several respondents refer to as important facets of literacy. These include: 21st-century skills, vocabulary related to multiple areas of students’ lives, understanding multiple perspectives, and communicating in preparation for college and careers.

Because we are focused on the 21st century, we can no longer teach as we did in the past. Simply presenting information to the students does not mean that it is being taught or, more importantly, learned. As teachers, we may forget to make our discipline-specific skill set obvious to our students because it comes so naturally to us. We must continually remind ourselves that our students are new to the processes and we need to work to pull that part out of us during instruction. One history teacher uses the think aloud to model how he reads, writes, and thinks like a historian. Using the gradual release of responsibility he takes the students through processes such as analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information from primary and secondary source documents as they are often very complex.

In addition, one of the respondents stated that his/her school focuses on coordinating teacher efforts not only within departments but also across disciplines. For example, several teachers use graphing techniques at the same time, or refer to other teachers’ uses of graphing in their own subject area in order to develop these skills. However, in order for this to be effective, the curriculum must be

clearly communicated and understood among the disciplines.

What are some of the most helpful ways you are becoming informed about high school literacy?

“The first thing I did was get involved with the literacy team at our school.”

Educators are becoming more informed about high school literacy. Survey respondents indicate that they have developed their level of knowledge and expertise within disciplinary literacy through various means. Just as our students’ needs and preferences vary from one to another, our educators’ professional development needs and preferences vary as well. One type of professional development will not meet everyone’s needs. Differentiation is key.

A critical factor in the advancement of high school literacy is administrative support of teachers’ pursuits. Various respondents indicated that they have received opportunities for further growth and development through various job-embedded professional development opportunities. Of the options offered through these opportunities, the inclusion of collaboration within and across disciplinary Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) was key. Respondents also attribute advancements in their learning to their work with literacy coaches, their individual professional readings, and to various district sponsored professional development opportunities. Many respondents also choose to participate in various professional organizations, which offer print, online, and face-to-face professional development. University sponsored courses and K-12 / university partnerships, such as the Wisconsin ESEA Title II Improving Teacher Quality Program, are also viable forms of teacher education.

What are some of the challenges you have experienced surrounding high school literacy and what are you doing in an attempt to overcome these challenges? What could any of the professional organizations do to help?

“We need to help students know that this work is worth the effort; they need to keep trying.”

Though teachers are seeking further professional development in the area of disciplinary literacy, there are many challenges that stand in the way.

With the implementation of Common Core, teachers across the curriculum face professional and personal challenges. Some of the teachers we interviewed expressed fears about how they would start conversations with colleagues about using the standards. One of the newer teachers felt nervous about making suggestions to veterans about curriculum and instruction. For example, one high school social studies teacher felt that her easy acceptance of working together to improve curriculum might threaten other teachers: “Other staff see that as somebody who ... tried to overachieve or ... [tried] to make themselves look better than others... This may have had me shy away from promoting literacy outside of those people that know I accept it... It’s actually the staff and how splintered they are over the issues as to whether or not literacy is essential.”

There’s also the enduring challenge of convincing teachers across the curriculum that literacy is important in all subjects. A high school science teacher related her experience with colleagues who are “feeling uncomfortable or uncertain when being asked to teach literacy in science or math, many colleagues feel that it isn’t ‘their job’ to do so—frustrated that they are being asked to spend time on reading and writing skills while their English teaching coworkers are never asked to incorporate science or math topics into their reading and writing intensive courses.”

These enduring challenges are compounded by the conflict of time that exists when attempting to integrate teaching literacy strategies and content area curriculum. Through interviews we have found that many teachers feel that time is a profoundly contributing factor in their ability to integrate literacy instruction into their core content curriculum. A teacher from Baraboo stated that designing lessons incorporating reading skills and strategies takes added time to prepare. This teacher states that “... fitting reading into the lesson rather than it being the mode of learning...” poses a challenge in itself. The goal is to incorporate reading in a seamless fashion, however, in this case the inclusion of those skills in instruction is done at select intervals rather than as part of the routine.

The addition of Reading Specialist and Instructional

Resource Teachers has created an outreach for resources to help incorporate reading into content areas. However, there is a valid concern that providing one literacy coach for the entire high school is inadequate. These resource personnel are often tied up in meetings and training sessions for staff and are inaccessible to content area teachers.

Many high school teachers desire a central location for literacy resources. Teachers want to have resources that are multiple lexile levels in addition to being relevant to the content of their curriculum. Having a central source for content area literacy resources is a challenge that is faced by many teachers: “The most valuable thing that professional organizations could do to help us is create some of these resources or at least find a centralized location for teachers to share them.”

Resources such as articles and narratives as well as charts and graphs are extremely important in the correlation to the textbook. Non-fiction articles and journals prepare students for common assessments such as the ACT,[®] with graphs, data and researched-based information. Students need to be career and college prepared, and disciplinary literacy encourages students to use lifelong learning strategies throughout their lives. “Written resources that are content based but relevant and engaging” are very important for high school teachers.

With any paradigm shift of this magnitude, professional development to support teacher expertise is key. Training for how to incorporate literacy into the disciplines and how to differentiate instruction for students was noted as important by teachers in the fields. Preferred methods of professional development were job embedded, such as literacy coaches, action research, and professional collaboration.

While the concept of disciplinary literacy is a major shift in thinking and teaching for many content-area teachers, our respondents seem to have similar concerns and thoughts surrounding the inclusion of literacy in their classrooms. While there are many challenges to adapting instruction to include literacy skills and strategies, educators are open to, and seeking, professional development opportunities. Most of our educators are ready to step up

to the plate. They are seeking resources that are readily available and relevant to their content area. As the WSRA High School Literacy Committee, we are hopeful that further developments in the field of disciplinary literacy will help educators achieve the integration of literacy and content in their classrooms that is demanded by CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) and help us to cultivate students who are College and Career Ready.

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Literacy Methods for Teaching ELLs through Children's Literature and Ways to Provide Culturally Relevant Instruction

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The necessary components of an appropriate language environment for children include conversation, acceptance, experience, and children's literature (Gestwicki, 1999). "Because culture and language are critical components of children's development, practices cannot be developmentally appropriate unless they are responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 4). Children's literature may be used as the base of instruction for teaching a variety of literacy methods, while being responsive to diverse cultures.

Culturally relevant instruction is a kind of teaching that encourages children to choose academic excellence, while at the same time allowing them to maintain a positive identification with their own heritage and background (Ladson-Billings, 1992). In other words, culturally responsive reading instruction bridges the gap between the school and the world of the student. This type of teaching empowers students by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. As Nichols, Rupley, Webb-Johnson, and Tlusty (2000) stated, "Without culturally congruent reading instruction, different emergent literacy experiences and exposure to literature from their culture or from traditional American literature may inhibit success in early literacy instruction" (p. 2). Therefore, it is important to attend to the culture of the student in order for literacy instruction to be meaningful.

English Language Learners (ELLs) bring intelligence, experiences, and skills to the classroom, but they may have difficulty expressing themselves at times due to the language barrier (Rice, Pappamiheil, & Lake, 2004). Also, culturally and linguistically diverse students may have literacy experiences that are different from what is expected by the school (Stahl, 1990).

In order to develop a significant oral language base in English from which to read and write, the ELL needs to have many opportunities to experience the rhythms and rhymes of language through poems, songs, and movement. This article shares literacy methods for teaching ELLs through the use of culturally relevant instruction and literature-based activities for reading and writing.

Literature-Based Strategies

There are several literature-based strategies that capitalize on background knowledge to help with skill development (August & Shanahan, 2006). Such strategies include connecting new vocabulary with ELLs' native language with vocabulary instruction and expanding on language by using word study activities.

Vocabulary

Children's literature serves as a natural and easy vehicle in which to learn vocabulary. After selecting words to teach from a story, teachers should provide explicit instruction in teaching word meanings

(Apthorp, Randel, Cherasaro, Clark, McKeown, & Beck, 2012). “Providing explicit instruction includes explicitly defining and contextualizing terms using student-friendly definitions, helping students to actively process words, and providing multiple exposures to vocabulary” (Wexler, Reed, Mitchell, Doyle, & Clancy, 2014, p. 3). Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) suggest frequent exposure to a new vocabulary word, possibly focusing attention on each new word between 8–10 times per week (p. 73).

As a new book is introduced, teach students new vocabulary and encourage them to use this vocabulary in their speech and storytelling. For example, when introducing the book *Mary Wore Her Red Dress and Henry Wore His Green Sneakers* (Peek, 1998), introduce the color words in this story by showing pictures: red, green yellow, blue, brown, purple, orange and pink. After students are comfortable with color words, another level of vocabulary (the clothing) is introduced: dress, sneakers, sweater, jeans, pants, shirt, and hat. Then, write the words on the board with the picture next to it to show the correlation between picture and word.

Another way to teach vocabulary is to use pictures and objects that help the ELL to make the abstract concrete. In *Words Their Way with English Learners*, Bear, Helman, Templeton, Invernizzi, and Johnston (2007, p. 73) described the procedures for previewing vocabulary with ELLs. First, select up to 10 pictures from the story for vocabulary study and preview these pictures with the students. It is important to name the picture and repeat the name often, paraphrasing and generating examples, such as; *I placed my cap on the table. Do you take off your cap when you are in school?* After all of the cards have been discussed, chant each word as a group.

When teaching for content related vocabulary, locate books that are written in two languages. Then, introduce the student to the English word for a particular phenomenon; such as plant, earth, and multiplication (shown in English, Spanish, and Hindi).

English: plant; **Spanish:** planta; **Hindi:** paudha

English: earth; **Spanish:** tierra; **Hindi:** prithvi

English: multiplication; **Spanish:** multiplicacion;
Hindi: gunana

In order to connect new vocabulary with the ELLs’ native language, write new vocabulary on the board when teaching content subjects (social studies, math, science, etc). With the words of the new vocabulary in English, also have the corresponding word in the student’s native language. An example of a children’s book that has two languages is *!Marimba! Animals from A to Z* (Mora, 2006). This picture book has animal pictures that correspond with each letter of the alphabet. For the letter N, we see a picture of goats and otters, “Nanny goats and nutrias gobble salads of nuts and flowers” (p. 18). What is beneficial to the Spanish ELL is that nutrias means otters in Spanish and the picture of the otter is clearly shown in the text.

At this point, the ELL writes the name of the animal in her own native language and in English, associating the newly learned animal name with her own language. Writing the word in both languages increases the chance of remembering the new word based on the established connection.

Word Study

Word study is a versatile way to respond to literature while learning key aspects of words. In word study, students sort words, pictures, letters, and sounds. With word sorting, students are actively engaged by searching for similarities and differences among words, comparing word features, and forming generalizations, which they apply to new words (Williams et al., 2009).

Word study with ELLs is useful when considerations are made by comparing English to the ELLs’ language based on sounds, writing system and their literacy experiences (Bear, et al., 2007). Word study teaches students to discover the base principles of spelling by examining the regularities and patterns of English orthography needed to read and to spell (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnson, 2012). The simple process of sorting words into categories “searching, comparing, contrasting, and analyzing” (p. 55) is the heart of word study.

Sound Sorts

Using a piece of quality literature, such as *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood (2009), this activity is created for the function of a sound sort,

specifically learning about vowel sounds. Students (K–3) will enjoy the simple tale about people and animals in the house who are taking a nap and will smile at the comical illustrations. The text is a series of phrases that build upon one another in cumulative rhyme.

There is a house, a napping house,
where everyone is sleeping.

And in that house, there is a bed, a cozy bed
in a napping house, where everyone is sleeping.

And on that bed there is a granny, a snoring
granny, on a cozy bed, in a napping house,
where everyone is sleeping. (2009, unnumbered)

After listening to the text, readers then use a sound board to sort sounds (see Figure 1). A sound board focuses on letter-sound features (beginning consonants, digraphs, blends and vowels). For this sound sort, practice of the English vowel sounds (short and long) is helpful to the ELL child as English vowel sounds are different than most other languages.

The goal for this lesson is for the students to read the chosen word and to identify the vowel sound in the word. Using the soundboard (Figure 1), the students may work in partners to match the word to the correct column according to the vowel sound in the word. The sound board has the image of a bed, grandma, child, and flea. Grouping the students in partners with a native speaker and an ELL works well here, providing support to the ELL. After the class reads the words aloud, as a group, talk about the vowel sound in the word: short /e/, short /a/, long /i/, and long /e/. Allow students to hear the designated vowel sound. Then, have partners place their word under the correct column on the sound board. After reading the story, display the sound board and talk about the four pictures (bed, grandma, child, and flea) and the words with the appropriate vowel sound that correlates with each picture.

Sound Board for Napping House (Figure 1)

bed (short e)	grandma (short a)	child (long i)	flea (long e)
			
Net	Cat	Five	Bee
Egg	Fan	Slide	Knee
Sled	Sack	Bride	Teeth
Bell	Wag	Pipe	Pea
Desk	Satchel	Nine	Key
	Rag		

Similarly, another sound sort focuses on the medial vowel sound (see Figure 2). The following is a word sort contrasting sounds and spelling patterns for the medial vowels, long /a/ and long /o/ (Bear, Helman, Templeton, Invernizzi, & Johnston, 2007, p. 296). Ask students to read the words aloud and check to see that they know the meanings of the words. Generally, teach up to five unknown terms. Say each of the words and compare them to the guide words: *Does **take** sound like **nail** or **goat** in the middle?* Have your students join in as you model the isolation, identification, and categorization of the medial vowel sound. Show students the letter patterns for consonants (C) and vowels (V). In this activity, they listen to the medial sound and also learn about consonant-vowel letter combinations.

(Figure 2)

Nail (long a)		Goat (long o)	
CVCe	CVC	CVCe	CVC
Take	Fail	Rope	Coast
Same	Maid	Broke	Foam
Wake	Waist	Chose	load
Brake	Trail	Owe	Loaf
Cape	Braid	Cope	
Hate		Stole	

Concept Sort or Meaning Sort

A concept sort, also described as a meaning sort, is conducted by using pictures for learning about a content area, such as the topic of *community* (grades 3–5). List the words having to do with the community onto cards, cut them apart, and place them into envelopes or small plastic bags (See Figure 3). Using the board with the headings of Urban, Rural, and Waterway, have the students place the words underneath the heading of the appropriate category (Bear, et al., 2007, p. 295). After sorting, discuss how the places and objects relate to each other, for example, under the category of **rural**: *The horses are grazing on the farm.*

(Figure 3)

Urban	Rural	Waterway
Skyscraper	Ranch	Harbor
Subway	Farm	Port
Taxi	Horses	Dock

The discussion conducted in partners and with the whole class is beneficial because it expands on the meaning by using words in multiple ways.

Homophone Sort

Word sorts may be used to learn about words that sound the same but have different meanings, such as with homophones. A homophone is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning and spelling; such as, as heir or air. The children’s story used for this example activity, targeted for grades 4, 5, and 6 is, *Dear Deer: A Book of Homophones* (Barretta, 2007).

This story is about a deer that is writing his aunt to tell about the various things that go on in the zoo. Several animals are mentioned and the homophones are written in upper case for easy detection. After reading this text aloud to the class, have them write down as many homophones as they hear.

Excerpt from *Dear Deer: A book of Homophones* (Barretta, 2007).

DEAR DEER,

I now live at the zoo. Wait until you HEAR what goes on over HERE. Love, AUNT ANT

The MOOSE loves MOUSSE. He ATE EIGHT bowls.

Have YOU seen the EWE?

She’s been in a DAZE for DAYS.

That’s HIM, the HORSE who is

HOARSE from humming a HYMN.
(unnumbered, 2007)

Using the examples of to, two, and too, demonstrate how to put these two words together in a column. The purpose for this activity is to give students practice with words, comparing those that are pronounced the same, look different, and have different meanings. After reading the text, and pointing out the homophones within the story, give students an envelope with words in them where they are to pair them and place them in a column (see Figure 4).

(Figure 4)

Aloud	Allowed
Morning	Mourning
Berry	Bury
Presence	Presents

Pattern Sort

Another word sort, a pattern sort, involves students using their visual skills (Bear, et. al, 2012), and this particular activity involves visually scanning to find the double letters. Using directions for boiling an egg called, “Egg Fizz” for grades 1–2, students are to identify double letter words and to sort them into the correct letter category. Copy the following story onto a paper and pass it out to pairs of students. The students are instructed to read the passage and circle all of the double letter words: (will, need, egg, cook, fizz, pull, feed, and shell).

Egg Fizz (Webber, 2008):

You can do science with a few things from your house. First, you **will** need to hard boil an **egg**. Put the **egg** in a pot of water. Heat the water so it boils. Let it **cook**. Ask your mom or dad to help you with this. Then, **fill** a cup with vinegar. Put the **egg** in the cup. Watch the **egg**. You will see **fizz** above the **egg**. **Keep** the **egg** in the cup for one day. **Pull** the **egg** out of the cup. **Feel** the **egg**. You **will feel** that it has a soft **shell**. Move the **egg** to a dry spot. Let it sit for a day. It **will** get hard again.

After reading, the teacher will ask the students which words they circled. Then, as a class, sort the words into the correct double letter category (gg, oo, ll, ee). For ELLs whose native language is Spanish, show how they might locate words with double letters from their own language; such as, direccion (address), perro (dog), llave (key), and puzzle (jigsaw puzzle).

Word sorts, sound sorts, and concept sorts are wonderful ways to explore the intricacies of letters, sounds, and meanings, allowing the ELL practice in speaking words and sounds as well as visually looking at the letter combinations. In the next section, ideas for literature-based strategies are presented considering themes, natural items, and drama.

