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Daddy, I know what the story means — now, I just need help with the words

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ABSTRACT

This article describes a single instance of literacy learning involving the author and his two daughters, and provides a demonstration of how this literacy event can be unpacked both theoretically and practically in a way that a reflective practitioner could do. The aim of this article is to stimulate some reflective thinking and start some new conversations about what theoretical assumptions should drive reading instruction in the 21st century.

Children are born learning, if there is nothing to learn they are bored and their attention is distracted. We do not have to train children to learn, or even account for their learning; we have to avoid interfering with it. (Smith, 1985, p. 8).

The purpose of this article is three-fold: 1) describe a single instance of literacy learning; 2) provide a demonstration of how this literacy event can be unpacked both theoretically and practically in a way that a reflective practitioner could do, and, 3) stimulate some reflective thinking and start some new conversations about what theoretical assumptions should drive reading instruction in the 21st century.

I begin by describing a single instance of literacy that occurred at a local bookstore and involved myself and my two young daughters. Then, I take a reflective stance and discuss how this literacy event challenged me to interrogate some old beliefs and consider some alternative assumptions about reading, learning to read, and the relationship between reading and literacy. Based on these reflections, I end with a few lingering questions that I feel are worth thinking about more.

BACKGROUND

Last winter, while visiting my mother over the Christmas holidays, I took a break from some frantic, last-minute Christmas shopping, and spent time visiting the old neighborhood in which I grew up. At first, I drove slowly around the block looking at all the familiar houses, trying to remember some of the names and faces of children who had lived in these houses at one time, and perhaps still do. I also drove up and down the “back alley”. This alley was a narrow concrete road that separated all the houses on the block into two rows. Adults, not from the neighborhood, used the alley as a short cut to avoid traffic on their way home from work. Parents from the neighborhood used it as a convenient place to load and unload furniture, appliances, groceries, relatives, kids, and pets from the family truck. But kids used the alley as a playground, a special place where we all met after school to play games such as Hopscotch, Kick-the-Can, Red Rover-Red Rover, Strike Out, Wiffle Ball, Pee Wee Football, and even Spin the Bottle when our parents weren’t watching.

As I drove out of the alley that afternoon and started back to my mother’s home, I noticed a house that was familiar and yet unfamiliar to me. It was a house with a large blue awning hanging over the front door. The words *THE BLUE MARBLE*, written in large white letters, were emblazoned on the front of the awning.

Growing up, I remembered this house as just an old, two story brick home, one of many that were built in the neighborhood around the turn of the 20th century. Today, I noticed that it had been refurbished into a children’s bookstore. I stopped at the bookstore for several reasons. I was still feeling nostalgic about the old neighborhood and was curious to see if one of my childhood friends might be the owner, and it was an opportunity to buy some books for my daughters and finally finish my Christmas shopping for this year.

AT THE BOOKSTORE (FIRST VISIT)

Once inside, I met the owner, talked with several salespersons, and chatted with other customers who also had come into the store to buy books. None of these individuals was familiar to me. So, I spent time quietly browsing through shelves of children’s picture books looking for a few that might be particularly suited for Christmas gifts. After awhile, the owner reappeared and reminded me that before leaving I should go upstairs and see The Goodnight Moon Room.

Soon after, I went upstairs and quickly learned that The Goodnight Moon Room is actually a large bedroom that has been refurbished to replicate the setting of the classic children’s picture book *Goodnight Moon* (Brown, 1947). Like the original, the room has been painted in hunter green, outlined in bright orange hues, and equipped with accouterments such as a mother rabbit sitting in an old

rocker, a pair of mittens hanging from a clothes line near the fireplace, some toy kittens, and a picture of a cow jumping over the moon. I was captivated by the entire room, so much so that for the next 30 minutes I sat on the edge of the rabbit's bed and silently read *Goodnight Moon* several times. Afterwards, I spent time reflecting on the many times I had read this same story to my children when they were very young. Near closing time, I returned downstairs, complimented the owner on adding such a unique feature to the bookstore, and said goodbye.

