



# Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

---

Volume 51  
Issue 4 July 2012

Article 9

---

7-2012

## Reading Horizons vol. 51, no. 4

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading\\_horizons](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons)



Part of the Education Commons

---

### Recommended Citation

(2012). Reading Horizons vol. 51, no. 4. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 51 (4). Retrieved from [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading\\_horizons/vol51/iss4/9](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol51/iss4/9)

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Education and Literacy Studies at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu](mailto:wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu).





# Reading Horizons

A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

ISSN 0034-0502

2012 Volume 51, No. 4

---

## **Café Culture: Promoting Empowerment and Pleasure in Adolescent Literacy Learning**

*Brandi Gribble Mathers, Ph.D., Geneva College*

*Amanda J. Stern, Geneva College*

## **The Professional Development Practices of Two Reading First Coaches**

*Charlotte A. Mundy, Ph.D., University of Alabama*

*Dorene D. Ross, Ed.D., University of Florida*

*Melinda M. Leko, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin -  
Madison*

## **Building Conceptual Understanding through Vocabulary Instruction**

*William H. Rupley, Ph.D., Texas A & M University*

*William Dee Nichols, Western Carolina University*

*Maryann Mraz, University of North Carolina at  
Charlotte*

*Timothy R. Blair, University of Central Florida*

## **Great Books for Late Summer Reading**

*Terrell A. Young, Ed.D., Brigham Young University and*

*Barbara A. Ward, Ph.D., Washington State University*





# *Reading Horizons*

A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts



Published by the

Dorothy J. McGinnis Reading Center & Clinic  
College of Education & Human Development  
Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Editor: Karen F. Thomas, Ph.D.

Volume 51, Number 4

June 2012/July 2012





# *Reading Horizons*

A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

*Volume 51, Number 4*

Café Culture: Promoting Empowerment and Pleasure in Adolescent Literacy Learning

*Brandi Gribble Mathers, Ph.D., Amanda J. Stern..... 259-278*

The Professional Development Practices of Two Reading First Coaches

*Charlotte A. Mundy, Ph.D., Dorene D. Ross, Ed.D.,  
Melinda M. Leko, Ph.D..... 279-298*

Building Conceptual Understanding through Vocabulary Instruction

*William H. Rupley, Ph.D., William Dee Nichols, Maryann Mraz,  
Timothy R. Blair..... 299-321*

Great Books for Late Summer Reading

*Terrell A. Young and Barbara A. Ward..... 322-333*





## **Dear *Reading Horizon* Readers,**

This issue represents the last issue, number four, of Volume 51. Beginning in the fall, *Reading Horizons* will enter a new publication year with a new look. *Reading Horizons* is looking to grow and reach out to our literacy community. We are using Scholar-Works to become available as a digital publication where we will soon be accepting online submissions. In addition, we plan to expand our web-presence with a blog, Facebook page, Twitter, Pinterest, and possibly more.

Please note that this web presence will unfold slowly over the next year to determine where you, the readers, would like to see us. Think of this upcoming process much like the signs dotting our highways this summer “Under Construction”. We know that the end results should mirror a smooth and far more enjoyable ride—so much for the highway metaphor.

This issue starts out with an invitation to the café culture issued by authors Mathers and Stern. In the café setting, adolescents can enjoy the pleasure of choice in reading material. Based on a survey of 160 adolescents, Mathers and Stern found that although adolescents admit to the importance of reading, they rarely engage voluntarily in reading books for pleasure. Citing the origins of the first coffeehouses around 1400 in Constantinople and later institutionalized in Europe among the literarie, the authors outline criteria for and examples of four existing successful school cafes where reading for pleasure has increased.

Next, authors Mundy, Ross, and Leko take us inside two elementary schools in north central Florida to share their qualitative data on two differing literacy coaches. Following the two coaches, the authors chronicled and described how these two coaches interpreted and delivered professional development very differently with their respective faculties. One employed a knowledge-for-practice in her role as expert, while the other conceptualized her role as knowledge-in-practice in her role as collaborator.



Mundy, Ross, and Leko then share implications for how to better prepare literacy coaches for their roles.

Rupley, Nichols, Mraz, and Blair share their research on that ever-present literacy developmental process of building readers' vocabulary. With a theoretical framework which leads to practical approaches to building vocabulary, the authors present several explicit approaches for vocabulary instruction. Additionally, they present conceptual understandings allowing a generative approach designed to help students generate meanings of new words based on relating old knowledge to new knowledge.