Themes, Natural Items, Drama and Writing

Identifying themes that reflect the culture of the ELL is motivating to that student. For example, *Baseball in April and Other Stories* (Soto, 1990) is a collection of eleven short stories for grades 7–12 featuring daily experiences of Mexican American youth. For a post-reading activity, have each student discuss his/her favorite story and provide reasons for liking the story. Also, using evidence from the text, discuss characters, interesting dialogue, and the conflict and resolution from the text.

Natural Items

Teaching in culturally relevant ways includes exposing ELLs to common items from nature that are present in their native country as well as the country in which they are living. It allows them to make a connection with the new vocabulary. Natural items including trees, grass, flowers, butterflies, fish, clay and vegetables or fruit may be used as objects for development of English vocabulary. The English

word for the item is listed beside the native ELL's language. Using objects from their native country assists in the development of vocabulary, connecting their home culture to their adopted one (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006a).

Natural items may also be used in writing activities. In order to facilitate writing, each student is provided with a blank copy of the graphic organizer to classify words describing nature by using one of the senses. Traditional Japanese poems, Haiku, lend themselves well for this activity. Haiku are poems about the physical world which are very short, made up of three lines.

An old silent pond...
A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again. (Matsuo, n.d.)

A summer river being crossed
how pleasing
with sandals in my hands! (Buson, n.d.)

Figure 5 contains examples of how these Haiku poems can be used in a graphic organizer that classifies natural things with words describing them.

(Figure 5)

Natural things	Words Describing Nature
Pond	silent
Pond	old
Frog	Jumps in pond
Summer river	pleasing

Since the natural item (pond) is common to the ELL, the learning of the new word (silent) becomes easier due to the relevance of the item.

Drama

Drama is a useful strategy for ELLs to learn new vocabulary and also to become comfortable with the English Language. An example of drama incorporated into children's literature is the story *Martina the beautiful cockroach: Cuban folktale* (Deedy, 2007). Martina Josefina Catalina Cucaracha is a beautiful cockroach who is ready to get married, but does not know which mate to choose. After receiving offers from several suitors, her grandmother advises her to play a trick on each suitor by conducting a test in order to reveal the best choice. Children will

(Figure 6)

French	English
Un crocodile s'en allant à la guerre Disait au r'voir à ses petits enfants Traînant la queue*, la queue dans la poussière Il s'en allait combattre les éléphants.	A crocodile is going to war, Bidding his little children farewell, Dragging his tail, his tail in the dust He was going to fight the elephants.
Refrain: Ah les crococo, les crococo, les crocodiles Sur les bords du Nil ils sont partis n'en parlons plus Ah les crococo, les crococo, les crocodiles Sur les bords du Nil ils sont partis tout est fini.	(Chorus) Oh the cro-co-co, the cro-co-co, the crocodiles From the banks of the Nile, they left, say no more about it, Oh the cro-co-co, the cro-co-co, the crocodiles From the banks of the Nile, they left, it's all over.

enjoy playing the roles of Martina, the suitors, and grandmother with the antics of this story. The new English language vocabulary can be connected with Spanish speaker's vocabulary, including cockroach (cucaracha), marriage (matrimonio), coffee (café).

Drama may be utilized with the collection of poems, *A movie in my pillow/Una película enmi almohada* (Argueta, 2001). A young boy has moved from El Salvador and adjusts to his new life in San Francisco. Children may dramatize his night dreams where he recalls his life in his homeland with scenes of volcanoes, cornmeal pupusas, (traditional Salvadoran dish) and stories from his grandmother.

Drama may also be incorporated with song. The French song, *Ah les crocodiles* (Oh, The Crocodiles) is about crocodiles going to war (see Figure 6). Using tambourines and drums, the students may create the beat of the song. Dramatize the actions by waving goodbye, dragging the tail, and fighting the elephants.

Writing

Researchers recommend that teachers immerse and surround the students with literature and models for their writing (Graves, 1983, 1994, 2004; Calkins, 1994). Beginning readers and writers should write every day and draw pictures to illustrate their writing. Using the patterned book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Martin, 1970), have students make their own version by changing the animals.

Green Frog,
Green Frog,
What do you see?

I see a
Purple kangaroo (instead of purple cat)
Looking at me.

An example of using literature to encourage writing is the collection of poetry, *Iguanas in the Snow/Iguanas en la nieve* (Alarcon, 2005). The poems are set in the ancient redwood forests of the Sierras. The illustration is of a family frolicking in the snow, and the picture reminds the poet of the iguanas playing by his grandmother's house in Mexico. The students write in their own native language about their experience of winter and identify English words for the corresponding native word from the book. For example, words for English may include *clouds* and *snow* and the corresponding words for Spanish are *nubes* and *nieve*. Beginning with their own language and then identifying English words facilitates learning from the known to the unknown.

A dialogue journal is another writing strategy that is useful. The ELL is provided an opportunity to write a journal entry in English as well as in his native language. Share the journal with another student who is more proficient in English. The English-proficient peer responds to the ELL's journal writing in English. The ELL then responds to the peer with more writing and the written dialogue develops over a topic. Dialogue takes place about daily events, unique learning experiences, and responding to literature. These dialogue journals have also been used at home with the ELL where the dialogue is between

parents, a relative or family friend. This also develops a relationship and connection between the ELL, the family and the teacher (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Here is an example of a dialogue journal between an ELL, teacher, and parent:

Teacher: *Tell me about your favorite things you like to play with at home.*

ELL: *I play with my dog an (and) cat. Favort (My favorite) thing is to play outside (in) the rain.*

Parent: *I like you leaning (learning).*

Teacher: *I am glad your parent wants you to be learning. You like to play in the rain. I think children your age like to play in the rain during the summer.*

The ELL writes in his native language, or English, or use both languages. The journal can be written at school and the student's family responds at home. By writing for an authentic audience (the teacher and parents), the experience becomes powerful.

Conclusion

A famous writer once compared language to a city, and in the building of this city, every human being brings a stone (Emerson, 1895). Just as in building a city, teachers must build upon the language of the ELLs. By using culturally relevant instruction and children's literature, teachers capitalize on the students' known experiences, which empower them intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

When reading and writing behaviors are modeled in the classroom, it results in effectively sharing a love of reading with your students. Literature-based strategies of vocabulary instruction, word study, drama, and the use of natural items in both reading and writing facilitate English learning and literacy comprehension for ELLs.

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Motivating ELLs Through Booktalks and Speed Booking

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore strategies used for increasing English language learners' (ELLs) reading motivation along with their knowledge about books and authors. After reading multiple sources, the author found two strategies that focused on this goal: booktalking and speed booking. The author examined three professional books and ten peer-reviewed articles related to booktalking and speed booking, all of which were published within the past 11 years. Implementing these strategies into her classroom during a four-month period, the author gave weekly booktalks and guided her fourth-grade students to acquire the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills needed to participate in a speed-booking event where students shared their favorite books with peers. Through pre- and post-project surveys, the author found using these strategies helped students become more cognizant of books and authors while also increasing their motivation to read. Also included are procedures for implementing these strategies into the classroom..

The air is filled with quiet anticipation. Dozens of eyes scan nervously around the room, not quite sure where to settle. The recycle bin is overflowing with ripped cardboard and plastic, freshly discarded from the morning frenzy of opening new school supplies. The classroom floor is still summer shiny, unmarked by the spills, mud tracks, and scuffs that are sure to come. It is the first day of school. I've just passed out a reading-interest survey, and my fourth graders sit quietly, their perfectly sharpened pencils making the first marks of the year. I shuffle around the room answering questions when a boy in the back raises his hand and shouts, "I forgot the name of my favorite book!" The comment puzzles me, and I laugh to myself ready to tell him that if he cannot remember the name of his favorite book, then it's probably not his favorite book. The irony of the situation quickly turns to shock as more students start chiming in, admitting that they, too, do

not know their favorite books. Another student asks what to do because he does not know any authors. This statement echoes throughout the room. My mind spins as I realize this fresh group of English language learners does not know books or authors. I realize right away that my students are going to need some guidance for growth in these areas.

English Language Learners

In today's classrooms, English language learners (ELLs) face tremendous challenges. These students must not only keep up with the extensive standards presented in the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association [NGA] Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Offices [CCSSO], 2010) but also meet high expectations in their new language. Each year, ELLs must participate in the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS

for ELLs®) test. The purpose of ACCESS for ELLs® is to annually test ELLs until they reach a level that is accepted as English language proficient (Fox & Fairbairn, 2011). “The test assesses social and general academic English in reading, speaking, listening, and writing, as well as language used in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies” (Fox & Fairbairn, 2011, p. 425).

Because ELLs need to navigate through social and academic language in each of the core content areas, it is imperative that they get multiple opportunities to practice with language. “Schools can capitalize on the social nature of literacy learning, not only for the benefit of ELL students, but also for the benefit of all children in the classroom, by structuring conversations where language is used in meaningful ways” (Purdy, 2008, p. 45). Booktalks and speed booking are two valuable strategies teachers can use to help English language learners increase their reading motivation, become more aware of books and authors, and provide them with opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions about books.

Booktalks Defined

When teachers finish a book they have enjoyed, often times the natural tendency is to share the book with others, and teachers usually know exactly who should read the book next. This natural instinct to share books can be transformed into a booktalk. A booktalk is a short advertisement given for a particular book that is delivered to students in person. The main purpose of a booktalk is to attract potential readers and give them a desire to read a certain book (Chance & Lesesne, 2012; Fischbaugh, 2004).

Before Booktalking

Before planning a booktalk, the presenter must spend time considering the titles. The audience, most often made up of students, probably has a plethora of interests. The booktalker should try to address the interests of the entire audience, not just promote personal favorites (Baker, 2010). In order for the booktalk to be successful, the booktalker needs to read the book in its entirety. In fact, this is “Golden Rule Number One” in *The Booktalker’s Bible* by Chapple Langemack (2003):

You must read the book to have any credibility with your audience. Woe betide you on the day that an eager teenager shouts out, “Did you really read all those books?” (and I promise you it will happen) and you can’t honestly and confidently answer yes. It’s a sad thing to see such a golden opportunity blown to smithereens. (p. 28)

Components of Booktalks

Booktalks have three main components: the hook, the sharing of the plot, and the closing. The hook should instantly capture the attention of the audience (Chance & Lesesne, 2012). Teachers can choose from a variety of enticing hooks. An intriguing question can serve as a hook. For example, if booktalking *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made* (Pastis, 2013) an effective opening question could be, “What would your mom do if you drove a car through the living room window?” This question is sure to grab students’ attention. In his book *Igniting a Passion for Reading*, Steven Layne (2009), a noted literacy leader and advocate for booktalks, suggested using props, wearing simple costumes, or taking the accent of a main character to provide a captivating hook. Another idea is to take on the identity of a certain character and speak from his or her point of view. Enthusiasm is key when delivering the hook. The more enthusiastic the booktalker, the more successful the booktalk will be (Baker, 2010; Turner, 2005).

Next, the presenter must decide which parts of the plot to share. Most often, the speaker shares the basic plot of the book and keeps the ending a secret. If the ending is spoiled, the audience will have no need to read the book, deeming the booktalk useless (Turner, 2005). When deciding which parts of the plot to share, the booktalker should keep in mind parts that are especially funny, dramatic, or interesting (Chance & Lesesne, 2012). Sometimes booktalkers may even want to read an excerpt from the book. This can be effective for engaging listeners as long as there is not too much background information needed in order for students to understand (Layne, 2009).

The last component is the closing of the booktalk. As stated earlier, the purpose of the booktalk is to entice students to want to read. What better way to do this

than to leave a little mystery? It should be the booktalker's goal to create a tease or urgency for students to pick up the book (Turner, 2005). Closing with a question, reading a riveting excerpt, or summarizing the problem and asking the audience members to imagine how they would solve it are all creative options for the closing of a booktalk. For example, when concluding a booktalk for *Stone Fox* (Gardiner, 1980), the booktalker could ask, "Will Little Willy win the race and save Grandpa, or will Stone Fox destroy Willy's only chance to rescue the farm and get Grandpa back?"

Benefits of Booktalks

When teachers use booktalks, they help connect their students with a perfectly matched book. As teachers get to know their students, they should keep students' interests in mind and find out which types of books students enjoy reading (Yunker, 2006). Booktalking a variety of books that fit students' interests can be a useful tool for increasing reading motivation. Booktalking will also show students that their teachers have a love and enthusiasm for reading.

Booktalking develops a positive rapport among teachers and students because it shows students that adults are eager to connect them to a book they will love (Chance & Lesesne, 2012). Another added benefit is that booktalks are free to give. They highlight excellent reading options without any additional funding.

For general education teachers, booktalking is an effective tool for student engagement; booktalking is also an effective tool that can help ELL teachers accomplish this goal in reading. ELLs can greatly benefit from listening to booktalks. "Literature can play a critical role in immersing children in their new language. Both school and classroom libraries are integral parts in this process because access to books has been shown to encourage more frequent reading" (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006, p. 734). Because this is true, teachers of ELLs have an especially important job. These teachers have the momentous task of helping their students navigate through a new language; additionally, ELL teachers must help their students fall in love with books written in this new language.

Challenges of Booktalks

While there are many benefits to including booktalks in the classroom, some may argue that they take up too much instructional time or that the planning process is too involved. However, most educators are already lifelong readers. If this is the case, booktalking becomes a natural occurrence. The booktalker can plan how much time to spend booktalking. Even if teachers booktalk one title each week, the message that reading is important and fun will begin to spread. This is a message all students, but especially ELLs, need to hear.

Speed Booking Defined

Once students have become accustomed to hearing booktalks, they should be encouraged to give their own. This can be an intimidating task, especially for ELLs who may have difficulty speaking in front of large groups. Speed booking is a strategy teachers can implement into their classrooms that gives students opportunities to talk about books in a one-on-one setting. Not much literature is available on the topic of speed booking. Because of this, information on speed booking for this article primarily comes from Boardman Moen's (2007) *Book Links* article, "Speed Booking: Creating a Classroom Literacy Community."

According to *Merriam Webster*, the definition of speed dating is "an event at which each participant converses individually with all the prospective partners for a few minutes in order to select those with whom dates are desired" (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/speeddating>). Speed booking is the literary version of speed dating and is set up much the same way. During speed booking, participants are paired up and tell a partner about a book that he or she recently read and enjoyed (Moen, 2007). Once the time limit is up, the partners switch roles. When each partner has shared, participants rotate and find a new partner with whom they share their books (ibid, 2007).

Preparation for Speed Booking

Before the speed-booking event, students need to choose a book they have recently read and enjoyed. Teachers should ensure the books are self-selected. "When children have the opportunity to read

self-selected materials, it increases their positive feelings about reading and increases their reading achievement” (Turner, 2005, p. 195). After students choose a book, they should spend some time creating a one-page script by writing down exactly what they want to share about the book. This is beneficial for ELLs because it gives them a chance to play a leading role in forming the topic of discussion (Purdy, 2008). During the speed-booking event, students can use the script as a guide for speaking.

The Day of Speed Booking

Students should come to the event with their books and scripts in hand. Students will also need a recording sheet to write down the titles of books they are interested in reading. Then they pair up with a partner. The teacher should establish a rotating routine so that when the sharing is finished, the students know who stays seated and who rotates. Then the sharing begins. Each partner shares for 90 seconds. The teacher should walk around and listen to the discussions. The first time speed booking is done, students may need help in order to stay on task and tell about their books (Moen, 2007).

Benefits of Speed Booking

One benefit of speed booking is that it encourages reluctant readers to read and finish a book (Moen, 2007). This event gives reluctant readers a purpose and audience for reading and sharing their books. Another benefit is that students hear about books from peers rather than adults. This is important because a recommendation by a peer serves as a strong reading motivator (Howard, 2012; Younker, 2006). Students participating in speed booking have the opportunity to come away with a list full of future reading material. Thus, the reading community strengthens because of the personal connections made by reading books recommended by peers.

Speed booking also provides benefits that are specific to ELLs. The need to orally respond to texts and practice flexible use of English is critical for ELLs’ language development (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004). Participating in speed booking provides an opportunity for ELLs to experiment with both of these skills.

Challenges of Speed Booking

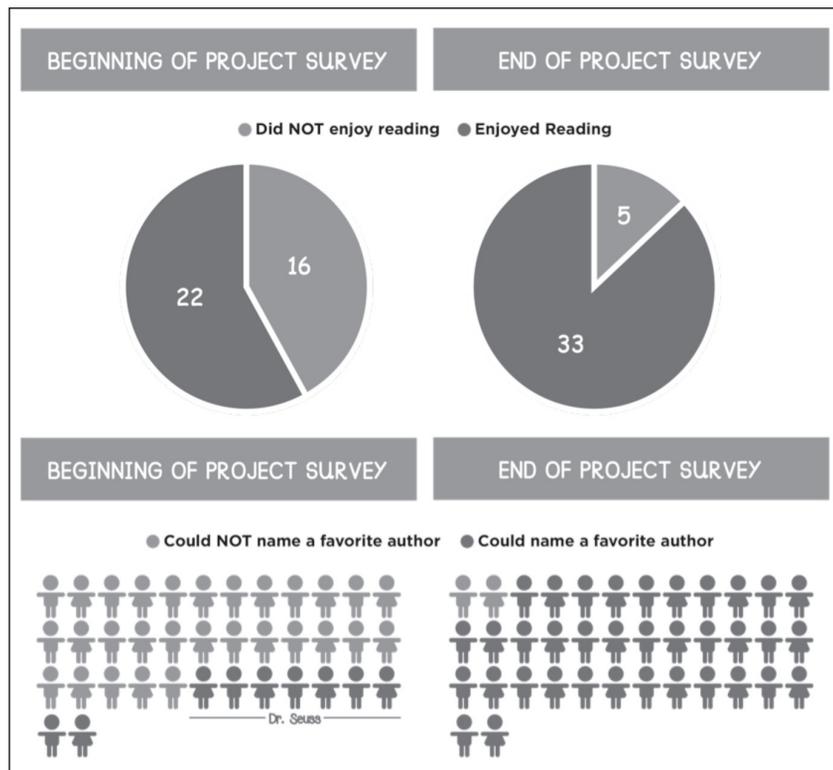
Although the benefits of speed booking are many, there are a few challenges. One challenge is that this activity requires a large space in which to rotate. Teachers can solve this problem by moving to a larger area, such as the gym or library. If this cannot be done, teachers can use the perimeter of the classroom and have students rotate along a line of chairs or desks (Moen, 2007). Time is another obstacle of speed booking. Similar to booktalks, teachers must decide how much time to dedicate to this activity. Instructional time is very valuable, but if students are engaging in discussions about books, the time will be well spent. “English learners need extensive practice with their new language—opportunities to hear and use English in a variety of purposeful, authentic ways” (Vardell et al., 2006, p. 734). Booktalking and speed booking are strategies that provide these essential opportunities.