AT THE BOOKSTORE (SECOND VISIT)

Since then, I have had the opportunity to revisit The Goodnight Moon Room on several different occasions. One time I was accompanied by my two daughters, Ferris, who was eleven years old at the time, and Madrean who was five. On the way to the bookstore I gave The Goodnight Moon Room quite a build-up. Thus, I wasn't surprised when, as soon as we entered the bookstore, Madrean went directly up to the salesperson behind the checkout counter and asked, "Where's the moon room? My daddy said you have one, and Ferris and me want to see it." The salesperson smiled, pointed towards the oak staircase in the adjacent room and said, "Sure, we have one. But you mean The Goodnight Moon Room. It's upstairs. Go right on up. Both children immediately darted upstairs with Madrean leading the charge saying, "C'mon, Ferris, let's check it out." Since neither of the children invited me to join them, I remained downstairs.

After awhile, I decided to see what the children were doing upstairs. So, I started to slowly walk up the staircase, but suddenly stopped at the top of the landing. By the sound of things, it appeared that Ferris and Madrean were collaborating in a dramatic interpretation of *Goodnight Moon*. Not wanting to interrupt the performance, I secretly watched Ferris playing the role of the mother rabbit and narrating the story to Madrean who was playing the role of the baby rabbit. Without them knowing, I observed the play for almost 15 minutes as Ferris sat in the rocker and narrated and choreographed the production as Madrean, following her big sister's instructions as well as improvising her own, spent time hopping, dancing, and singing around the room.

Eventually, Ferris finished the story, and Madrean concluded the performance. I couldn't help but applaud at the end. Apparently, my hand-clapping caused some concern and embarrassment, prompting the following conversation:

"How long have you been standing there, Daddy?"
asked Madrean.
Not long", I responded.

"Well, you shouldn't sneak up on us like that, and you shouldn't be spying on us either," she stated.

"I wasn't sneaking or spying, Madrean, I was just watching", I said.

"How did you like it Daddy?", asked Ferris.

"I loved it, Ferris", I responded.

"Can we do it again, Daddy", asked Madrean.

"C'mon, you can join us this time. You can be the mother rabbit."

I said that I would love to play the mother rabbit, but it was supper time, and unfortunately we had to leave. Unlike Ferris, who by now was famished, Madrean agreed to leave, but only on the condition that I purchase a copy of *Goodnight Moon*. "I want to read it to you and Ferris in the car on the way home, Daddy," she explained. I mentioned that we already owned several copies of the book, but that explanation had no impact. Madrean wanted her own copy. So, knowing the futility of trying to reason with a five year old, I acquiesced and bought the book. Afterwards, we got in the car and headed to Grandma's house.

On the way home, Ferris sat in the back seat listening to music on her portable cassette player, while Madrean sat in the front with the copy of *Goodnight Moon* opened on her lap. Shortly after starting for home, the following conversation occurred between Madrean and me:

"Thanks for buying me this book, Daddy," Madrean said.

"You're welcome, Madrean," I responded.

"Can I read it to you right now," she replied.

"Sure, go ahead," I said.

"I want to read this book because I want to practice my reading," she stated.

I had never heard Madrean say "practice my reading" before, and was curious as to what meant by the phrase. So, I asked, "What do you mean you want to practice your reading?"

"Well, I can read books, Daddy. And, I can read this book. That's no problem. But now I need your help," she continued.

"How can I help, Madrean?", I inquired.

"Well, I know what this story is all about. But, there are some hard words in this book, and now I want you to help me with some of those words," she explained.

"Okay." I said.

At that point Madrean started to orally read the story. While she read, two conversations, one public and one private, were taking place in my mind: one conversation was between a father and daughter, and the other was between a reading educator and himself. As a father I was listening to Madrean read, and helping her with the “hard words” whenever she asked. I soon learned that “hard words,” to her, meant words that she couldn’t easily pronounce or simply didn’t recognize or both. And as a reading educator I was listening to myself thinking about connections between what happened before at the bookstore and what was now happening in the car. Specifically, I was thinking about reading and learning to read, and how this whole experience had much to teach me. Both conversations continued until Madrean finished the story and we finally arrived at Grandma’s house.

SHIFTING BELIEFS AND ALTERNATIVE ASSUMPTIONS

The only practical educational conclusions that can be drawn from an analysis of the relatively few fundamental ideas that have come, gone, and continually returned throughout over twenty centuries of reading instruction — always with the same result that some children have learned to read but others have failed — is that the universal concern should change from what teachers should do to what teachers should know. (Smith, 1985, p. xii).