And Young and Ward present a great list of books that not only can help students to keep an edge on their summer reading but keep this edge well into fall. You will meet some great animals and great characters from the Mighty Miss Malone to the Chinese Cyborg Cinderella.

A final word or two needs to be shared about *Reading Horizons* new staff and advisors. First, we have the artistic and editorial expertise of Shana Wolstein, with a newly minted M.F.A. She brings great talent and energy to both the technology and writing/editing process of this journal. Next, the graduate faculty of Literacy Studies will share in the production, review process, literacy expertise, and advising role for *Reading Horizons*. They bring a shared vision albeit in their differing areas of literacy expertise. They include Lauren Freedman, Esther Gray, Susan Piazza, Marie Selena Protacio, and Karen F. Thomas.

Thank you and enjoy,

Karen F. Thomas, Ph.D.  
Professor, Literacy Studies  
Interim Editor, *Reading Horizons*





**There is no more crucial or basic skill  
in all of education than reading.**







# *Reading Horizons*

*Interim Editor: Karen F. Thomas Ph.D.*

*Design & Production Assistant: Shana Wolstein M.F.A.*

## **Editorial Advisory Board**

Jennifer Altieri, School of Education

*The Citadel School of Education, Charleston, South Carolina*

Julie W. Ankrum, Literacy Education

*University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Johnstown, Pennsylvania*

Bryan Bardine, Director of Teaching Assistant Training

*University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio*

Mary Alice Barksdale, College of Human Resource and Education

*Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia*

Rita Bean, College of Education

*University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Angela Beumer Johnson, Department of English Language and Literatures

*Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio*

William Bintz, Department of Teaching, Leadership,  
and Curriculum Studies

*Kent State University, Kent, Ohio*

Stergios Botzakis, Reading Education

*University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee*

Terri Duncko, Education

*Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio*

Ingrid Ennis, Education Department

*Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama*

Pamela J. Farris, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

*Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois*

Gay Fawcett, Consultant

*Kent State University, Kent, Ohio*



Amy Seely Flint, Middle Secondary Education and  
Instructional Technology

*Georgia State University, Decatur, Georgia*

Mary Jo Fresch, School of Teaching and Learning

*The Ohio State University, Marion, Ohio*

Sara Helfrich, Literacy Education

*Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho*

Holly Johnson, College of Education

*University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio*

Diane Kern, School of Education

*University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island*

Kathryn Kinnucan-Welsch, Department of Teacher Education

*University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio*

Dorothy J. McGinnis, Professor Emeritus

*Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan*

Susan McGowan, Institute for Innovation in Education

*West Liberty University, Wheeling, West Virginia*

Aimee Morewood, Curriculum and Instruction, Literacy Studies

*West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia*

Vanessa Morrison, Teacher Education

*Adrian College, Adrian, Michigan*

Maryann Mraz, College of Education

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina*

Molly Ness, Division of Curriculum and Teaching

*Fordham University, New York, New York*

Brandi L. Noll, Literacy Coach

*Canton Local Schools, Canton, Ohio*

Michael Opitz, Department of Reading

*University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado*



Linda T. Parsons, School of Teaching and Learning  
*The Ohio State University, Marion Campus, Marion, Ohio*

Diana Quatroche, Elementary and Early Childhood Education  
*Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana*

Alexa Sandman, Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies  
*Kent State University, Kent, Ohio*

Jon Shapiro, Department of Language Education  
*University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia*

Michael Shaw, Education  
*St. Thomas Aquinas College, Sparkill, New York*

Allison Swan Dagen, Curriculum and Instruction, Literacy Studies  
*West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia*

Elisa Waingort-Jiménez, Spanish Bilingual Teacher  
*Dalhousie Elementary, Calgary, AB, Canada*

Barbara A. Ward, Department of Teaching and Learning  
*Washington State University, Pullman, Washington*

Patricia Watson, Language and Literacy  
*Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas*

Donna Werderich, Department of Literacy Education  
*Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois*

Katherine D. Wiesendanger, Graduate Literacy Program  
*Longwood University, Farmville, Virginia*

Terrell Young, Department of Teacher Education  
*Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah*







## Café Culture: Promoting Empowerment and Pleasure in Adolescent Literacy Learning

**Brandi Gribble Mathers, Ph.D.**  
Geneva College

**Amanda J. Stern**  
Geneva College

---

### Abstract

---

The 160 third, seventh, and eleventh-graders involved in this study agreed, almost unanimously, that reading was “important.” Participants cited the empowering benefits of reading as they justified this opinion. However, with regards to the enjoyment of reading, fewer middle and high school participants reported “liking” reading than their elementary counterparts and fewer reported reading in their free time.