Application to the Classroom

After reading about the benefits of booktalks and speed booking, I decided to try these strategies with my two sections of fourth-grade ELLs. Because our school is a Title 1 school, meaning we receive funds from the government because the majority of our students are living at or near the poverty level, my students may not always have access to books at home or parents who speak English. I wanted to see how these circumstances affected my students’ reading interests and attitudes. If their reading motivation and knowledge of available texts were low, I hoped that using booktalks and speed booking could help improve both these areas.

To gauge my students’ reading motivation levels and their knowledge of books and authors, I gave a reading interest survey (See Figure 1). I learned that 29 of my 38 students could not name their favorite authors. Upon further questioning, I discovered this was not because my students forgot the names of their favorite authors; rather, it was because they simply did not know the names of any authors. Of the nine students who did name a favorite author, seven of them wrote down Dr. Seuss. This suggested that my students had little experience reading a variety of books. I knew this needed to change, and I hoped that giving weekly booktalks would increase my

Figure 1. Reading Interest Survey Results



students' motivation to read as well as their knowledge about books and authors.

In September, I started giving weekly booktalks where I would introduce two to four titles. When selecting which books to booktalk, I kept in mind the reading needs of my ELLs who struggle with reading, some so much that reading is not enjoyable for them. In fact, on the beginning-of-the-year survey, 16 out of 38 students claimed they did not enjoy reading (see Figure 1). This showed me that my students needed to be introduced to texts that were engaging and approachable, given their individual reading levels. I also made sure that the books I chose were available in either my classroom library or our school library. This ensured that if a student was interested in reading a particular book, I could get it in his or her hands right away.

During booktalk time, which lasted anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes, my students were engaged and excited. I added variation in the ways I delivered the booktalks. Sometimes I took on the identity of a main character, brought in props, or showed pictures relating to the book. Other times I started with an intriguing question that grabbed my students'

attention. As they listened to the booktalks, I asked my students to have their "Someday Lists" out and ready. "The Someday List" was a convenient place for students to write down titles they were interested in reading. These lists helped them keep track of their future reading plans.

While observing my students during booktalks, I noticed they were genuinely interested. While gathered on the carpet, some of them got up on their knees and started inching their way closer to the front. When I ended booktalks with an intriguing question, students shouted out their thoughts and answers. Immediately after booktalks, many students asked if they could be the first to read one of the books. I even had to start doing a book drawing, a strategy suggested by Donalyn Miller in the book *Reading in the Wild* (Miller & Kelley, 2014). Students enter their names in a drawing to see who gets to read the book first. My students cheered (and some groaned) after hearing the results of the drawings. Based on these observations, I could see that my students' excitement for books was on the rise.

My students displayed the benefits of booktalks each week when our class headed to the school library.

For the first time, they came to the library with a purpose in mind. Most of my students knew exactly which books they wanted to check out. This became a problem when the library had only a couple copies of certain books. The students filled out hold slips each week to ensure they would get a turn to check out a booktalked title.

From September to January, I booktalked a total of 30 books (see Appendix A for a book list). Between my two classes, these titles were checked out of the school library 142 times. Students even went to the public library to get books because they didn't want to be on the wait list at school. I counted five booktalked titles in our classroom that came from the public library. Two students even purchased books that I booktalked.

I can say confidently that giving booktalks improved the overall reading motivation in my classroom. After four months of booktalking, I surveyed my students again regarding their feelings about reading. This time 33 out of 38 students stated they enjoyed reading (see Figure 1). I again asked my students to name their favorite authors. This time, only two students left this question blank. The other students listed amongst themselves 17 different authors as favorites, a substantially wider variety than from the beginning of the year (see Figure 1). Giving weekly booktalks improved my students' reading motivation and knowledge of books and authors.

After the success of booktalking, I wanted to further increase my students' reading motivation. I thought it would be very beneficial for them to take part in a speed-booking event. Not only would this event give them an engaging way to share and learn about books, but it would also provide an opportunity for them to practice their writing and speaking skills, which for struggling ELLs is very important. I invited another fourth-grade class to participate in the speed-booking event. I chose to work with another class because within my classroom, students usually know what their classmates are reading. Because booktalking was a part of our weekly routine, many of the same titles kept getting passed on from student to student. By meeting with another class, I thought the students would get a fresh look at some new texts.

To help my students prepare for this event, I asked them to choose one book they had recently read and enjoyed. I then gave them a speed-booking guide (see Appendix B). I created the guide in order to help my students gather their thoughts about what to share. On the guide, they filled out the book's title and author. Then they wrote a summary of the book without giving away the ending. I encouraged the students to write this summary as if they were giving a booktalk. I also included on the guide a place for them to explain why another student should read the book. It took my students about two class periods to finish filling out the speed-booking guide.

When the guide was completed, we did several practice rounds before meeting up with the other fourth-grade class. I had my students form two lines where they were each facing another student in the opposite line. We named these lines the movers and the non-movers. Because of the need to rotate and change partners after sharing, one line always remains stationary while the other line moves one spot to the right. After we established the line names, the students took a seat on the floor. They had a copy of their books, their speed-booking guides, and their Someday Lists (future reading lists) ready. After trial and error, I found that I had to be much more specific with the directions than I initially thought. My students needed clear steps to follow. In the end, we practiced using the set of directions found in Appendix C.

My students struggled to follow all these steps. I noticed that many students were racing through their scripts. They were not speaking with excitement; they were more like robots spitting out information. I think they were nervous that they were going to run out of time so they rushed in order to finish. I had to stop and have a conversation about the quality of these booktalks. The purpose of this event was to learn about new books and get excited about reading them. This goal would not be reached if students could not fully comprehend what was being communicated. Previously, I timed each speed-booking round for three minutes. This included time for both partners to share. Because my students were struggling, I decided to add a minute to each speed-booking round.

I also think my students struggled because I did not provide enough modeling for them. I sometimes forget how much step-by-step modeling my ELLs need. I had to start again and model an example of a speed-booking round. This time, I focused on how to speak clearly, slowly, and with excitement. We discussed why the quality of voice was so important during speed booking. No student will get excited about a book if the speaker seems utterly bored and robotic when speaking about the book. From here, I continued to model the list of steps. This time, I had the students practice each step immediately after I modeled it. This explicit instruction with time to practice immediately after each step greatly benefitted my ELLs.

With this new set of steps and many reminders from me, we practiced for two class sessions before the speed-booking event with the other class. I believe this practice time was instrumental in creating a successful speed-booking event. We were able to work out all the bugs before the true event. This practice time also enabled my students to hear about a few new books within our own classroom. But most important, practicing gave my ELLs time to experiment and use English for an authentic purpose. Because the students repeated their booktalks multiple times during practice, they began to feel more comfortable speaking. As I watched and listened, I could see their comfort levels increasing. In fact, many students were even excitedly asking when we were going to meet with the other class. I could tell they were definitely ready for our event.

On the day of the event, my students helped me push all the desks to the center of the classroom. Then the students formed a large circle against the perimeter of the room and sat down on the floor. The next time I use this strategy, I will be sure to reserve the multipurpose room or the gym so that we could have a larger space. With two classes, we were a little crowded, but it still worked.

As the other class came in, armed with books, speed-booking guides, and Someday Lists, they walked their line around and paired up with my students on the floor. This was quick and easy because the line just stayed in order, and the students sat down whenever they got to a new student on the

floor. We did have an odd number of students, so we made one group of three. After this, I made sure the students were sitting face-to-face. Then I quickly reviewed the speed-booking steps. It was important that the other class was prepared as well. Prior to the event, I gave the other fourth-grade teacher the list of steps so that she could prepare her students in advance. After the directions, I set the timer for 4 minutes, and we began.

While observing the students, I noticed they were engaged and listening; however, many students were nervous and talking quietly. I had to walk around and listen in, prompting students to speak up. Again I could tell the students were rushing. Many of them were finishing much sooner than the given time. After the timer went off for the first round, I stopped to remind all the students to take their time and explain their book with excitement. After the next round, when I noticed students were still finishing much earlier than the 4 minutes given, I decided to reduce the time to 3 minutes. I concluded that I would rather have the students share and keep moving than have them sitting wasting a minute at the end of each round. We continued speed booking for 30 minutes and finished seven rounds. Each student met with seven different students and heard about seven different books. Almost every student came away from the event with at least one book title written on his or her "Someday List." The majority of students had three to four titles written on their "Someday Lists."

Although the quality of this event was not what I'd hoped due to students rushing through their booktalks, I still believe it was a valuable time for my ELLs. They practiced listening and speaking skills all while hearing about books their peers had loved. I also need to keep in mind this was the first time my students had met with another class to complete a project like this. I do think nerves had a lot to do with the rushing. I believe the next time I do this event students will be more comfortable speaking with one another.

Implications

I believe booktalks and speed booking are strategies that have many benefits for all students, not just ELLs. During booktalks, students are actively listening. My students were even able to respond to questions and comment back while listening to booktalks. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) English Language Arts-literacy strand SL.4.1c expects fourth graders to “pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Offices [CCSSO], 2014). Booktalks gave my students opportunities to listen, ask questions, and respond.

Additionally, booktalks are easy to use with any content area. We want our students to read a wide variety of texts. In order for this to happen, we need to *show* them a wide variety of texts. Science teachers could booktalk informational texts on science topics. Social studies teachers could booktalk historical fiction or informational texts relevant to their teaching. These teachers should not booktalk books related to their content area only; they could include appropriate personal favorites as well because students need to see their teachers as readers. It would be so powerful for all teachers to booktalk and give students a peek into their own reading lives. This inside look might just give students the motivation they need to become active readers.

Just like booktalks, speed booking also creates an opportunity for students to practice active-listening skills. Speed booking also requires that students practice writing skills. In order to prepare for speed booking, students need to write a short summary of the book on the speed-booking guide (see Appendix B). This summary acts as a starting point for the students as they develop their booktalks to share during speed booking.

Most important, speed booking focuses on speaking. During the preparation for speed booking, students discuss the purpose for speaking and practice speaking with clarity and excitement. This practice is so important for all students, but especially for ELLs who are still experimenting with the English language. Speed booking gives them an authentic and purposeful reason to speak.

The CCSS English Language Arts strand SL.4.4 requires fourth-grade students to “report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace” (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2014). As discussed earlier, students must practice and prepare for speed booking by organizing their information into a speed-booking guide. They also must tell about their book using accurate details while speaking so their partner can understand. Additionally, the CCSS English Language Arts strand SL.4.1b expects students to “follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Offices [CCSSO], 2014). The speed-booking steps (see Appendix C) explicitly lay out the rules for discussion. The students know what actions they need to take in order to participate in a successful speed-booking round. Since lots of practice time was involved, students were able to carry out these assigned roles.

Both booktalking and speed booking require students to use all four domains of literacy. Students are reading books and writing summaries of stories, they are listening to their teacher and classmates talk, and they are speaking to communicate main ideas and thoughts about a text. These strategies provide opportunities for students to engage in activities that utilize the Common Core State Standards; but most important, these strategies are authentic and purposeful. Students practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening all with the purpose of finding new books and becoming more motivated and knowledgeable readers.

I am already imagining the scene for next year’s first day of school. As I am passing out the reading-interest survey to my fresh bunch of ELLs, I will not be so alarmed if they cannot remember the name of their favorite books. In fact, I will know just what to do.

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Appendix A. Booktalk Titles

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Applegate, K., & Castelao, P. (2012). <i>The one and only Ivan</i> . New York: Harper. | Henkes, K. (2000). <i>Wemberly worried</i> . New York: Greenwillow Books. | Pastis, S. (2013). <i>Timmy Failure: Mistakes were made</i> . Somerville, MA: Candlewick. |
| Blume, J. (1980). <i>Superfudge</i> . New York: Dutton. | Holm, J. L., & Holm, M. (2005). <i>Babymouse: Queen of the world!</i> . New York: Random House. | Pennypacker, S., & Frazee, M. (2006). <i>Clementine</i> . New York: Hyperion Books. |
| Blume, J., & Lisker, S. O. (1971). <i>Freckle juice</i> . New York: Four Winds Press. | Krosoczka, J. (2010). <i>Lunch lady and the bake sale bandit</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf. | Raczka, B., & Reynolds, P. (2010). <i>Guyku: a year of haiku for boys</i> . Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin |
| Breen, S. (2008). <i>Violet the pilot</i> . New York: Dial Books. | MacLachlan, P. (1985). <i>Sarah, plain and tall</i> . New York: Harper & Row. | Reynolds, A., & Numberman, N. (2009). <i>Joey Fly, private eye in creepy crawly crime</i> . New York: Henry Holt. |
| Brown, D. (2013). <i>The great American dust bowl</i> . New York: Houghton Mifflin. | Malley, K., Heyer, C. & Goto, S. (2005). <i>Once upon a cool motorcycle dude</i> . New York: Walker & Company. | Schreiber, A., & Speirs, J. (2000). <i>Twister trouble</i> . New York: Scholastic. |
| Clements, A., & Selznick, B. (1996). <i>Frindle</i> . New York: Simon & Schuster. | Moss, M. (1995). <i>Amelia's notebook</i> . Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press. | Shannon, D. (1998). <i>A bad case of stripes</i> . New York: Blue Sky Press. |
| Dadey, D., Jones, M. T., & Gurney, J. S. (1990). <i>Vampires don't wear polka dots</i> . New York: Scholastic. | Naylor, P. R. (1991). <i>Shiloh</i> . New York: Atheneum. | Telgemeier, R. (2010). <i>Smile</i> . New York: Graphix |
| Devlin, W., & Devlin, H. (1971). <i>Cranberry Thanksgiving</i> . New York: Parents' Magazine Press. | Palacio, R. J. (2012) <i>Wonder</i> . New York: Random House. | Warner, G. C. (1977). <i>The boxcar children</i> . Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman. |
| Devlin, W., & Devlin, H. (1988). <i>Cranberry birthday</i> . New York: Four Winds Press. | Palatini, M., & Davis, J. E. (2000). <i>Beadhead</i> . New York: Simon & Schuster. | Watt, M. (2007). <i>Scaredy Squirrel makes a friend</i> . Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press. |
| Favia, L. (2012). <i>Geronimo Stilton saves the Olympics</i> . New York: Papercutz. | | Woodson, J., & Lewis, E. B. (2001). <i>The other side</i> . New York: Putnam's. |
| Gardiner, J. R., & Sewall, M. (1980). <i>Stone Fox</i> . New York: Crowell. | | |

Appendix B. Speed-Booking Guide



Title: _____

Author: _____

Without giving away the ending, tell what happens in this story.

If there are pictures in your book, choose a couple you want to show your partner. Remember the pictures shouldn't give away the ending! I want to show pictures on page numbers: _____

Why should another student read this book?

Appendix C. Speed-Booking Steps

1. Before you begin speaking, wait for the teacher to set the timer and say, "Go!"
2. Greet your partner and introduce yourself if needed.
3. The partner in the non-moving line should share his or her book first. (I found that if I let the students decide who goes first, much time can potentially be wasted).
4. Show the cover of the book.
5. Say the title and the author in a voice loud enough that your partner can hear.
6. Share about your book. Speak with excitement! Use the script you wrote on the speed-booking guide if needed.
7. If you are showing pictures from your book, make sure your partner can see them clearly. (I also reminded the students beforehand that they should not show a picture if it gives away the ending of the book. Before the event, I had the students use sticky notes to mark the pictures they wanted to show so they weren't losing time by searching for them.)
8. Explain why your partner should read this book.
9. Switch roles. Now the student in the moving line will repeat these steps.
10. After the second partner is finished sharing, write down the book title on your someday list if you are interested in reading it.
11. Thank your partner for sharing.
12. Listen for the teacher to say, "Switch" then the partner in the moving line moves one spot to the right.
13. Repeat this process.



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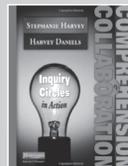
Keith Schroeder

Tech Tools and Easy Activities for Meeting the Speaking and Listening Standards

There are many easy things that we can use with students to help meet the speaking and listening standards. This session will give to lots of simple things you can start using with students immediately to help them meet the speaking and listening standards.

Website: keithschroeder.net

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7



Harvey Daniels

Topic to be announced
Website: harveydaniels.com

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1

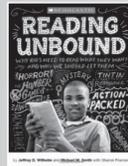


Maria Nichols

Talk Matters! The Foundational Role of the Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards

Website: heinemann.com/authors/4119.aspx

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28



Jeff Wilhelm

Reading Unbound
Website: jeffreywilhelm.com

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29



Laura Adams

Smarter Balanced and the Speaking and Listening Standards

TUESDAY, MARCH 17



Doug Fisher

Collaborative Conversations and the Speaking and Listening Standards
Website: fisherandfrey.com

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

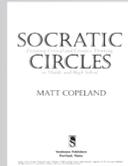


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Mindful Literacy Practices: Engaging Dynamic Learners

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Introduction

On a warm September beginning-of-the-school-year morning, a group of eager fourth graders were gathered closely on the carpet to enjoy Peter Reynolds' (2004) *Ish*, a delightful thought-provoking story of a young boy, Ramon, who LOVED to draw, until his brother ridiculed his pictures. After that, whenever Ramon tried to draw he crumpled up his paper and threw it away. One day his younger sister snatched one of his crumpled drawings and raced to her room. Ramon angrily chased after her and was stunned to see a gallery of his crumpled drawings on his sister's walls. Pointing to the wall she said, "That is one of my favorites."