Later that evening, after putting the children to bed, I spent time reflecting on this whole course of events. From this experience, I have come to learn several important lessons about reading, learning to read, and the relationship between reading and literacy. I see these lessons as personal shifts away from old beliefs and movements towards new assumptions for three reasons. First, I have learned from this experience, and others like it over the years, that what we currently believe really matters. The beliefs we currently hold shape what we can know in the future in that they influence what questions we ask, what problems we solve, and what solutions we consider (Eisner, 1993).

Second, I highlight beliefs because I have come to think of intellectual development as a matter of continually outgrowing what we currently believe. Beliefs are not indisputable facts or immutable propositions; rather, they are theoretical assumptions, tentative hypotheses, or current best guesses about what the social world is and how it operates. In many ways, belief is knowledge at rest. We put ourselves in a position to grow when we recognize that knowledge is fragile and tentative, and beliefs are (or should be) as easy to reject as they are to embrace (Schwandt, 1990). From this perspective,

learning is a natural process that continually affords us opportunities not to believe tomorrow that we currently believe today.

And third, I highlight beliefs because reading education, like all professional fields of study, is a belief-driven profession. It is a field grounded in and driven by a constellation of theoretical assumptions about reading, readers, and text, and the symbiotic relationship between them. Continually interrogating beliefs and assumptions about reading is important because as Frank Smith (1985) states: "Old assumptions about reading haven't served us very well; children aren't reading any better and with any greater enthusiasm than they were 25 years ago." What is problematic is that much of reading education today is still based on old beliefs. What is needed is a conception of reading that is based on a different set of assumptions that reflect the best we currently know about reading, learning to read, and the relationship between reading and literacy. Based on this incident at the bookstore, and others like it, I have begun to interrogate some old beliefs and consider some alternative assumptions about reading and learning to read.

Shifting Belief: Children must master the alphabet and be able to accurately name and correctly sound out the letters (and combination of letters) before they can learn to read.

To me, it's just common sense. Children have to first know and be able to pronounce all the letters of the alphabet before they can learn to read. How can kids read if they don't know the letters of the alphabet? We have to start by teaching them the sounds and letters of the alphabet (preservice teacher, 1996).

Over the years I have heard statements like the following from countless preservice teachers, as well as from highly experienced inservice teachers. Quite honestly, I found myself making similar statements not long after my own children were born. At the time, I, like these preservice teachers, believed it was just "common sense." Since then, I've come to believe that therein, perhaps, lies much of the problem.

What is problematic about reading education today is that the field is grounded in and driven by a common sense view of reading. In addition, current conceptions of reading and learning to read are based on an adult, not a child's perspective. Ironically, what is needed is not a common sense, but an "uncommon sense" view of reading (Mayher, 1990). A good starting point is to shift perspective and consider some alternative assumptions about reading based on what we currently know about how children themselves learn how to read

Alternative Assumption: The starting point for teaching children how to read should be viewed from a child's perspective, and based on the best we currently know about how children themselves learn how to read.

When students and teachers ask me the question What is the starting point for teaching children how to read?, I often answer by saying, "It all depends." It all depends because there are many potential starting points for teaching reading. Many parents, teachers, and college students, for example, believe that the most logical starting point is to teach children grapho-phonemics. These individuals assume that knowledge of the alphabet is an essential precursor for learning how to read. Commercial products such as *Hooked on Phonics* and professional materials like basal readers are just two powerful examples of reading programs that promote accurate recognition and correct pronunciation of letters as the most appropriate starting point for learning to read.

Others, however, believe that the starting point is not letters, but combinations of letters taught as sight words. These individuals believe that reading is a matter of accurately recognizing words and building up large sight word vocabularies. Reading instruction that highlights word attack skills and commercial products that promote the use of Dolch word lists to increase vocabulary are just two common examples of this view of reading.

Still others believe that the starting point is neither to teach letters nor words, but to highlight meaning. These individuals do not reject teaching the alphabet or word recognition skills, but believe that reading, first and foremost, is a natural meaning-making process. For them, children learn to read by strategically using all three cueing systems (grapho-phonemics, syntax, semantics) in any instance of reading where the focus is on meaning. In this sense, these individuals believe that if you "take care of the sense, the sounds (and words) will take care of themselves" (Lewis Carroll, from *Alice in Wonderland*). Stated differently, they believe that reading is synonymous with making meaning, and that accurate recognition and correct pronunciation of letters and words do not precede the act of reading, but are learned as a result of reading.