One solution to this dilemma involves providing adolescent students with a context devoted solely to pleasure reading. In doing so, educators can look to an institution that boasts both an historical link to literate culture and current-day pop culture appeal: the coffeehouse. When combined with more traditional forms of literacy instruction, the coffeehouse provides a viable model for promoting both empowerment and pleasure in adolescent literacy learning.

---

### Introduction

Most educators would agree that the ability to read is empowering. After all, success in everyday life—whether it be work, school, or community involvement—demands individuals who are “highly skilled in reading for understanding” (Learning Point Associates, 2005, NCLB Act, ¶ 2). The long-term empowering benefits of reading are numerous, and yet, as Newkirk (2003) points out, “We all regularly avoid tasks that do not give us some form of pleasure, no matter how beneficial they

might be for the future” (p. 33). Furthermore, not only do people regularly avoid unpleasant tasks, but they seek out other, more pleasurable activities with which to fill their time (Nell, 1988).

Indeed, this phenomenon plays itself out when it comes to adolescents and reading. Although most adolescents *can* read, many do not find it pleasurable, and, therefore, avoid it when they can (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000; Strommen & Mates, 2004), choosing to fill their time with other activities. This disturbing trend makes the issue of reading for pleasure and its link to motivation and engagement an important one, despite the argument that “reading for pleasure is a ‘cuddly’ activity that some people like to indulge in but that is essentially without further merit” (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, p. 5) and/or the misconception that issues related to motivation represent “the opposite of having high standards” (Goodson, as cited in Cassidy, Garrett, & Barrera, 2006, p. 35). Such claims hold no merit; after all, much research exists linking motivation and engagement to increased learning (eg: Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Teale & Gambrell, 2007) thus making pleasure reading an important issue in adolescent literacy.

Our research was initially guided by two general research questions. First, we wanted to know how middle and high school students’ beliefs about reading differed from their elementary counterparts’. Second, we were interested in the reasons elementary, middle, and high school students gave for their beliefs about reading. However, as we began to examine students’ justifications for their beliefs, we became interested in the idea that motivation for reading could spring from a variety of sources, including the desire for “empowerment” and “pleasure.” The emergence of these two categories caused us to consider the importance of promoting both sources of motivation within adolescents’ school-based reading experiences. Finally, further reading and contemplation led us to consider the role an institution that boasts both an historical link to literate culture and current-day pop culture appeal, the coffeehouse, might play in achieving such a goal.

## Conceptual Frame

A joint position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Middle School Association reports that, while elementary students fare quite well in international comparisons of reading performance, “the data indicate that the level of student performance drops off in the middle and high school years” (International Reading Association, 2002, ¶ 4). Not only do scores drop as students reach adolescence, but attitudes worsen (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). McKenna,



Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) report that, on average, students' attitudes towards reading "begin at a relatively positive point in Grade 1 and end in relative indifference by Grade 6" (p. 952). The fact that scores drop and attitudes worsen leads educators to ask the question, "Why?" Ivey and Broadus (2001) believe the answer lies in a "mismatch between what students need and the instruction they likely receive" (p. 353). A review of the literature exposes various aspects of this mismatch, all of which point to the same end result: draining the pleasure out of reading.

### **Mismatch #1: Adolescents are Social, But School is Not**

Santa (2006) contends that adolescents have a natural talent for things social. Consequently, school reading practices which honor the social nature of learning are likely to engage students (Casey, 2008/2009; Wigfield, 2000). However, practices which devalue the importance of things social often lead to resistance towards reading (Lenters, 2006). Adolescent resistance abounds, not surprisingly, since teacher-centered language arts classrooms are plentiful. Indeed, Ivey (1999) reports that, in her survey of sixth-grade readers, peers and social learning did not emerge as pivotal components of reading classrooms. These findings lead Ivey and Broadus (2000) to surmise that "effective strategies for social literacy learning may be rarely used in middle school classrooms" (p. 71). Failure to recognize this social "mismatch" contributes to adolescents' resistance towards in-school reading (Lenters, 2006).