Ramon sheepishly responds, "It was supposed to be a vase...but it doesn't look like one." "It looks 'vase-ish'," she replied. Ramon, seeing his art in a new light, began filling his journals tree-ish, boat-ish, peace-ish, excited-ish. His ish-art inspired ish-writing (not sure if they were poems, but they were poem-ish). From that day on Ramon decided to live *ishfully* ever after.

I closed the book and after a minute of enjoying and savoring, I asked the students to jot two words the story made them think about. As students enthusiastically offered their thinking, I prompted them for further explanation: "What makes you say that? Tell me more." Together our list of words and understandings grew: artistic, creative, scared, mistakes... Then I called on Molly. "*Chauffeur*," she responded. For a second I thought, "Where in the world did that come from? Maybe she doesn't get it." After taking a breath, I calmly asked, "What makes you say that?"

Her response suggested that she didn't have a full understanding of the word *chauffeur*, so next I asked the students to briefly "turn and talk" with their partners sharing what they knew about *chauffeurs*.

"Movie stars have chauffeurs." "Your mom and dad chauffeur you back and forth after school and to soccer practice," they responded. Then Molly raised her hand once more and said, "Oh, so Ramon's sister was his chauffeur on his road to becoming an artist." Thus comes the reward of witnessing deep understanding and also chills... to imagine how easily I could have dismissed Molly's answer and the conversation would have taken a completely different turn. What a difference a few words can make.

As educators, let's reflect on what we are doing and what is important, stepping back in order to move forward. How can we create the space and make time for mediated and responsive literacy practices? How do we mindfully use language, inviting children to take risks, deepen and expand their thinking in the classroom? In this article we explore these questions and consider factors for engaging mindful literacy practices, and inspiring the reciprocity of thoughtful, intentional, dynamic learning.

Creating the Space

"If you asked me about the importance of creating community in my classroom, I'd say it is everything" (Miller, 2013, p. 21). Building relationships and establishing trust are essential to creating a space for literacy practice and discovery. How is it that we create the community and climate for thinking, exploration and discovery?

First, we begin with a consideration of opening minds as examined by Johnston (2012). The open mind framework draws upon a lens of learning as dynamic rather than fixed. The dynamic-mindset learners show confidence in solving problems and are realistic about their successes. They do not blame their ‘intellect’ or anyone else for lack of success, or even think of themselves as failing. Rather when encountering a trouble spot, dynamic learners respond strategically. On the other hand, fixed mindset learners become helpless when encountering trouble spots, adopting an ‘I’m not very smart’ attitude (Johnston, 2012). Learners who have a well-developed sense of agency, a dynamic approach to learning and perseverance show vitality and steady growth in their understandings. Such a way of being can be nourished within our classroom space.

Second, in creating the classroom space, Weaver and Wilding (2013) suggest several aspects for us to consider, beginning with cultivating an open heart. An open heart accompanies an open mind, as exemplified by a willingness to suspend judgment, to allow and to discover. With an open heart we are gently holding the space, trusting in the children’s inclinations and abilities for thoughtful meaning making. In nurturing a dynamic classroom space, we engage and allow the *self-observer*, both as teacher and learner. As self-observer, we sustain mindful awareness, a sense of relaxed alertness, and kindness toward others and ourselves. What does it mean to be authentically kind toward others? And further, what does it mean to be authentically kind toward ourselves? The self-observer doesn’t have all the answers, rather learns to look into these questions with spacious alertness. Thus the self-observer, both as teacher and learner, shifts from reacting to responding, from reactivity to response-ability. While nourishing our own teaching and learning, we also support our students in engaging their own self-observer. In, working with awareness practice, silence and reflection, children can learn to pause before reacting and responding, and bring a thoughtful presence to their work and explorations with others.

A third aspect of creating the space for engaged teaching is presence, which emerges from practice of mindful awareness (Weaver & Wilding, 2013). The

engaged teacher is fully present to *whomever* is right in front of her/him, when they are right in front of him/her and with what it is they want and need. In other words, the engaged teacher is not distracted thinking of yesterday or tomorrow, but is precisely working with what is right there. Lastly, engaged teaching works within *respectful boundaries* and with *emotional capacity*; that is, taking responsibility for ourselves and our classrooms, clearly communicating and defining our limits while maintaining caring relationships. Developing emotional capacity gives us the ability to work intentionally and conscientiously with emotions—ours and others. In the classroom space, we cultivate emotional intelligence, creating emotional safety and sustaining our resourcefulness, resilience and effectiveness (Weaver & Wilding, 2013).

Dudley-Marling and Michaels (2012, p. 164) tell the story of observing the power of classroom community in supporting engaged literacy practices with all learners. Two children, without disabilities, were racing around the room as Superman and Batman. Playing their story, capes and all, they ran to the Bat Cave to get maps of the city. Throughout the play another youngster with special needs lay sprawled out on the floor on a mat. He had toy cars to play with, but seemed more interested in his peers as they moved about the room. The classroom aide approached the youngster as a fully participating member of class and asked if he wanted to do something different—music or the writing center. The youngster, not having any spoken language, lifted his head and looked at the boys playing Superman and Batman. “Do you want to help battle crime?” the aide asked. Overhearing the conversation, ‘Superman’ came over and asked, “Would you like to be Spider Man or the Incredible Hulk?” The boys agreed that the youngster did not want to be evil, he wanted to be on the ‘good team.’ Taking the youngster to the writing center they cut out an S for Spider Man to put on his chest, then an S for Superman and a B for Batman for themselves. The researchers observed these children, in classroom community, as they explored literacy practices and the construction of meaning together. This small exchange helps us begin to see the power that language (spoken and unspoken) and listening can have

toward transforming all members of the classroom community.

Assuring that all students have a voice in class, that everyone in the room is part of the community of learners, and establishing that no one is invisible, creates the space for mindful literacy practice and discovery. Through this lens we engage the reciprocity of teaching and learning, the natural back and forth that emerges in the discovery of ideas. We study, explore, question and uncover together, side by side, without fear of mistakes, but rather with recognition that mistakes are signals of learning. In these ways, attending to our classroom space supports the very nature of mindful literacy learning and discovery.

Attending to Language

Literacy practice is fully understood as engaged reading, writing, speaking, and listening—as teacher and as learner. How do we use language to nourish our community of learners in a way that is playful and, at the same time, one in which participants take each other’s ideas seriously in the process of getting things done?

When we become mindful of the language we are using in the classroom to engage learning, we become ever aware of the dynamic reciprocity between student and teacher. In his book *Opening Minds*, Johnston notes, “Children seldom misquote you. They usually repeat word for word what you shouldn’t have said” (2011, p.1). Language matters. “We are shaped by the language we use about ourselves, and by the language used by others about us” (Fisher, Frey, & Pumpian, 2012). The language we use has the power to build up or tear down. Language shapes the identity of our students and depending on the words chosen can stop learning in its tracks or move learning forward and allow it to become self-generating. For nearly three decades Bomer and colleagues from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project have used an introductory exercise asking teachers to journey down memory lane and reflect on the comments they received about their writing, both positive and negative (2010). Throughout the study, Bomer and colleagues have consistently found “negative comments on writing result in lifelong anxiety and avoidance of writing; positive comments result in lifelong ease

and confidence in writing” (2010, p. 14). Our language choices have the power to support students’ identity development as literate people. And so, if our words can influence for a lifetime, it becomes imperative that we step back and mindfully consider our word choices. At first glance this may seem simple; we can nurture students’ literate identity with a simple “Good job!” Yes, that would be easy, but it would not be care-full and would not express the words that “can be crucial ingredients to help a kid make a breakthrough” (Fletcher, 2006, p.189). To guide our students to ever deepening levels of understanding, we must mindfully notice the feedback we are giving our students and choose words that will inspire them in continuing their growth toward discovery and independence.

Dweck’s (2006) research can also help us to consider the role of language, especially feedback, through a new lens. Dweck, like Johnston (2011), characterizes fixed and growth mindsets. With a fixed mindset, learners are viewed simply as either smart or not smart. In the fixed mindset, the goal is to look smart, and attempting new, challenging tasks and failing is out of the question. On the other hand, with a growth mindset, mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the learning process, and with effort and collaboration, knowledge is expanded. Dweck delves into how we can use language to lay the foundation for growth. Looking again at Bomer’s findings, we see that negative comments about writing led to a fixed mindset, “I am not a writer, that’s just the way it is,” whereas positive comments led to a sense of agency and identity as a writer.

Dweck (2006) characterizes response language in terms of person-oriented feedback and process-oriented feedback. She reports that person-oriented feedback leads to fixed performance frame and process-oriented feedback leads to a growth learning frame. Person-oriented feedback puts the teacher in the position of judge and doesn’t leave a path for strategic action. The child is situated within the fixed mindset; a judgment has been made. On the other hand, a growth mindset is supported by process-oriented feedback such as: “How did you figure that out?” “Can you think of another way to do that?” “Look at the exact details you added in the beginning of your story; they create a vivid picture for

your reader.” With this type feedback, the student is encouraged to examine their work strategically, thus building a personal narrative as a problem solver who can figure things out. The emerging sense of agency increases engagement and motivation, leading to inspired effort in continuously growing the depth of understanding.

In reflecting back on the introductory story about Molly’s response to *Ish* (Reynolds, 2004), earlier in my career I would have expected the students’ answers to match my understanding. My feedback would have been person-oriented. I may have said something like, “Molly there is no chauffeur in this story; can you think of another word?” Or worse “Can somebody else think of a better word?” Molly would have been left with the impression that her thinking wasn’t “good enough”. How might that impact her future considerations to contribute to classroom discourse? At the very least I would have “mis-assessed” Molly as having weak comprehension skills.

It is sobering to think what a difference a few words can make. As teacher I cannot script or pre-plan a dialogic exchange. And yet, standing on the shoulders of educators who remind us to attend to our language (Johnston, 2004, 2012; Hoyt, 2011; Keene, 2008; Harvey & Goudvis, 2005), I have learned to attend to my choice of words. Through mindfully considering the language we use, we can support classroom community in discovering, sharing and developing a sense of agency together. “What makes you say that?” “Tell me more.” These two seemingly simple expressions invite children to extend our thinking, deepen exploration and engage individually and collaboratively in literacy practices. In creating the space for mindful literacy practices and learning to attend to language with care, as a classroom community, we open possibilities for deepening understandings.

Deepening Understandings

As teachers, how is it that we can engage meaningful conversation and set sail away from the “right answer syndrome”? How do we cultivate an appreciation for uncertainty, thus discovery, in our classrooms? How can we supportively work side-by-side with our learners as they discover their edge

in learning? How can we embody ways of thinking about what we are doing, ways of responding to difference, and ultimately ways of dialogic teaching and learning?

Johnston writes about the value of dialogic teaching—such that we as a community of learners expect to engage, to disagree, and to grow from that disagreement (2012). Growing from disagreement requires that we allow for the expression of different perspectives. Growth within dialogic teaching necessitates speaking and listening as reciprocal processes. Perhaps we take these for granted; how can we as a community of learners choose our words with care and listen deeply rather than reactively? Practice. Support and more practice.

In the dialogic classroom, students recall their readings better, understand them in greater depth, and respond more fully to aesthetic elements of literature. Also the dialogic classroom may reduce achievement differences across race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Johnston, 2012). How do we go about honoring and engaging a dialogic classroom? First, let’s be mindful about wait time. Regularly practicing the pause of silence and reflection with students will support the spaciousness of wait time. In dialogic classrooms we notice students being invited to say what they think, with everyone’s voice being an asset to the community and every response being taken seriously through care-full listening. Working with an understanding of “together, we” requires listening practice. Are we listening just waiting for our turn to give a reply? Or are we listening deeply to know more clearly and understand? Deep listening nourishes both the listener and the speaker.

Through engaging in dialogic conversations students come to discover that making sense often requires more than one person, that reaching out to others can offer a balancing hand, and that language use includes tentativeness with words like *maybe*, *perhaps* and *could be*. The climate in a dialogic classroom creates the possibility for agency. “The concept of agency in literacy and learning is not only central for the individual’s sense of competence and well-being, and for his or her performance, but also indispensable to democratic living, though individual

agency is not enough for that” (Johnston, 2004, p. 41). Through attending to language, deepening understandings and growing our classroom community, we can enhance our students’ sense of agency and expand understandings through social imagination, resulting in expressions of empathy, caring and compassion.

Expanding Understandings

How can we explore varying perspectives and see the expansive possibilities for growth and social development through the use of story? How do we find ways through mindful literacy practice to help children expand understandings and grow in social imagination?

Social imagination invites learners into seeing, caring and experiencing our interconnectedness. In working with mindful literacy practices for deepening dialogue and comprehension, social imagination engages learners specifically in explorations of compassion and empathy. Empathy is much more than the ability to feel and understand, it supports social development and “allows us to see the other side of the argument, comfort someone in distress... Empathy builds self-awareness, ...allows us to work together” (Pink, 2006, p. 160). Social imagination invites the learner to walk in another’s shoes, thus beginning the study of cause and effect, and ultimately of kindness in action. Learners begin to expand their lens in discovering different perspectives and gradually realize that others routinely have different perspectives—physical, emotional, motivational and cultural. From this expansion, learners become more developed socially, morally and intellectually (Johnston, 2012). Children with limited social imaginations may develop negative bias in their understandings of the world around them and have difficulty generating productive solutions to social problems, showing less self-regulation and often making impulsive decisions.

Through dialogic learning as a classroom community, learners can encounter examples of self-regulation and enter into social problem solving and decision-making. Max and Oatley (2008) write, “The simulations of social experience that literary narratives afford provides an opportunity for empathic growth. It trains us to extend our understanding toward other

people, to embody (to some extent) and understand their beliefs and emotions... and ultimately to understand ourselves” (p. 181).

Children’s picture books lend themselves to the cultivation of social imagination both through the stories that are told and through the illustrations that accompany the stories. *Something Beautiful* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth (1998) is the story of a little girl who has lost her ability to see what is beautiful in the world. When she looks out her window all she sees is broken glass, graffiti and empty lots. Her mother has told her that everyone should have something beautiful and she begins to wonder “Where is my something beautiful?” She sets out to discover what others have to say about ‘something beautiful.’ She listens to her teacher, to Miss Delphine at the diner, to her friends, to Mr. Sims and to her Aunt Carolyn. She goes home and sits on her front step. She sees the graffiti on the wall, washes it off and sweeps the courtyard. She begins to see possibilities for planting a garden and inviting in her friends.

This story lends itself to social imagination and asking children in the classroom to step *into* one of the pictures to share their perspective within the context of the story. “As we tell stories about the lives of others, we learn how to imagine what another creature might feel in response to various events. At the same time, we identify with the other creature and learn something about ourselves” (Harmon, 2002, p. 177). Stepping into the picture, children’s talk is about the story, yet also *within* the story as they too begin to explore and share their own ‘something beautiful.’ In this way, their awareness of the story, awareness of themselves and awareness of one another encourages expansive understanding.

Conclusion

With mindful literacy practices, we as educators can cultivate an engaging dialogic classroom space, attend to care-fully choosing our words, deepen and expand our understandings and invite social imagination through story. These practices can move our learners toward seeing themselves imbued with an open, dynamic mindset, and a willingness to explore. Through these practices, the classroom community allows for varying perspectives and the opportunity for every voice to be heard. Langer writes,

“The widespread failure to recognize the insights that can be found in all different perspectives may itself constitute a disability” (1997, p. 139). In furthering a classroom environment where learners can discover and grow together through listening and reflecting on varying perspectives, we can see possibilities for expansive understanding while growing a caring classroom community. “Empathy and caring are central to social responsibility, citizenship and democracy. Many of our daily actions and decisions are rooted in empathy and an active citizenry with conscious caring helps us cultivate democracy and embrace diversity” (Wolk, 2013, p. 108). Whether it’s giving Molly the time and space to share her understandings of *chauffeur*, creating a space for Superman and The Incredible Hulk to engage their classmate as Spider Man, or inviting the children to step into a story and share their ‘something beautiful’, we can uncover empathy, caring and agency in our very midst. Through intentional, mindful literacy practices, we can nourish and grow engaged learners who are discovering together in a dynamic, caring classroom community.

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Integrating Fitness and Literacy: Why and How

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Abstract

While the idea of teaching with an integrated curriculum has been long-embraced by literacy educators and is anything but innovative, it has primarily been connected to content areas such as science, social studies, and mathematics. Extending this content integration to all areas of fitness (physical, nutritional, social, and emotional) is innovating for reading educators. In this article, I provide six reasons for integrating fitness and reading. I then suggest and explain how using fitness literature, as one component of a fitness literacy lesson, is a practical, do-able way to achieve this integration.

Few days go by without sobering news regarding the health of our nation's children. Childhood obesity is in the media spotlight, and often with startling statistics. For example, Anderson and Whitaker (2009) report that nearly one in five American four-year-olds is obese and that the rate is even higher among different groups. These researchers are troubled by their findings because of the many accompanying health problems associated with childhood obesity. They are not alone. Dr. Reggie Washington, childhood obesity expert and chief medical officer of Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children in Denver, Colorado notes that children live in an *obesigenic environment*, which he defines as an environment that sees a decrease in physical activity both in and out of school and the proliferation of snack foods that have little or no nutritional value. His solution includes making people aware of issues that surround childhood obesity and focusing on prevention (Washington, 2009). Disney's bold solution is to ban junk food advertisements in children's programming (including television, radio stations, and websites aimed at children), making it the first major media company to do its part in helping to ward off childhood obesity (Associated Press, 2012).