What we have here, then, are three very different perspectives on how to teach reading. Each of these perspectives represents a very different, and irreconcilable, system of values about reading and learning to read. Continually examining and interrogating our system of values should run concurrently with putting these values into practice. The incident at the bookstore and the conversation in the car has afforded me an opportunity to reflect on and reexamine what I currently believe about reading and learning to read. Based on this experience, I have come to believe that the starting point for teaching children how to read should be based on the best we currently know about reading from the child's point of view. When we see reading

from this perspective, we quickly learn that children learn to read effectively, efficiently, and effortlessly provided they are offered lots of reading experiences where the focus is always on meaning.

For example, throughout the entire performance Ferris and Madrean were clearly not focusing on letters and words, but on ideas and meaning. More specifically, they were not interested in comprehending words, but in creating and performing a dramatic interpretation of a story. In fact, I suspect that if at any time during the performance, Madrean were to stop and correct her sister whenever she mispronounced or misread a word during oral reading, Ferris would no doubt complain at first, and then protest. If Madrean continued, Ferris would quit reading all together. Conversely, I also suspect that if any time during the performance Ferris were to stop and correct Madrean whenever she sang out of tune, danced out of sync, or improvised beyond the story line, Madrean, likewise, would protest at first, then perhaps sulk. And, if Ferris continued, finally quit as well.

Fortunately, neither of these possibilities happened because both children naturally focused on the meaning of a familiar story, using imagination to see if from a different perspective and recast it in a different light. What did happen was that Ferris and Madrean collaboratively used reading, singing, dancing, and improvisation to create meaning from this text and context. They challenged themselves to make the familiar, unfamiliar, in new and creative ways, and in their interpretation also challenged me to rethink what I currently believe about the relationship between reading and language.

Shifting Belief: Reading is the ability to accurately comprehend written language.

Typically, reading is conceptualized as the ability to accurately comprehend written language. This notion seems entirely reasonable, and, as my students often remind me, "just makes common sense." What is problematic about this view of reading is that it is based on the assumption that a one-to-one correspondence exists between reading and language. According to this view, language consists of words, each of which has a specific meaning, given a specific context in which the word is used. Successful reading depends on the extent to which readers accurately recognize and correctly understand word meanings, and then use these meanings to faithfully reconstruct an author intended meaning of text.

Alternative Assumption: Reading is a process of using alternate communication systems or multiple sign systems to construct personal meaning from text.

Reading, of course, is an instance of language uses. However, I don't believe that the relationship between reading and language is one-dimensional, or that reading and learning to read solely involves decoding written language. Learning to read is less about decoding

words, and more about generating hypotheses, tinkering with ideas, and socially constructing personal meaning. Of course, learning to read involves the use of written language. But I've come to believe that it involves much more than written language. Language (oral and written) is only one tool, albeit a powerful and privileged one in our culture, that children use in learning to read. But it is not the only tool, and it is not a tool that children use in isolation, as Ferris and Madrean have demonstrated at the bookstore.

Rather, reading is a multi-modal experience, one that involves a variety of ways to create meaning. Metaphorically speaking, children have a whole tool box filled with lots of meaning making tools in addition to language that they use collectively and strategically to create personal meaning. Conceptually, I see those tools as alternate communication or sign systems (music, dance, art, improvisation, math), each of which is powerful potential for readers to create personal meaning through and beyond text.

Shifting Belief: Learning to read precedes reading to learn.

Historically, learning to read has been grounded in a chronological age or what Harste (1993a; 1993b) critiques as a developmental stage model of learning. This model has viewed learning more or less as a movement along a "pathway" (Bruner, 1990), and learning to read as a matter of mastering a set of hierarchically arranged and sequentially ordered skills deemed necessary to make headway along this path. Different paths are planned for different groups of students depending on chronological age and developmental stage. The idea is to match up as closely as possible an appropriate pathway with a set of specific skills that will enable learners to travel this path efficiently and effectively.