While there are many contributing factors associated with obesity, there is little question that lack of physical activity and poor nutrition are two. We have long known that physical activity improves children's circulation while strengthening their bones and muscles. Just as important, though, is compelling evidence that when students engage in physical activity, their *academic achievement improves* (APA, 2012; Berg, 2010; Castelli, Hillman, Buck, & Erwin, 2007; CDC, 2010; Coe, Pivarnik, Womack, Reeves, & Malina, 2012; Landry, 2012; Medina, 2008; Ratey, 2008; Wittenberg, Northrup, & Cottrell, 2012).

As with physical activity, nutrition also relates to academic achievement. An ever-increasing body of research reveals that poor nutrition and obesity are two contributors to lower levels of student achievement (Currie, 2005; Florence, Asbridge & Veugelers, 2008). The implication is that when educators support better nutrition, they also support increased academic performance (Satcher, 2008). Without a doubt, children's overall health and their success in school are connected (Basch, 2010; Landry, 2012; Wechsler, McKenna, Lee, & Dietz, 2004).

Many entities such as the America Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAPHERD), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum, (ASCD), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Designed to Move (DTM) to name four, are working diligently and collaboratively to do their part in resolving childhood obesity. Why and how might literacy educators want to contribute to this cause, one that some claim threatens our economic future (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2012)? The purpose of this article is to address this question. I begin by explaining six reasons for integrating fitness and literacy. I then suggest and explain how using *fitness literature* as one component of a *fitness literacy* lesson is a practical, do-able way to achieve this integration.

Why Integrate Fitness and Reading?

Teaching with an integrated curriculum (i.e., teaching two or more content areas together) is an idea long-embraced by literacy educators. The overarching goal is to help children better learn by showing them how different subjects are inter-related. Through content integration, children's understanding goes deeper and therefore has staying power. This deep understanding and meaningful learning comprise one reason for integrating the two in all subject areas, including fitness (i.e., physical, nutritional, social, and emotional).

While integrating literacy with content areas such as science, social studies, and mathematics is common practice for many educators, integrating literacy, specifically reading, with fitness is not. Instead, the onus has fallen on physical educators to embrace content integration and to become language arts teachers (Buell & Whitacker, 2001; Ballinger & Deeney, 2006; Erwin, 2010; Gaus & Simpson, 2009; Heynen, 2008; Hruska, 2008).

But just as fitness educators can do their part to help children understand how fitness and literacy are connected and to do their part in helping to ward off childhood obesity, so, too, can literacy educators do the same by making deliberate plans to integrate the two topics into their existing classroom literacy routines such as readers' and writers' workshop.

A second reason is the alarming statistics regarding childhood obesity. A sad irony is that while we as a nation are beginning to recognize the problem, we are at the same time so obsessed with leaving "no child behind" *academically* that we may in fact be contributing to the obesity epidemic. In our desk-bound "race to the top," recess is often cut and physical education programs are scaled back, if they exist at all (Winter, 2009). Inactivity contributes to obesity (Currie, 2005; Welk & Blair, 2000; Waite-Stupiansky & Findlay, 2001). Integrating fitness and literacy, then, is a way to combat this problem because both can be accomplished in a given class period. Fitness and literacy can join forces to increase children's learning capacity and, simultaneously, fight against obesity.

A third reason which closely relates to the second is to assist all educators in answering the call of the *Let's Move in School* initiative housed within the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (See www.LetsMoveinSchool.org.) In order to fulfill a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP), and to achieve the nationally recommended 60+ minutes of daily activity, the group suggests four ways that physical activity during school can be achieved. Integrating physical activity into classroom lessons during the school day is one suggestion. Reporting on the results of a recent study conducted in Louisiana that showed connections between physical activity and academic growth, Landry (2012) offers the same suggestion.

Fourth, children are often led to believe that they must choose between being hooked on fitness or hooked on book learning, that one cannot be passionate about both. This is a misconception that we can dispel by showing children the thought processes and skills that are used in fitness and also used in literacy in general and reading in particular. In order to accomplish any aspect of fitness or reading, learners need to be active, purposeful, evaluative, thoughtful, strategic, persistent, and productive (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Helping students to understand that these thought processes are similar whether engaging in a fitness activity or reading is a sure way to help them understand that both contribute to a healthy lifestyle and both require thinking and meaningful practice (see figure 1).

Figure 1 Thought Processes and Skills that Transcend Fitness and Reading

Active	One component of fitness is physical activity, which calls for active participation. Participants also have to engage the intellectual aspect of fitness as they think about how to complete the activity and what they might already know about it in order to perform it.	Readers read the text bringing their own experiences to the text to construct meaning. They make predictions, make decisions such as what to read and reread, and when to adjust reading rate.
Purposeful	Fit individuals have definite purposes, which is what makes them select specific activities, eat certain foods, and determine how to interact with different individuals.	Readers have purposes in mind when they read a text. They then read with these purposes in mind.
Evaluative	Fitness participants evaluate their performance when doing an activity to determine their level of performance.	Readers evaluate what they are reading asking themselves if the text is meeting their initial purposes for reading it.
Thoughtful	Fitness participants think about the physical activity before, during and after completing it. Before performing, they think about what they know about it. During the activity, they think about how their performance and alter it as needed. After the activity, they think about what they got out of the experience and if they want to repeat it.	Readers think about the text selection before, during and after reading. Before reading they think about what they might already know. During reading, they think about how the current text relates to what they already know. After reading, they think about what the text offered and their interpretations of it.
Strategic	Fitness participants use strategies such as monitoring and visualizing to ensure that they are completing a task correctly. They use monitoring when they chart their gains. They use visualizing as they see themselves performing an activity.	Readers use specific strategies such as monitoring, and visualizing ensuring that they comprehend the text.
Persistent	Fitness participants stay with a task as long as they see that it is helping them to accomplish a specific purpose.	Readers keep reading a text even when it might be rather difficult if they feel that the text is helping them to accomplish a set purpose.
Productive	Researchers repeatedly report that fit individuals are more productive at work and play. They also experience lower stress levels and have fewer bouts with illnesses.	Readers bring their own experiences to the text at hand to construct or produce their understanding of it.

A fifth reason draws on the research findings of researchers who investigate motivation. Their reported findings indicate that motivation plays a powerful role in learning (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). As it relates to fitness and reading, sometimes an interest in fitness motivates reading. At other times, reading motivates fitness. Take the many readers who like to read the sports page of the newspaper or books about sports. An interest in organized sports is the driving force behind the reading. On the other hand, reading about fitness can motivate readers to become more fit. For example, when reading

selections that focus on how to run faster, readers may sprint from their armchairs to the neighborhood track to give the ideas a spin. As they read about nutritious meals and how to prepare them, readers may be tempted to “go healthy” in their own kitchens. Sixth, several researchers have written about the achievement gap that exists among various populations and have offered practical, helpful suggestions about what educators can do to address this achievement gap (Tatum, 2005; Freeman & Freeman, 2002). Yet the achievement gap persists. Could it be that one reason it remains is the lack of focus on the optimal

wellness of students, as Basch (2010) and Currie (2005) suggest? Both make clear in their research reviews that students who are healthy are better learners. Currie (2005) also notes that children of poverty eat foods that lack critical nutrients, which contributes to their obesity problem and thwarts their neural and cognitive development. Focusing on students' optimal wellness seems appropriate to help address the achievement gap.

How Can Literacy and Fitness Be Integrated?

Using *fitness literature* or *FitLit* (author, 2010; 2011; 2012), children's literature and other forms of text that spotlight the multiple aspects of health and wellbeing is one sure way. It entails helping children do more than simply reading about fitness topics. Instead, it is part of a more comprehensive *fitness literacy lesson* (FLL) focused on helping children use one or more literacy dimensions (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing) and fitness to better understand why and how they can take action over their own lives to live a healthy lifestyle.

With a *FitLit* selection as a springboard to target specific fitness learning (e.g., understanding heart rate, the differences between servings and portions, how

to identify advertising tricks used to lure children into buying and eating unhealthy foods) teachers can use a specific literacy teaching strategy to develop lessons that pack a one-two punch, simultaneously developing children's critical reading skills and their overall health. For example, to help them better understand the importance of flexibility, teachers can use a *vocabulary knowledge-rating guide* (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006) to introduce children to words associated with flexibility. They can then engage children with reading about flexibility and participating in flexibility activities such as yoga. In so doing, they can help children understand how remaining flexible in movement is beneficial to their overall health and how remaining flexible in their thinking benefits their reading ability. In yet another lesson, teachers can show their students how to crack open the *text structure* typically used to frame nutrition labels. Teachers can then help children understand that knowing how to read such labels enables them to make informed decisions about what and how much they should eat at any one sitting.

Since I first started investigating fitness and reading nine years ago, I have compiled an extensive bibliography of *FitLit* titles, using six selection criteria to compile the list (see figure 2).

Figure 2. *FitLit* Selection Criteria

Selection Criterion	Rationale
1. K-5 picture books, both fiction and nonfiction, related to a specific area of fitness (physical, nutritional, social, emotional).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures help support readers, especially those with limited background information • Content-specific words help readers attain necessary vocabulary in a meaningful context • Information is less overwhelming than textbooks. • Some students gravitate toward fiction whereas others gravitate to nonfiction.
2. Focus on a specific fitness category and a skill(s) within it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help develop understanding of the many different skills associated with any given area of fitness. • Provide focal point for both reading and fitness.
3. Cast a positive light on any given area of fitness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images and story lines are powerful in their suggestions to readers. Therefore, all books had to portray fitness as a value added to one's life rather than as torture that is rewarded with unhealthy food such as candy.
4. Age-appropriate content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can best comprehend if the material is within reach.
5. Easily integrated into existing classroom routines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little time to add content into the school day.
6. Accessible in bookstores or libraries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access leads to easy use.

FitLit In Action

Let's explore FitLit in action in a classroom setting by taking a look at *Catch the Beat!*, a lesson I developed and used with second-grade students to help them better understand the importance of *making predictions*, a comprehension strategy, to learn about their pulse rates, to discover how physical activity increases it, and to learn more about physical activity. The students and I also investigated why an increased heart rate is beneficial to their overall health, and how to take action for their own health by documenting their physical activity outside of school.

Before Reading

Using the three-phase lesson plan shown in figure 3, I gathered all students in the meeting area. Once all were settled, I commented, "You have been learning a lot about what good readers do when they read. You know that *making predictions* is one strategy they use before and during reading. But did you know that you also can make predictions when learning about other subjects such as fitness? That's exactly what I am going to show you today. We're going to make predictions about your heart rates and learn how they relate to physical activity."

I continued by asking, "What do you think I mean by *heart rate*? Let's make some predictions." As students made their comments, I wrote them on the smart board so that all could see. I then commented, "Let's see if any of your predictions are accurate." Using the chart shown in figure 4, I showed students how to take their pulse rates by first taking my own. I then asked for a volunteer so that I could demonstrate with a student. Finally, I had students take their own heart rate and write the number and their name on their sticky notes.

"Because you were sitting still, or resting, when you took your heart rate, the number you just wrote on your sticky note is called a resting heart rate," I noted. "What do you think might happen to it if I have you do some marching in place? Let's make some predictions. If you think it is going to increase, put your sticky note in the column on the board that says 'Increase'. If you think it is going to decrease, put it in that column. And if you think that it is going to stay

the same, put it in the 'Stay the same column.'" After giving students time to place their sticky notes in the appropriate column, I stated, "Ok, now I want you to stand up and when I say begin, march in place until I say that time is up. Ready? Begin."

After one minute, I stopped students and instructed them to take their heart rates. I then had them write their number on a second sticky note. Next, I had them retrieve their sticky note from the board and compare the two. "So what happened? Were your predictions accurate?" After some students volunteered their responses, I noted, "You discovered that when you move, your heart rate goes up. Do you know why?"

"I think it's because the heart is working harder," says Heidi. "And you are exactly right," I assured her. I then added, "When you move, you make your heart work harder. It has to push blood in and out more quickly than when you are sitting still. So if you want to have a strong heart, you have to move. You have to be physically active. And that is what you are going to be reading about today during small group reading time."

During Reading

When meeting with students during small group reading, I reminded them the purpose for reading by stating, "Today you are going to practice *making predictions* to learn about physical activity. Before you start reading your book, let's make a group list of physical activities you think you might discover." Once volunteers had shared responses and I had written them on a chart large enough for all to see, I briefly introduced each title and let students choose the one they wanted to read and stated the reading expectations:

- Read to yourselves.
- Look for specific ideas that tell about physical activity.
- Reread your books if you are finished before I call you back together as a small group.
- Check to see if any of the ideas you read about are on our group chart.
- Be ready to talk about your book when all are finished reading.

Figure 3. *Catch the Beat* Fitness Literacy Lesson

Objective: To practice making predictions, a comprehension strategy, to detect pulse rate, to discover how physical activity increases it, and to identify physical activities that can be used both inside and outside of the school day.

<p>Texts</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: <i>Run and Hike, Play and Bike: What is Physical Activity?</i> by Brian Cleary 2: <i>Get up and go!</i> by Nancy Carlson 3: <i>Exercise and Play</i> by Cath Senker 4: <i>The Busy Body Book: A Kid's Guide to Fitness</i> by Lizzy Rockwell 5: <i>Why Should I Get Off the Couch? And other Questions About Health and Exercise</i> by Louise Spilsbury 6: <i>Wallie Exercises</i> by Steve Ettinger 7: <i>We Like to Move: Exercise is Fun</i> by Elyse April 8: <i>Ready, Set, Skip!</i> By Jane O'Connor
<p>Before Reading Whole class</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather the class together in the whole-group meeting area. 2. Give students a sticky note and ask them to write their names on it. 3. Show students how to take their pulse (See Figure 1.2). Explain that pulse rate is how many times their heart beats in one minute. It is felt as blood is pushed through an artery located in their wrists. Once students have their rate, have them write it on their sticky notes. 4. Ask them what they think might happen to their pulse rate if they start to move. Do they think it will stay the same? Increase? Decrease? 5. Have students place their sticky notes in the column that corresponds to their answer and to provide reasons for their choices. 6. Have the students march in place for one minute. 7. Have them take their pulses and write down the number. 8. Have them check their predictions. Were they correct? Did their number stay the same? Increase? Decrease? 9. Provide time for students to discuss why they think their heart rate went up. Point out that completing activities to increase heart rate strengthens the heart. Emphasize that they can take action for developing healthy hearts by being physically active.
<p>During Reading Small groups of 5</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call groups of five to read and respond with you in small groups. Remind students that just as they made predictions about their heart rate, they will now make predictions when reading. 2. Brainstorm ideas about physical activities and write their responses on a chart large enough for all to see. 3. Provide a brief overview of the books and allow time for student selection. 4. Invite students to use the cover and title to predict what they think their book will tell them about physical activity. 5. Explain the procedure for reading their books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read to yourselves. • Look for specific ideas that tell about physical activity. • Reread your book if you finish before I call you together as a small group. • Check to see if any of the ideas you read about are on our group chart. • Be ready to talk about your book when all are finished reading. 6. As students read, provide help as needed. 7. Provide time for sharing of ideas.
<p>After Reading Whole Class</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once all have finished reading in small groups, gather the whole class together. 2. Display the small group charts and use them to construct a class chart of Physical Activities. 3. Encourage students to state reasons why being physically active is important and add additional essential points as needed. 4. Show and explain the "My Physical Activity Log."

Figure 4. How to Measure Your Pulse Rate

How to Measure your pulse rate:

1. Hold out your left hand with your palm facing up.
2. Place your right fingertips on your left wrist.
3. Press firmly to feel the thump of your pulse.
4. Count the beats for sixty seconds.
5. Write the number of total beats you count during the sixty seconds.
6. This is your resting heart rate.

Normal resting heart rate for children is 80–90 beats per minute.
**Adapted from Heartwave (p. 5). Heart Center of the Rockies, Fort Collins, CO.*

I then gave them time to read silently providing help as needed. Once finished, I asked students to write one idea they learned about physical activity and to show the rest in the group where the idea was stated or shown in their book.

After Reading

Once all had finished reading in their small groups, I called the class together to share ideas with one another. I displayed the group charts showing the different ideas each group had generated about physical activity, and commented, “Each group made a list of physical activities when reading with me in small group. Let’s take a look at all of them and see if we can pull them all together in a class list that we can post as a reminder for the many ways we can be physically active.” As students looked for and stated common traits, I made a class list titled, “Physical Activities We Can Do.” I closed the lesson: “Let’s review what we have learned about being physically active” and invited volunteers to comment. I then concluded, “As you have learned, being active is very

important in order to be healthy. One way that you can make sure that you are being active and taking control of your health is to keep a list of the activities you do. Some of your activities will be like those on our class list. But there may be others that you do outside of school. You can use this chart to keep track of your physical activities.” I then gave a chart to my students (see figure 5) and showed them how to complete it.

For the Upper Grades, too!

While the previous example focuses on primary grades, similar lessons can be developed and used with older students. For example, *Fueling the Body and Mind for Physical Activity*, is one that middle school fitness teacher Mike Vance developed and used to help his seventh-grade students understand how to use self evaluation to get more out of fitness and reading. He conducted the lesson within his fitness circuit classroom, further sending the message that reading can and is completed before, during, and after physical activity. See figure 6 for his lesson.