Several assumptions underpin this view of reading: 1) learning to read requires accurate word recognition which depends on accurate letter recognition; 2) reading requires rapid, accurate, automatic word recognition; 3) written language is a tool for writing down oral language; 4) phonemic awareness is essential to reading and reading development; 5) reading is a process of Look/Say, and 6) meaning is imposed on readers by the text (Goodman, 1993). From this perspective learning to read is seen as a developmental process in the sense that children cannot read to learn until they have first mastered letters, sounds, and letter/sound relationships, and then words, combinations of words, and syntactical structures in the order. Once these skills have been developed, then children will be able to accurately and fluently comprehend text, and thus read to learn. Simply stated, from this perspective learning to read is a developmental process based on a letters-to-words-to-meaning mentality.

Alternative Assumption: Learning to read and reading to learn is a false dichotomy. They are really the same thing, and occur simultaneously in each instance of reading.

A few months after this incident occurred at the bookstore, I started to read *Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit* (Canfield and Hansen, 1993). One of the stories in the book captured my eye. It was written by John Holt and entitled "We Learn By Doing."

Not many years ago I began to play the cello. Most people would say that what I am doing is "learning to play" the cello. But these words carry into our minds the strange idea that there exists two very different processes: 1) learning to play the cello; and 2) playing the cello. They imply that I will do the first until I have completed it, at which point I will stop the first process and begin the second. In short, I will go on "learning to play" until I have "learned to play" and then I will begin to play. Of course, this is nonsense. There are not two processes, but one. We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way.

Although this story is clearly about learning to play the cello. Holt could just as easily have been talking about learning to read. For example, the same paragraph could read:

Not many years ago I began to read. Most people would say that what I am doing is "learning to read." But these words carry into our minds the strange idea that there exists two very different processes: 1) learning to read; and 2) reading. They imply that I will do the first until I have completed it, at which point I will stop the first process and begin the second. In short, I will go on "learning to read" until I have "learned to read" and then I will begin to read. Of course, this is nonsense. There are not two processes, but one. We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way.

Learning to read and reading to learn occur simultaneously in any instance of reading. Children do not postpone reading to learn until they learn to read letters and words accurately any more than they put off writing to learn until they have learned to write words conventionally, or delay singing until they have learned to interpret musical scores correctly, or defer dancing until they have learned to perform dance routines precisely, or even postpone talking until they can pronounce words and sentences properly. Rather, children learn to read and read to learn by using all three cueing systems of

language (graphophonemic, syntax, semantic) simultaneously and strategically to make constructive sense of written language. These systems are inextricably interrelated and function as potentials for children to learn to read, learn about reading, and learn from reading in every instance of reading where meaning is the central focus. Simply stated, from this perspective learning to read and reading to learn reflect a semantic-to-syntax-to-graphophonemic rationality.

In this instance Ferris and Madrean were clearly engaged in reading as a meaning-making and meaning-representing process. Both children used reading as a tool to collaboratively create and spontaneously represent a socially constructed and highly personalized version of *Goodnight Moon*. The focus of this experience was clearly on collaborating, reading, singing, dancing, dramatizing, and improvising, all of which were used synergistically by the children, but especially by Madrean, to make sense of written language. Later, of course, the focus changed. Madrean wanted me to buy the book because she wanted to read it herself, just like Ferris had earlier. Apparently, it was at this point that Madrean wanted to attend to words, letters, and sounds by announcing: "Daddy, I know what the story means. Now, I just need help with the words."

Shifting Belief: The relationship between reading and literacy is hierarchical in nature such that reading is viewed as a precursor to literacy.

Historically, reading (like writing, speaking, and listening) has been viewed as an isolated skill that is learned (and therefore should be taught) from a chronological age and developmental stage perspective. For example, this perspective believes that children learn to listen before they learn to speak, learn to speak before they learn to read, and learn to read before they learn to write. Over time, and with developmentally appropriate instruction, children become literate. That is, they acquire "The Basics" or the three R's: Reading, (W)Riting, and (A)Rithmetic.

Alternative Assumption: The relationship between reading and learning is symbiotic in nature such that how we learn to read reflects how we learn to learn.

Recently, however, reading educators have widened the lens through which we view reading. Today, reading, as well as writing, speaking, and listening, is viewed, not as an isolated skill, but as an instance of language use. From this perspective, understanding how children learn to read means understanding how children learn language. Like reading, language isn't an isolated skill as much as it is a communication system, one of many that our culture has created over the centuries as ways to make, represent, and share meaning about the social world. In addition to language, these communication systems include art, dance, music, sign language, mathematics, and

improvisation, and represent different ways of seeing and understanding the social world.

Traditionally, however, education has not treated all communication systems equally. In particular, it has privileged language and math over all other ways of knowing. One powerful example is in the area of evaluation in that formal standardized testing privileges linguistic and logical-mathematical proficiencies over all other ways of knowing (Gardner, 1988). Other communication systems are recognized as beneficial and desirable in a fully literate individual, but these systems compliment and support the "Three R's." They are not regarded as or included in "The Basics" of literacy, and therefore do not enjoy anywhere near the same prestige as does language and math in schooling.

This incident has caused me to reexamine what the term literacy might actually mean, and how individuals actually become literate. Based on this incident, I've come to view reading not as a collection of discreet and hierarchically arranged skills, but as a tool to learn. Similarly, I've come to see literacy not in terms of "The Basics" or "Three R's", but as a set of interrelated ways of knowing. Learners become literate as they continually intentionally and strategically use a wide variety of different communication systems to generate and represent meaning of the social world.

In this incident Ferris and Madrean clearly were not treating reading as an isolated skill. Rather, they were using reading in tandem with other ways of knowing (singing, dancing, dramatizing, improvising) to create a multi-modal interpretation of *Goodnight Moon*. In other words, like most highly sophisticated learners, Ferris and Madrean naturally used an assortment of meaning-making potentials not to accurately reproduce, but to creatively produce a personalized variation of the original. Stated differently, these children, like all individuals (children and adults) become literate by actively and strategically using different communication systems to go beyond the known (what they already knew about the story) in order to enter the unknown (what they can come to know about, from, and through the story). In Madrean's case the unknown or, the yet to be learned, was driven by her interest and curiosity in now wanting me to help her learn "some of the hard words in this book."

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

In this article I have tried to describe an incident that has challenged me to reexamine and rethink my beliefs about reading, learning to read, and the relationship between reading and literacy. This incident has enabled me to glean some new insights into the nature and function of reading. Fortunately, it has also allowed me to generate some new questions that hopefully will propel my learning

forward. Here are a few lingering questions that I am currently thinking about, and feel are worth thinking about more.

— How do we build a model of reading based on the inquiry questions of learners rather than on our assumptions about what their inquiry questions ought to be?

— How can we build on the best we currently know about language and language learning in order to move from a whole language view of learning to a holistic model of literacy to recognize language as but one way of knowing?

— Given that semiotics is the study of signs, e.g., art, dance, music, improvisation, to what extent should we use this field of study to develop new theories of reading?

— What curricular implications are involved when curriculum is grounded in and driven by theories of reading and learning which highlight multiple ways of knowing?

— What implications for assessment are involved when students are given opportunities to represent what they know or what they have learned over time by using a variety of alternate communication systems?

— What implications are involved for using a multiple ways of knowing perspective across the curriculum, K-12?

— What is the relationship between imagination and reading? To what extent do children and teachers perceive reading differently? To what extent do we as teacher educators enable preservice teachers to personally experience an imaginative, rather than a utilitarian, view of reading in the university classroom so that they, in turn, will be better able to create classroom contexts that will enable children to continue using reading in creative and imaginative ways?

I do not know the answers to these questions at this time. What I do know is that constructing answers to these questions will require me to take four stances: keep watching closely, keep testing rigorously, keep seeing differently, and keep taking risks. By watching closely, I mean keep “kidwatching” (Goodman, 1978), keep watching closely how my own children and the children of others go about learning how to read as well as use reading in conjunction with other sign systems to become literate individuals. By testing rigorously, I mean keep testing what I believe against what I see, hear, and feel about how children are learning to read and becoming literate in the process. By seeing differently, I mean shifting perspective so that what constitutes conventional wisdom and common sense today has the potential to be viewed in unconventional and uncommon ways tomorrow. And by taking risks, I mean keep putting my beliefs and theories to the test so that I can know tomorrow what I don’t know today about the nature of reading. To this end, I conclude with a quote by Ruth Simmons, President of Smith College, who once stated

"You have to take risks and also go against conventional wisdom — conventional wisdom doesn't make for startling advances."

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