Figure 5. My Physical Activity Log

My Physical Activity Log		Name _____	Week: _____
Day	Activities I Performed		

Figure 6. Fueling your Body and Mind for Physical Fitness Fitness Literacy Lesson

Objective: To practice using self-evaluation to determine fitness awareness and reading comprehension

<p>Texts</p>	<p>All texts are articles obtained from www.teenshealth.org:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stretching 2. Sports and Exercise Safety 3. Motivation and the Power of Not Giving Up 4. Strength Training 5. Figuring out Fat and Calories
<p>Before Reading Whole class</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather the class together on the floor in the center of the circuit center. 2. Review questions given the day before (See figure 7) and discuss how they rated themselves on each question. 3. Explain why the self-evaluation tool was open-ended and provide time for volunteers to share their insights. 4. Conclude by emphasizing that our bodies are like a car. They need to be warmed up and fueled properly in order to get the most out of them and to protect them. 5. Transition to reading by explaining that all of the questions on their self-evaluation guide are connected to what they will be reading about today.
<p>During Reading Small groups of 5</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefly introduce each article. 2. Allow time for students to choose the one they would like to read. Emphasize that they will need to have a second or third choice because there are only five copies of each article. 3. Explain the procedure for reading their articles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group yourselves by like title. • Read to yourselves. • Look for specific ideas that tell about your main topic as identified in the title of your article. Find at least three points that you think others should know. • Reread your article if you finish before I call you together as a small group. • Be ready to talk about your article when all are finished reading. 5. As students read, provide help as needed. 6. Once all are finished, discuss your articles and the points that you think the most important for others to know. 7. After coming to agreement on three ideas, create a chart that shows the title of your article and the three ideas.
<p>After Reading Whole Class</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather the whole class together. 2. In turn, have each group share out their charts. 3. Once all have shared, provide time for them to self-evaluate how well they thought they read and participated. 4. Connect self-evaluation with fitness and reading by stating something such as, "Self-evaluation is something we use both in fitness and reading. It helps us to be aware of our goals and how well we performed relative to those goals. We can also use it to set new goals."

Figure 7. Self-evaluation

Name _____
1. How would you rate your effort on warm-ups?
2. How would you rate your quality of diet before exercise?
3. How would you rate your safety awareness during exercise?
4. How would you rate your motivation before AND after exercise?
5. How important is stretching before exercise?

Conclusion

The time is right to extend integrating literacy from content areas such as science, mathematics and social studies to all areas of fitness (i.e., physical, nutritional, social, and emotional). Clearly, there is a reciprocal relationship between fitness and literacy. As the two lessons in this article illustrate, using *FitLit* as one component of a *fitness literacy lesson* is one way to weave the two together. In so doing, we are more apt to provide all children with the necessary practice of connecting literacy and fitness learning thus deepening their understanding of both.

Children need our help in understanding how they can use literacy to live healthy lifestyles. I remain steadfast in my belief that we literacy educators can join entities such as the America Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAPHERD), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum, (ASCD), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Designed To Move (DTM) who are working diligently and collaboratively to do their part in resolving childhood obesity. I wholeheartedly agree with Wechsler and colleagues (2004, p. 6) who state: “Schools alone cannot solve the obesity epidemic on their own, but it is unlikely to be halted without strong school-based policies and programs.” As literacy educators, we can do our part.

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Speaking and Listening: Five Lessons to Start the Year off Right!

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Abstract

Literacy acquisition is complex and mediated by various factors, including classroom discourse. This article presents dialogic teaching lessons for elementary aged students that facilitate robust classroom talk. Dialogic teaching not only advances higher order thinking but promotes successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards; namely the Speaking and Listening Standards which call for students to collaborate in a variety of discourse settings.

As teachers begin planning for the new school year and adapting their instruction to help students meet the demands set forth within the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (National Governors Association [NGA] Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Offices [CCSSO], 2010), close attention should be paid to the Speaking and Listening Standards. Intended to advance higher order thinking, these anchor standards expect students to engage in collaborative conversations around complex topics. The CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) note:

...students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner. Being productive members of these conversations requires that students contribute accurate, relevant information; respond to and develop what others have said; make comparisons and contrasts; and analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in various domains (p. 48).

Research (Allington & Johnston, 2002) suggests that effective teachers intentionally devote time to explicitly teaching their students how to use language to engage in meaningful collaborations. Unfortunately, observations of classroom interactions have revealed that most teachers don't readily facilitate quality classroom talk (Cazden, 2001; Nystrand, 2009). Reasons for this may vary, but some teachers have poorly engrained discourse styles while others are under the erroneous assumption that students come into their classroom already knowing the principles of effective communication.

Thankfully, there are strategies that educators can implement in order to help students become successful speakers and listeners. To begin, teachers must be willing to embrace dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2009) as a mind-set of instruction. Dialogic teaching is a student-centered approach to learning that "... harnesses the power of talk to engage children, stimulate and extend their thinking, and advance their learning and understanding" (p. 37). Rooted in the notion that strategic instructional discourse breeds higher-order

thinking, dialogic teaching can be characterized by the following principles:

- Questions are posed in order to elicit critical reflection and response; not just rote, question/answer sessions.
- Student responses are taken up by the teacher and used to provoke more questions and dialogue.
- Students know how to build upon another's thinking, advance new ideas, and defend their propositions with evidence.
- The teacher effectively connects ideas and reinforces student understandings.
- Turn taking is controlled by students, and is not a hand-raising bidding war.
- Children recognize talk as a tool for learning. Teachers recognize talk as a tool for critical thinking.

Educators can embrace dialogic teaching by launching the year with lessons that develop their students' capacity to converse with partners, in small groups, and within whole class structures. Listed below are five dialogic teaching lessons that lay the groundwork for helping children navigate these diverse settings. Rooted in evidenced-based instruction (Dawes, Mercer, and Wegerif, 2000), these lessons can be embedded within a K-5 literacy block or used during another time of day (e.g. morning meeting). The fifth and most important lesson empowers students to create the Ground Rules of Talk (Dawes, 2008), which ultimately establishes the norms for productive language use throughout the school year.

The Lessons

Before beginning these lessons, establish student "talk" partnerships for times when students will stop, reflect, and discuss the questions that are posed to them. You will also want to make sure you accommodate for your English Language Learners, children with language impairments, and remain sensitive to cultural differences with respect to the familial use of language. Consider using sentence frames, visuals, strategic partnerships or triads.

Lesson One: Understanding the Role of Talk through Hands Free Turn Taking

In this lesson, assemble students in a circle and begin discussing questions related to the importance of

speaking and listening. Start the discussion by asking what sort of activities can be accomplished through talk. Using the concept of talk as the cornerstone for the discussion, facilitate dialogue with questions like this:

- Why is it difficult to talk in large groups...in small groups?
- How do you help someone with a problem through talk without just giving them the answer?
- Why do some people not talk in groups?
- Can someone talk too much in a discussion?
- What interferes with a productive discussion?

Encourage students to respond without raising hands and when necessary, have students problem solve if two or more people talk at once. Facilitate the discussion but don't mediate every turn; this shouldn't sound like a question/answer session. Remember, your job as a teacher is to talk less and have students talk more. Support your dialogic teaching with prompts (see figure 1) that you can refer to in order to promote student discourse. Encourage students to provide reasons for their opinions (Can you give us examples of what you're thinking?), challenge remarks (Does someone think differently?), build off of one another's ideas (Can someone add on?), and change sides (Your ideas really got me to view this differently.).

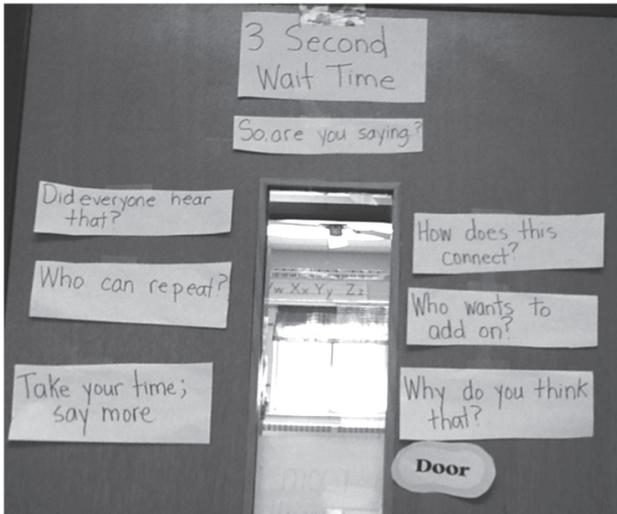
At the end of the lesson, reflect on the key points of the "talk" discussion. Create an anchor chart to document these observations. You can repeat this lesson several times throughout the week, but now use discussions about picture book read alouds to promote hands free turn taking. Always end the lesson by reflecting on the talk. What went well? What didn't?

Lesson Two: Learning to Question

In this lesson, students learn effective questioning techniques in order to elicit quality responses from their partners. Begin the lesson by assembling students in a circle, making sure they are sitting next to their talk partner. Next, informally prompt students (without raising hands) to discuss the concept of "talk" with the whole group:

- Why do you talk?
- When was the last time talking helped you understand something new?
- Is it more important to listen or to talk?

Figure 1: Teaching Prompts to Facilitate Classroom Talk



Explain to everyone that they will watch you talk with a student and that their job is to note and remember the types of questions you ask. Call a volunteer up to the front of the circle and provide him or her with an interesting photograph; ask the student describe it to you. As the listener, ask critical thinking questions (Dawes, 2008) to help the students elaborate on their description:

- Can you say more about what you're thinking...?
- I wonder why...
- Can you explain again?
- So, are you saying...?
- Why do you think that?
- What do you mean by?
- Can you give reasons to support your thinking?

When you are done, have partners turn and talk about the questions they noticed you asking. Create an anchor chart of student observations; add to it as needed. Close the lesson by reiterating the importance of using these types of questions when collaborating with others.

Lesson Three: Learning to Listen

In this lesson, students apply the questioning techniques observed in yesterday's lesson. Begin by giving each child an interesting photograph or cover off of a picture book and ask them to describe the picture to their partner. The partner's job is to listen and ask questions using the prompts learned yesterday.

Rotate. At the end of the lesson, discuss experiences of how talk was used. What types of questions did your partner ask? What was it like being a listener? What was difficult about describing the photograph? Close the lesson by adding to the anchor chart and reminding students to use these effective questioning prompts in their own collaborations.

Lesson Four: Collaborative Group Work

Begin by explaining to students that there are secrets to making group work productive and that how we talk to each other matters. Briefly brainstorm (again, no hand raising) some of these "secrets" (e.g. respectful listening, not taking over the group, etc.) Next, with two students who are comfortable modeling collaboration (you may need to prep them ahead of time), demonstrate in front of the class how you are able to work cooperatively to write a letter to parents inviting them to the school Open House. The group must communicate throughout the process (one person can't do all of the work) and respectfully share ideas, disagree, agree, and even provide reasons to support their decisions. As you are working with the students, chart the language that you are using to promote positive interactions:

- What are your ideas...?
- Why...?
- Tell me more about what you're thinking.
- I agree because...
- I am thinking differently because...
- We should consider...
- My thinking is that...
- I have a suggestion...
- Your reasons helped me to change my mind.

After you've modeled a bit (most likely you won't be able to finish the entire letter), ask students to form groups where they must work to build something collaboratively in a specified amount of time (e.g. letter to parents, organize the classroom library, organize the writing center, etc.). The one rule is that everyone must participate, contribute, and negotiate ideas. Ask students to be mindful of using the talk prompts in order to promote positive interactions. When the building is done, ask groups to share their final product and how they collaborated effectively.

Individually, have students create an exit-slip at the end of the lesson noting what worked well and what didn't. Use these responses to conduct additional lessons as needed.

Lesson Five: Ground Rules of Talk.

Now that your students have had several experiences working in partnerships, small groups, and whole groups, they are ready to create the classroom Ground Rules of Talk (Dawes, 2008). Begin the lesson by asking students to offer up ideas about what they believe to be necessary for successful discussions. How does talk promote understanding? How would you describe a good listener...a good speaker? Encourage students to challenge or question their classmates' ideas. Now ask students to work with their partner to come up with one important rule for an effective discussion. Have students describe to the group an idea their partner had.

Next, break students up into small groups and ask them to come up with a list of 4-5 Ground Rules of Talk (Dawes, 2008) while remaining mindful of the principles of quality discussion: listening, respect, giving reasons to support ideas, challenging ideas, and inclusion. These elements should somehow be incorporated into the final product. Here is an example of what the Ground Rules of Talk could look like:

1. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying and don't interrupt.
2. Discuss ideas respectfully.
3. Provide evidence and reasons to support your opinions.
4. Include everyone and help one another by talking.
5. Ask questions when you want to learn more.

After students have compiled their small group list, have each group share out and then collectively work on condensing everyone's responses into a list of 4-5. Record these final rules on an anchor chart and post prominently in the classroom where all can see. Shrink down the rules for students to use during small group time.

Once the Ground Rules are established, teachers can now move into lessons that foster students' abilities to analyze text ideas, provide evidence for

their thinking, and argue various sides of a topic. In sum, the Ground Rules lay the foundation for how students work in book club, close reading sessions, partnerships, and collaborative projects.

In closing, these few lessons can help you begin the year with quality classroom talk and work towards meeting the Speaking and Listening standards contained within the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). Make sure to revisit the main teaching points of these lessons and bridge the questioning, listening, and collaboration techniques to talk about texts. In sum, by establishing a consistent dialogic teaching routine early with rich opportunities for classroom talk, you will empower your students with the cognitive muscle and collaborative dexterity that can only accelerate their overall language and literacy development.

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Conversing to Fortify Literacy, Language, and Learning

Jeff Zwiers, Susan O'Hara, and Robert Pritchard

I already know the answer.

Why do I have to talk to a partner?

— Nora, sixth grade

How would you respond to Nora's (all names are pseudonyms) question? You probably thought about how to convince Nora that she can learn from others and that they can learn from her, and that would be a good start. Yet the appropriate response in this and similar situations is a much deeper one, a transformation of both what and how students are taught.

Nora has been immersed in hundreds of lessons that have focused on short, "right" answers. She in lines, and choose the right letter on tests and several trees' worth of worksheets. She has come to believe that the purpose of talking to others in school, when allowed at all, is to give or get answers.

Interaction, dialogue, conversation, discussion, discourse, collaboration, and talk have all become increasingly popular terms in recent years, particularly with the advent of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). In the 21st century and beyond, students must be able to work together to build complex ideas and solve problems by talking to one another. Yet, as Nora's comment points out, we still must overcome several challenges related to using and building student talk in school, and those challenges are particularly relevant for language arts teachers in middle grades—academic years when texts and concepts tend to take an extra leap in complexity and abstractness.

Moreover, in schools where there has been constant fear of enduring sanctions for low test scores, large

numbers of English learners have with test preparation, word recitation, and grammar rules memorization. As a result, too many students have lost interest in learning, and many others, if they do graduate, lack key communication and thinking skills needed for both college and career.

To better prepare students like Nora for the communication rigors of college and beyond, for effective classroom conversations and possible ways to create them. In this article, we use the term classroom conversation to refer to paired interactions in which students build on one another's turns in a nonscripted manner.

Condition #1: Valuing Talk

Nora doesn't seem to value talking to learn, but is that her fault? Tests haven't valued it. Curricula, lessons, and teachers, for the most part, haven't valued it. And yet, conversations are highly valuable for many reasons, three of which are de-scribed in this section.

Conversing Supports Reading

As students converse with partners, they practice interacting, questioning, clarifying, paraphrasing, critiquing, making inferences, comparing, challenging ideas, building up understandings, and fortifying positions. Some even call this interacting with the text (Rosenblatt, 1995). By ex-tension, interacting with people can strengthen students' reading comprehension skills, especially those struggling readers who view reading as a passive "decode the words without stopping and hope it all sinks in" process.

Conversing Supports Writing Skills

In a conversation, partners must continually clarify ideas for each other. Each gets immediate feedback on how clear his or her idea is and can make

adjustments, often adding information or defining key terms. Each also fortifies and supports key ideas with evidence and examples. When, for instance, a student shares with her partner a sentence that proposes the use of symbolism in a story, and then she follows that sentence with examples from the text, she has practiced, orally, the crafting of a logical paragraph—just as teachers want to see in their students’ writing.

Conversing Supports Language Development

Producing linguistic output and interacting with others are vital for language development (Swain, 1985; Long, 1981). Paired conversations offer the most “practice opportunities per minute” for forming original and authentic messages. The more chances the brain has to put words together into sentences and connect those sentences to convey and clarify ideas, the better it gets at using language.

Condition #2: Focusing Less on Short Answers and More on Whole Ideas

Let’s consider the “I already know the answer” part of Nora’s comment. This answer-focused paradigm of education is deeply rooted in students, teachers, assessments, and curricula. Much of it stems from the “factory” or “banking” view of teaching, which reduces a person’s education to an accumulation of facts and “right” answers, most of which are “short,” meaning that they can be answered with one word or one sentence or by choosing a single option on a test. Short answers, of course, tend to be more easily taught and tested. For example, teaching the meanings of terms such as *onomatopoeia*, *irony*, *denouement*, and *foreshadowing* tends to be easier than teaching students to use criteria to evaluate and argue the strength of evidence supporting a theme in a novel.

In many classrooms, teachers have students answer questions orally to test their knowledge. Students’ responses are often just for “display,” to show what they have learned rather than to communicate an idea for a purpose or to put forth an idea so that it can be built upon or challenged. Because of the focus on answering with short answers to earn points, students have learned not to push themselves to clearly communicate their ideas. They say the minimum and tend to depend on prompting by the teacher for elaboration and standards, and to do well in life, students must be able to orally communicate longer, more complete messages that contain complex ideas. And to do so, they must have numerous opportunities to practice putting thoughts together in oral messages.

We must put into practice an idea John Dewey espoused more than 100 years ago: “Were all instructors to realize that the quality of mental process, not the production of correct answers, is the measure of educative growth, something hardly less than a revolution in teaching would be worked” (Dewey, 1916, p. 183). Thus, we must prepare and prompt students to do things that require “long” answers—ideas and understandings that require students to use a) thinking skills often required across the curriculum, such as interpreting text, supporting ideas, and applying principles, and b) original, complete sentences that connect to one another.

An activity that helps students fortify their oral communication skills involves *opinion formation cards* (Zwiers, O’Hara, & Pritchard, 2014). Students are presented with an issue, such as: Should middle school students take more classes online? Then each student receives a copy of one of (usually) six cards detailing a quotation from an argument-based text; three cards contain points supporting one side of this issue, while

CONNECTIONS FROM READWRITETHINK

Partner Talk

In this strategy guide, you’ll learn about Partner Talk—a way to provide students with another opportunity to make learning their own through collaboration and discussion. Partner Talk can be used for assessing classwork, making connections to prior knowledge, discussing vocabulary, or simplifying concepts.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/using-partner-talk-strengthen-30954.html>

Lisa Fink, www.readwritethink.org

the other three support the opposing side. Students are then asked to begin to form an opinion. They aren't required to agree with the card's idea, but they should be able to respond to it. The teacher models how to use complex sentences and how to link supporting sentences with appropriate transitions, pronouns, and noun phrases. Each student then shares his or her evolving opinion with three different peers. The crucial feature of the activity is this: with each successive partner, the student must augment what he or she says and how it's said. That is, the student must improve the complexity and quality of all opinions in each conversation by using the language and ideas of previous partners as well as modeling and feedback from the teacher.

Condition #3: Focusing Less on Talking to and More on Conversing With

Now let's look at the "Why do I have to talk to a partner?" part of Nora's response. First, there is a difference between talking to and talking with another person. Talking to is a one-way transmission of information. It is best for short answers, activities such as think-pair-shares and jigsaws. Students tell or read information aloud to others. Conversely, *conversing* with means building ideas together. It involves a two-way process in which students co-construct, co-fortify, and negotiate ideas to form new knowledge and understandings. It requires building students' abilities to orally communicate with others in academic ways—to "think together," as Mercer (2000) put it.

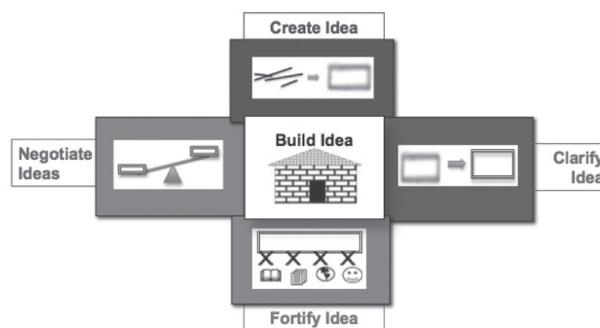
We often call interaction the fifth language domain. Listening and speaking are two of the famous four (reading and writing being the other two), but interaction involves much more than just listening and speaking. It requires those involved to build ideas in collaboration with others in real time, follow conversational norms, clarify and negotiate meanings, and both direct and follow the flow of the conversation.

Constructive Conversations

- LISA: I think the theme is being honest.
 EDGAR: I think it's don't judge a book cover.
 LISA: OK.
 EDGAR: It could be about friendship.
 LISA: Yeah. That one works.

The prevalence of nonconstructive conversations like Lisa and Edgar's in upper grades fuels the urgency of oral language development work through high school. In response to this urgency, we have been working with teachers to help students build four focal skills for what we call *constructive conversations*. The four skills are creating, clarifying, fortifying, and negotiating. These skills work together to help students build ideas within a conversation, as shown in Figure 1. The visual reminds students of the skills they can use as they talk, and the symbol in the center reminds them to build one idea as fully as possible before moving on to the next. Edgar and Lisa might have benefited from this visual tool.

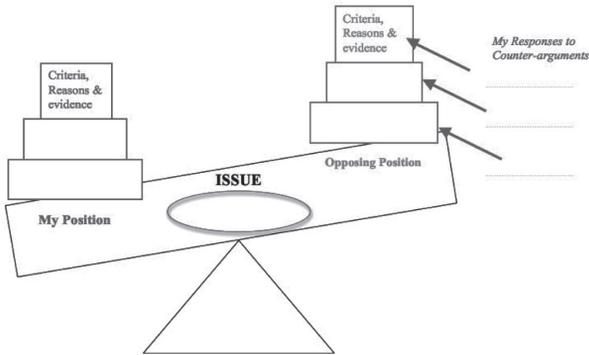
Figure 1. Based on the "Constructive Conversation Skills Poster" from Zwiers, O'Hara, & Pritchard (Stenhouse, 2014, p. 190). Used with permission.



Each conversation skill can be taught with focused activities, scaffolds, and practice opportunities. One helpful scaffold for teaching how to negotiate ideas is an Argument Balance Scale, as detailed in Figure 2 (Zwiers, O'Hara, & Pritchard, 2014). It shows students what happens in our minds as we assign values or "weights" to different reasons and their evidence. In their conversations, those with opposing viewpoints try to agree on how big or small the boxes should be, in proportion with the strength of the evidence provided. They then compare the points on both sides to agree on which side has more weight.

Students in a ninth-grade English class used the scale to decide which theme from *To Kill a Mockingbird* was most apparent in the text. The snippet that follows is from one paired conversation after a class discussion that explored several ideas for themes:

Figure 2. "Argument Balance Scale" from Zwiers, O'Hara, & Pritchard (Stenhouse, 2014, p. 143). Downloadable at ALDNetwork.org. Used with permission.



LEONEL: I think like the heaviest is doing the right thing.

DAISY: Why?

LEONEL: Atticus knows he's gonna lose the case with Tom.

DAISY: And it's dangerous for him and his kids. But I think it's don't be racist. It's heavy cuz being racist is really wrong. Look at what happened to Tom!

LEONEL: Yeah. And like Ms. Seeley said, Tom was an example of lots of others.

DAISY: So what's heaviest?

LEONEL: I don't know. If you don't be racist, then you don't need people like Atticus to do the right thing. It depends.

DAISY: Do the right thing is not being racist.

Even though Daisy and Leonel didn't quite reach consensus, they were creating and building on important ideas that will help them become skillful thinkers and communicators over time. Our work is cut out for us, though, if we want to hear conversations like this among our students. We must move the focus of our teaching answers to co-constructing and strengthening ideas.

Conclusion

Teachers play a key role in supporting and guiding conversations in school. In the early stages, we recommend that they take the time to model and show models (transcripts and video) that demonstrate to students what they can and should do with ideas in a conversation. And as soon as possible, students must be given opportunities to use the tools and skills needed to build ideas with partners without the training wheels provided by a teacher. That means teachers must gradually release to students the responsibility for running their conversations on their own (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

The three conditions for effective classroom conversations overlap and support one another, and all three are vital not only for developing students' literacy skills, but also for strengthening their abilities to communicate with others. It is our hope that Nora and many students like her with others as ways to learn and build on important ideas within each discipline.

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WSRA MISSION STATEMENT

The primary mission of the Wisconsin State Reading Association is to promote excellence in reading.



WSRA Goals

Communication

Provide leadership in addressing issues and trends in reading and language arts to inform educators, families, and community.

Membership

Develop and strengthen an active and diverse membership.

Partnership

Create partnerships that foster literacy in the home, school, community, and workplace.

Professional Development

Encourage professional growth opportunities for families, educators, administrators, and community members.

Research

Promote and disseminate research findings that will strengthen and support the best practices for instruction in the communication arts.

TEACHING TIPS

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Using the Read-Aloud as a Teaching Tool

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As a seasoned English Language Arts teacher of both fifth- and sixth-grade students, I have seen the pendulum swing back and forth many times on what we teach and how we teach it. Our newest initiative is the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (National Governors Association [NGA] Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Offices [CCSSO], 2010). I am always looking for interesting ways to keep my students engaged, but I am also looking for best practices in order to help students achieve the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). As the pressure of a new initiative sets in, one instructional activity that some teachers may feel they need to eliminate is the read-aloud. I disagree. I feel strongly that using a read-aloud in class is essential. The read-aloud—whether it is from a novel, a nonfiction article or a poem—is a meaningful activity to use at the beginning of a class or during a transition time because it gives the students the opportunity to get settled before we begin our class work. Just ten or fifteen minutes each day allows me to model strong reading strategies for my students while practicing some of the skills necessary for the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). For example, reading aloud provides an opportunity for sixth-grade students to practice eight of the ten Standards and Sub-Standards for Speaking and Listening. For example, one standard asks students to “Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions,” (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, Standard SL.6.1) and that certainly takes place during our read-aloud time. Students also get the opportunity to practice the Standards for Literature (RL) and Standards for Informational Text (RI). Students are asked to determine the theme or central idea (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, Standard RL.6.2), share how the story’s plot unfolds (ibid, Standard RL.6.3), and determine the author’s point of view or purpose (ibid, Standard

RI.6.6). All of this can be accomplished through the read-aloud and associated discussions.

Before I begin a read-aloud, I model for my students how to take notes and summarize as they listen. I periodically collect those notes for extra credit points. The only time notes are required is with the first read-aloud because I review story elements and summarizing at the beginning of the school year. After that, note taking during the read-aloud becomes easy extra credit, and almost every student takes advantage of this opportunity. In addition, students are encouraged to ask questions, make connections or predictions, and comment about a character, the setting or problem in the story. A tremendous amount of higher-level thinking and discussion can result from the teacher reading aloud.

Spending a little time with the right read-aloud text can help the teacher engage the students as they work toward mastering the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). The key is to find a book with a hook. I have found that books about children at the same age as my students and who are dealing with some sort of inner conflict provide the perfect hook. A wonderful novel I have used as a read-aloud with my sixth-grade class is the book, *Wonder*, by R.J. Palacio (2012). My students loved this book because it is about a boy their age and his being “different.” They couldn’t wait for me to read aloud each day! The fascinating part of this book is that each section is told from a different person’s point of view, and the author included a quote from a song or poem right at each chapter’s beginning. The changing point of view helped me introduce CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) Standards RL.6.5 (analyzing sentences, chapters, scenes and the overall structure of the book) and RL.6.6 (developing the point of view of a text).

When we finished the novel, I put up a flipchart on the Promethean Board. I listed each character whose point of view we've read, and we looked at the lyrics and listened to the song that was at the beginning of each chapter. For example, one character, Miranda, has nicknamed the main character (August) "Major Tom." She had given August a space helmet in order to help him become someone new, someone not judged by his facial deformity. A quote from the David Bowie (1969) song, "Space Oddity," is provided at the beginning of the chapter, so we listened to and discussed the song's lyrics. We talked about the connection between the character and the song, and the students then created a written explanation, drawing on the text evidence as well as their own inferences. This helped us to zero in on CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) Standard W.6.2, as well as all of its Sub-Standards. This standard asks students to "Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content" (ibid, 2010, Standard W.6.2). My students needed to carefully listen to and think about the text, as well as the song or poetry quotes, in order to write a cohesive, informative piece. The dissection and analysis of the chapter and song through discussion demanded higher-level thinking from my students before they put pen to paper. Reading this novel aloud provided the ideal opportunity for me to model the skills addressed in many of the CCSS (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) for my students, and for them to practice these skills. Furthermore, it opened up a lively discussion about bullying and acceptance.

Another benefit of read-aloud is the opportunity to practice the Vocabulary Acquisition and Use Standards and Sub-Standards (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). As we read, we often pause to discuss a word's meaning in the text or have a student look up the word and provide a definition. The students take some time to discuss key vocabulary, as well as their thoughts and ideas with a peer, before beginning to write. This results in higher quality written responses. Here is a thoughtful quote from one of my sixth-graders' papers:

The last chapter, from August's perspective, has lyrics from the song 'Beautiful Child' by the Eurythmics [1999]. I believe that Palacio chose the lyrics from 'Beautiful Child' because the lyrics describe how the child will accomplish what they want. In *Wonder*, August is accepted into school and he has many more friends. He's not concerned

about his face, because he knows that it doesn't matter how he looks.

This student not only wrote to Standard W.6.2, but she also "Cited textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text" (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, Standard RL.6.1).

I read aloud in Reading class, Morning Meeting, after an assembly—even with the time-crunch of a busy day, ten to fifteen minutes can be found for reading and talking about books.. I feel I do my best teaching and modeling of what good readers do when I am reading aloud. I model what fluent reading sounds like, what a thinking reader acts like, and even what informative essay writing consists of. The first two pages of any great text often have even the most-reluctant readers begging me to read on. When I finish up with my ten to fifteen minutes and my students say, "Aww! Can't you just read a little longer?" I know that I've helped inspire a love for books while also guiding them toward meeting the Standards. Sometimes I indulge their request and read a bit more because I secretly hope they will go home and tell their parents about the reading and thinking they did in school that day. They may assume I am just giving them some down time or entertaining them. I know, however, that I am using the read-aloud to introduce and practice the Common Core State Standards.

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CREATIVE CORNER



Humbled or Humiliated

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About a year ago, I began taking yoga. Yoga teachers aren't kidding when they refer to it as a 'practice.' I was hoping that one day I'd just be 'good' at it. I've realized now that's not the way yoga works. It's all about the progress. There are poses I couldn't do before that I can do now. What makes yoga fun for me is my yoga teacher. From the first day, he has modified for me and differentiated for every yoga student in the class. Therefore, if I need help with a specific pose – *Utkatasana* – he will not only model, but help me focus on technique so my chair pose looks like it should!

As I continued with yoga, I decided I wanted a little faster pace. Hey, how about kickboxing? Why not? I signed up and received actual tape AND honest-to-goodness boxing gloves! Real boxing gloves, not just pseudo-rock 'em, sock 'em robot gloves, either! Today I am proud to say I have stuck with kickboxing and several times a week I'm punching, kicking, twisting, squatting, and 'Ali shuffling' my way to better cardio health! What makes kickboxing fun for me is the trainer. When I met with the trainer, I explained that I had never done this type of workout before (I'm from the aerobics era with tights and leggings!) and I would undoubtedly need help. He heard me and as a result, often modifies for me. As an example, I can't do a push-up; tried, but not quite there. Therefore, I use my knees for the push-up or I'll plank, keeping the core tight. Furthermore, when I pulled a muscle in my back a couple of weeks ago, my teachers worked around my sore back; creating

a workout designed especially for me. Again, it's all about the progress!

As a teacher, these experiences have humbled me. I often think of what it must be like for the student learning something new:

- Does the classroom teacher make the lesson fun so the student is engaged?
- Does the classroom teacher modify for the student, meeting that student where he/she is?
- Is the classroom teacher flexible in case the student isn't ready to progress quite yet?
- Does the teacher keep it interesting adding just the right amount of challenge for the sake of progression?
- Does the classroom teacher encourage the student to self-advocate and self-reflect, so the lines of communication stay open?

Now that I'm doing the yoga thing and the kickboxing thing, I'm feeling particularly inspired, so a friend and I decided to tackle the next exercise trend – ta da – *aerial yoga!*

As we sat on our mats, we listened intently to the instructor explain what aerial yoga was all about; she had us grab and swing the fabric so we could get the feel of it. The instructor was extremely knowledgeable and incredibly limber. She gave us various demonstrations of what we would soon be doing.

However, it became increasingly clear and rapidly apparent that I could not do most of the poses associated with this workshop. I simply did not have the core strength (yet) to kick up my feet and do a somersault. Nor did I have the ability to sit on the fabric, “climb it,” and sit in a semi-split position.

As the instructor walked around, it became obvious that she wasn’t interested in working with me. I was the only one unable to do most of what she demonstrated. She never walked over to me and asked if I needed help, even when she saw me struggling to be part of the group. Instead, she either worked with someone else, or simply ignored me. Finally, my friend walked over to her and explained that I need assistance. The instructor asked, “What’s the problem?” I had never been referred to as a “problem.” Most importantly, as an urban educator, I had never referred to a student as a “problem.” I explained to her that I couldn’t kick my legs up high enough over my head to do a somersault. She questioned my desire and said, “Can’t’ is not a word we use. You need to will yourself to do it.” I rephrased my statement: “I cannot physically lift up my legs over my head from a standing position to do a somersault.” She tried to help me, but eventually walked away saying “Good job.” I still hadn’t done a somersault. This instructor refused to differentiate or modify for me. It was a cookie-cutter class and I didn’t fit into her mold.

Now I’m wondering how this might look if we move the situation to high school:

- Imagine a classroom teacher ignoring a student who needs support/assistance/help. The teacher knows the student is struggling, but simply ignores the “signs” (“signs” = head down, asking to go to the restroom, disruptive conversations).
- Imagine a classroom teacher asking a student, “What’s the problem?” I doubt the student would respond with anything other than, “nothing” and a grunt.
- Imagine a classroom teacher telling the student he/she has to “will” himself/herself to understand or comprehend the lesson.

- Imagine a classroom where the lesson is exactly the same for every single student — no modifications, no differentiation — every student is reading from the same textbook and doing the same assignment.

Imagine.

I wasn’t humbled during aerial yoga, I was humiliated.

And that’s when it hit me: we, as teachers, have that kind of power. We can be humbled as educators and continue learning with our students, knowing that our “yoga” practice will take time and our “kick-boxing” will require modifications, but we still progress. We still move forward.

Or —

We can humiliate and forego any kind of progression that we hoped would “magically” appear. We can stop learning and ultimately, stop living.

Be humbled or cause humiliation. It’s up to us.

***Peggy Grafwallner** is the School Support Teacher and School Assessment Coordinator at Ronald Reagan IB High School in Milwaukee Public Schools. Peggy coaches teachers in literacy best practices focusing on connecting IB, Common Core and ACT standards. She began teaching High School English 23 years ago and is currently serving as the literacy specialist for Reagan IB. Peggy has given local, regional and national presentations on the topics of alternative education and literacy. If you would like more information about this article, please contact the author at grafwapj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us.*

WISCONSIN'S
VERY OWN



Wisconsinites We Should Know in the Field of Literacy

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About this Column

Welcome to this new feature of WSRA's Journal! This column will provide our readers with information about Wisconsin's movers and shakers in literacy education. Our wonderful state has many dedicated individuals who work in new and innovative ways to bring literacy alive for students of all ages! Through the interviews presented in this column, it is our goal to increase awareness about the amazing programs that Wisconsin's very own are creating and implementing across the state!

Wisconsin's Very Own Marilyn Ward Launches Unique Website: *OmniLibros.com!*

Dr. Marilyn Ward is one of Wisconsin's very own literacy advocates! Since 1990, Dr. Ward has taught courses in children's literature at Carthage College in Kenosha. She is also the director of the Center for Children's Literature, located at Hedberg Library on Carthage College's campus. A native of Kenosha, Marilyn recalls growing up in a home immersed in literature. Her mother taught first graders in Kenosha for over 30 years, and her father was a math professor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. Over the years, Marilyn was the happy recipient of children's books from her father's colleagues. They often brought books to Marilyn from their world travels: Europe, Africa, Asia, etc. Little did her parents know that these books that contained tales from faraway lands would one day inspire Marilyn to focus on international children's literature in her professional endeavors.

Today, Marilyn can reflect satisfactorily on her many experiences with the International Board of Books for Youth (IBBY). She has traveled the world, herself,

giving presentations for IBBY in countries such as Belgium, France, Brussels, Scotland, Switzerland, to name a few. She has also contributed to several anthologies of international literature for the United States Board of Books for Youth (USBBY), such as the annually released volume: *The World Through Children's Books*.

Last year, Marilyn was working on another anthology of international children's literature, when she realized that libraries don't buy reference books in this digital age. So, she abandoned the book concept and started blogging about the newest international children's books. Eventually, her blog evolved into a website titled *OmniLibros.com*, published through *WordPress.com*. Marilyn created this name from her childhood memories of a PBS show, titled *Omnibus*TM. From this title, she decided upon "OmniLibros"—omni, meaning "all encompassing" and libros, Latin for books. This new website is sponsored by Carthage College's Center for Children's Literature.

OmniLibros.com officially launched on October 2, 2014 and has become an instant success! To date, 130 books are annotated on this site; all published



Dr. Marilyn Ward demonstrates her new website, OmniLibros.com, to a group of literacy teachers in Kenosha, WI.

outside of the United States and translated into English. Marilyn plans to post annotations on average of one per week, so stay tuned! Readers who log in to this site can become followers, allowing them to receive email alerts each time a new book is added to the site.

The purpose of OmniLibros.com is to provide an annotated bibliography of children's books that will connect United States teachers and students with children's literature published around the world. According to Marilyn Ward, "[Children] are our future leaders of this global society. We need to encourage exposure to literature of the world so they can make informed decisions as adults" (personal communication, September 17, 2014). By engaging in the books found on this website, United States children will read and connect to what children in other countries are currently reading. Perhaps their exposure to international literature will enrich their development with a more personalized understanding of people from other countries.

One very intriguing page of OmniLibros.com is its "book map". This Google™ map contains balloons/

pins placed on a particular country. Each balloon represents a book and is placed in its geographic origin, based on the author's home location, the book's setting, or the publishing company's location. When readers click on the balloon, a thumbnail appears, telling about the significance of the book's balloon placement. Teachers can project the website on the screen and click on balloons placed over countries they are studying in a social studies or geography lesson and learn about a children's book from that region! Imagine the endless curricular connections!

For Marilyn Ward, her favorite feature of OmniLibros is its emphasis on the international awards. Each award is listed on a page titled "Book Awards". According to Ward, this feature allows teachers to look for the best books and increase their knowledge about international awards. Readers can search for books by awards, such as "Hans Christian Andersen," Astrid Lindgren Award", etc.

Be sure to visit OmniLibros.com and explore the world of children's literature at your fingertips. Through her work in creating this website, Marilyn Ward has allowed our global society to become quite neighborly!

***Jacqueline Witter-Easley** is an Associate Professor in the Education Department at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Jacqueline currently serves as the Chair of the Education Department and as the Director of the Graduate Reading Programs. She has been the president of the Racine-Kenosha Reading Council for 4 years and is the new editor of the WSRA Journal. For additional information about this column, or to recommend future Wisconsin literacy leaders to be interviewed, please contact the author at jeasley@carthage.edu.*

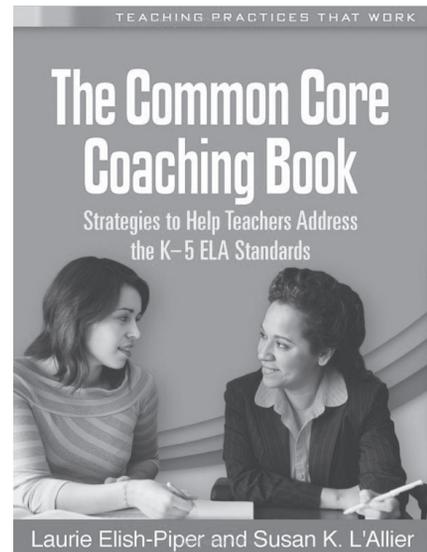
BOOK REVIEWS



The Common Core Coaching Book: Strategies to Help Teachers Address the K–5 ELA Standards

Laurie Elish-Piper & Susan L’Allier. (2014). New York: The Guilford Press.

Reviewed by Patricia L. Rieman, EdD
Associate Professor of Education, Carthage College



Authors Laurie Elish-Piper and Susan L’Allier have established a strong reputation as pragmatic, literacy-centered advocates for classroom teachers and preservice literacy education candidates. Both Elish-Piper and L’Allier have received national recognition for their efforts. In 2010, L’Allier received the Albert J. Kingston Award from the Literacy Research Association/National Reading Conference, and Elish-Piper currently serves on the International Reading Association’s Board of Directors. As professors at Northern Illinois University, they share a wealth of experience as classroom teachers, as well as a passion for supporting practitioners at all levels of experience and teaching in their endeavors to provide best practice, research-based literacy instruction. Elish-Piper and L’Allier spend a great deal of time in the field working with classroom teachers, administrators, and literacy coaches. Together they created the targeted coaching model (L’Allier & Elish-Piper, 2011), a framework based upon the relationship between literacy coaching and student achievement, and then applied that framework in a series of professional development DVDs, *The Literacy Coaching Series* (<http://www.theliteracycoachingseries.com/>).

Their latest collaboration is *The Common Core Coaching Book: Strategies to Help Teachers Address the K–5 ELA Standards* (*Teaching Practices That Work*) (2014). The *Common Core Coaching Book* is part of the *Teaching Practices That Work* series edited by Diane Lapp and Douglas Fisher. In their foreword, Lapp and Fisher note that *The Common Core Coaching Book* provides “real-time’ teaching” and guidelines for creating collegial, respectful, and collaborative school environments (2014, p.viii). Indeed, the layout of this text immediately conveys such an attitude of professional and practicable support.

The text is organized across five main instructional shifts in association with the ELA Common Core Standards: balancing literary and informational texts; increasing text complexity; developing evidence-based responses; writing from sources; and building academic vocabulary (p.3). It is also organized by the three layers of coaching; large group, small group, and individual. Elish-Piper and L’Allier provide 18 coaching strategies, 28 reproducible forms, clear and detailed procedures, illustrative vignettes, and a number of helpful charts and tables to guide even the newest coach.

As I read through the strategies, one trait that stood out was the approachability of the text—even the headings provide an air of support and encouragement. Each coaching strategy is described in great detail, organized by such headings as “What Is It?”, “How Do I Do It?”, and “Strategy in Action”. The “What Is It?” section provides a research-based rationale for using the strategy, while the “How Do I Do It?” section includes step-by-step instructions for implementing the strategy; much in the same way that one might write a lesson plan on strategy instruction. Finally, the “Strategy in Action” section demonstrates authentic application of each strategy and often includes insightful comments from both coaches and teachers.

For example, Strategy 14, Modeling, contains examples of how the teacher and coach used a modeling planning template and an observation form. The teacher completes the sentence stems on the modeling planning template to describe what he hopes to observe and learn from the coach, and then the teacher completes the observation form as he watches the coach model in a lesson study. Those coaches who are still fine-tuning their approaches will find this attention to detail quite helpful.

Regardless of their grade level or types of licensure, concern about adequately shifting instruction to meet the new tenets of the Common Core State Standards (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) is a condition shared by most classroom teachers. While I am

not employed as a literacy coach, I often take on a coaching role with undergraduate and graduate education students who seek to improve their literacy instruction. I find *The Common Core Coaching Book* to be an invaluable resource to which I can refer when facing a number of areas of questions. There are even sections on such interpersonal issues as administrative support, teacher resistance, and gaining entrance into teachers’ classrooms. Perhaps the best way to conclude this review is to quote Elish-Piper and L’Allier themselves in their final statement; these words are sage advice from wise, experienced mentors. “Be patient; embrace the change process; remember that building and maintaining relationships takes time, effort and compromise; and be the kind of literacy coach that you would have wanted as a teacher” (p.214).

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Close Reading of Informational Texts: Assessment-Driven Instruction Grades 3–8

**Sunday Cummins. (2013).
New York: The New Guilford Press.**

Reviewed by Nicolina DeVroy

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Educational leaders are faced with the creation and implementation of unit and lesson plans. The Common Core State Standards (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) dictate the percentage of informational text that teachers must implement in their units and/or lesson plans. One of the most commonly used guides when writing the plans is Sunday Cummins' *Close Reading of Informational Texts*. At first, this book appears to be another book on close reading; however, I found Dr. Cummins' book to serve as a guide to facilitate effective implementation of informational texts across the content areas. Each sequential chapter is packed with definitions, illustrations, strategies, and scaffolding of teacher-friendly information tailored for both new and veteran educators.

Dr. Cummins begins her book by answering the following questions: Why teach close reading of informational text?, and, What does Close Reading Mean? Here, Cummins provides her readers with sufficient information about the purpose and definition of close reading. She also aligns her information to the anchor standards found in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010).

Throughout this helpful book, Cummins thoroughly describes each skill related to using informational texts effectively and illustrates the concepts in tables, through case studies, and through detailed "how-to" strategies.

Dr. Cummins continues to effectively convey information by providing examples and techniques for

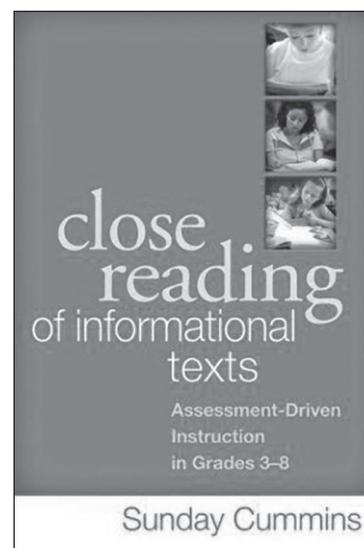
assessments of student needs, lesson planning, guided practice, independent practice, self-monitoring, and differentiation strategies to maximize the learning opportunities for all students. Cummins conveys this information to the reader by first stating the objectives, or, according to Dr. Cummins, "what your students need". She follows this with a series of explicit lessons, including samples of informational media used for the lesson, students' samples and possible solutions to problems that may be encountered.

The final chapter of this book is in the form of a guide for grade-level and/or cross-level teams. This is described as Professional Learning Committees. After reading this book, the question I asked myself is, "How did I ever plan a lesson without this book?!" The lessons are written in the Understanding By Design® format, and the skills and strategies used are research-based by well known researchers, such as: Buehl, Clay, Afflerback, Fisher, Goodman, Hoyt and Wiggins, and many more. This book should be on every educational leader's shelf.

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Reference

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) & Council of Chief State School Offices (CCSSO). (2010). Common Core State Standards for English language arts. Washington, DC: NGA Center & CCSSO.





Wisconsin State Reading Association *Journal* REVIEWER EVALUATION FORM

Editor — Jacqueline Witter-Easley

Manuscript Name _____ Reviewer _____ Return by _____

Directions for Reviewers: Please use the following criteria grid to help guide your review of the submission. Keep in mind that some submissions may be better suited for the Creative Corner, Classroom Considerations or Book Review sections of the Journal so certain criteria may not be applicable.

Criteria for review and evaluation:	HIGH				LOW	N/A
Appropriateness to the Journal	5	4	3	2	1	
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Appropriate Research Design/Methodology	5	4	3	2	1	
Appropriate Classroom Application/Examples	5	4	3	2	1	
Coherent Discussion	5	4	3	2	1	
Valid Conclusions	5	4	3	2	1	
Advancement of Knowledge	5	4	3	2	1	
Clear, Coherent, and Well-Written Manuscript	5	4	3	2	1	
References: Current and Appropriate	5	4	3	2	1	
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PAGE 2

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Thank you for your thoughtful review of this submission.
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WSRA COMMITTEES

WSRA's goals are accomplished through the work of statewide committees. WSRA members are encouraged to serve on one of the committees listed below. If you are interested in nominating yourself for a position on one of these committees, please fill out our Self Nomination Form at www.wsra.org. If you have questions about self-nomination, contact the WSRA Committee Coordinator.

Advocacy

Collects, prepares and disseminates information to support members as they advocate for the best practices in reading.

Awards & Honors

Oversees the process of granting awards and honors for exemplary service to reading education.

Budget & Dues

Examines and evaluates the income and expenditures of the Association.

Bylaws & Handbooks

Assesses the adequacy of the bylaws and handbooks of the Association and revises them as needed.

Children's Literature

Works to promote the daily use of high quality literature and writing with all students.

Convention Planning

Plans the annual convention.

Early Childhood Literacy

Provides support and information to teachers of preschools, day care centers, kindergartens and first grades for developing emergent reading and writing programs.

Early Intervention

Provides support and information for developing early intervention programs.

Elementary Reading

Explores the needs of elementary level teachers of reading, examines research relative to these programs, and prepares information for dissemination.

Families & Literacy

Develops and carries out plans which convey to parents the value of involvement in reading activities with children.

High School Literacy

Explores the needs of high school teachers of reading, examines research relative to these programs, and prepares information for dissemination.

Intellectual Freedom

Informs, advises, and supports members regarding matters of intellectual and academic freedom.

International Partnership

Seeks to develop and strengthen partnerships with educational institutes and/or individuals in foreign countries in an effort to expand access to literacy for all.

Legislative

Studies state and national legislation, disseminates information about legislation which is current, pending or needs development, and interacts with education committees.

Membership

Promotes membership in International Reading Association, WSRA, and local councils.

Middle Level Literacy

Explores the needs of middle level teachers of reading, examines research relative to those programs, and prepares information for dissemination.

Multicultural Literature

Encourages educators to celebrate diversity and multiculturalism in the classroom.

Nominations

Seeks candidates for elected positions in WSRA.

Preservice Teachers

Encourages the next generation of teachers to become members of WSRA, its local councils, and IRA; supports the professional development of preservice teachers in regard to literacy and literacy instruction.

Publications

Sets and monitors policies and procedures needed for Association publications.

Reading & Technology

Researches and makes recommendations concerning the latest in educational technology.

Reading Specialists

Provides leadership and opportunities for the professional growth of reading specialists.

Research

Seeks to determine problems which merit intensive study, stimulates research activities and disseminates research findings.

Title I

Ascertains and serves the needs of Title I teachers.

Become a Reading Professional: Join the Wisconsin State Reading Association!

The primary mission of the Wisconsin State Reading Association is to promote excellence in reading. WSRA's goals are:

- **Communication:** Provide leadership in addressing issues and trends in reading and language arts to inform educators, families and community.
- **Membership:** Develop and strengthen an active and diverse membership.
- **Partnership:** Create partnerships that foster literacy in the home, school, community and workplace.
- **Professional Growth:** Encourage professional growth opportunities for families, educators, administrators and community members.
- **Research:** Promote and disseminate research findings that will strengthen and support the best practices for instruction in the communication arts.

- You will receive *WSRA Update*, WSRA's bimonthly report of upcoming events, special projects, and association, legislative, and DPI news.
- You will receive three *WSRA Journals*, themed issues which address current topics and present education strategies for classroom instruction in reading and language arts.
- You will receive notification of WSRA conventions and institutes which you may attend at reduced rates.
- You may join one of WSRA's committees through which our goals are accomplished.
- You will stay current with trends in the field, grow professionally, gain new insights into reading instruction, and meet new colleagues who share your interests and concerns.

As a WSRA member...



WSRA Web Site
<http://www.wsra.org>

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Today's Date _____

First Name _____ Initial _____ Last Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Place of Employment/School District _____

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Home Phone (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____

E-mail _____

Are you a member of International Reading Association? Yes No

Are you a member of a local reading council? Yes No If yes, check name(s) → _____

Send me information about: WSRA Committees Information about your local reading council can be found at www.wsra.org

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_____ Central Wisconsin	55050
_____ Door County	55075
_____ Eau Claire	55100
_____ Fox Valley	55125
_____ Greater Bayland	55150
_____ Headwaters	55200
_____ Hidden Valley	55210
_____ Interlake	55250
_____ Lake Superior	55300
_____ Madison Area	55350
_____ Mid-East Area	55400
_____ Midwest Wisconsin	55450
_____ Milwaukee Area	55500
_____ Muirland	55512
_____ Northeast Wisconsin	55525
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Membership is for one year from the date of joining • Dues may be tax deductible. Some of the information provided will be in the WSRA Membership Directory.

You may join or renew your membership via:

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