### **Mismatch #2: Students Like to Choose, But Teachers Like to Dictate**

With adolescence comes the desire for increased autonomy. Ironically, however, the instructional environment found in many middle and high school classrooms provides little choice in students' school-based reading (Lenters, 2006). Such an environment is an anomaly since, as Reeves (2004) notes, "Younger people and older people get to choose what to read, only in middle school and high school are people's reading choices so controlled" (p. 242). Indeed, 80% of the elementary students in Gambrell's (1996) motivation studies revealed that the books they enjoyed most were ones they had picked themselves. Similarly, Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) report that their elementary participants cited "choice" and "personal interest" as factors that got them excited about reading. The importance of choice and personal interest does not diminish as students enter adolescence; Lapp and Fisher (2009) found that high-school participants were motivated to read when "their voices and interests were driving the text selections and conversations" (p. 560). Likewise, the middle-schoolers in Pflaum and Bishop's (2004) work identified "choice" and "pursuing personal preferences" as conditions that led to engagement

in silent reading. And yet, Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) reveal that the materials preferred by their sixth-grade participants have “traditionally been scorned by literary critics and many educators” (p. 23). The discrepancy between students’ desire to choose and the lack of choice actually afforded them in school represents a second “mismatch” in the teaching of adolescent literacy.

### **Mismatch #3: Students Need Time for Reading, But the Schedule Does Not Permit It**

“Choice” serves as a powerful motivator for reading engagement. Ironically, however, at a time in students’ lives when choice in reading, and the autonomy it represents, takes on a new level of importance, free-reading is often dropped from the curriculum (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Scheduling becomes an issue (Ivey & Broadus, 2001) and other classroom tasks take precedence. Compounding the problem is the fact that most of the time adolescents *do* have for reading involves being graded. Heins (1980) contends that it is the job of educators to “generate a positive pleasure in reading,” but that the process of “extracting” (p. 262) answers from readers ruins the whole process. Atwell (2007) concurs, “Every day, smart, well-meaning teachers erect instructional roadblocks between their students and the pure pleasure of the personal art of reading” (§ 4). The lack of time and space for free-choice pleasure reading represents yet another “mismatch” between the needs of adolescent readers and the schooling they receive.

### **“At-Risk Situational Contexts”**

Guthrie (1996) contends that students want to be successful, stating, “We know that students bring the desire for involvement, curiosity, social interaction, challenge, and enhancement of self-efficacy into school activities.” He asserts, however, “If the context supports these motivational goals, students become intensively engaged. If the context suppresses them, children become disaffected” (p. 418). Unfortunately, the “mismatches” described previously do little to create contexts which support student engagement. Rather, they can lead to the creation of what Moore (1996) refers to as “at-risk situational contexts” (p. 26). Such contexts cause students to think of reading as a pragmatic school-based activity (Pitcher, et al., 2007) rather than a pleasurable personal pursuit. In some instances, the prospect of the empowerment that comes from pragmatic school-based activities—for example good grades, admission to college, and the eventual promise of gainful employment—may motivate students to read. Equally important, yet under-utilized, however, is the

motivating force of pleasure. We believe educators would be wise to consider aspects of empowerment *and* pleasure as they create the educational contexts which facilitate the development of adolescents' reading identities. We also believe that the coffeehouse, with its historical link to literate culture and its current-day pop culture appeal, provides a viable model for promoting both empowerment and pleasure in adolescent literacy learning. This article will share our vision for that model.

### **Purpose of the Study**

We were initially guided by two general research questions. First, we wanted to know how middle and high school students' beliefs about reading differed from their elementary counterparts'. Second, we were interested in the reasons elementary, middle, and high school students gave for their beliefs about reading. However, as we began to examine students' justifications for their beliefs, we became interested in the idea that motivation for reading could originate from a variety of sources, including the desire for "empowerment" and "pleasure." The emergence of these two categories led us to consider the importance of promoting both sources of motivation within adolescents' school-based literacy learning and to consider the role of the coffeehouse in accomplishing such an objective.

### **Participants and Research Setting**

Our research took place in a small urban district located in the north-eastern United States. The district had an enrollment of approximately 1,100 students, kindergarten through twelfth grade. Seventeen percent of the students were African American while 83% were Caucasian. Thirty-three percent of the students were on free or reduced-cost lunch status.

A total of 160 students participated in the project. Fifty-three of the participants were members of three different self-contained third-grade classrooms. Fifty-nine were students of three seventh-grade language arts classes. The remaining 48 participants represented three eleventh-grade English classes.

# Procedures and Data Analysis

**Table 1.** *Original Reading Questionnaire Items*

|            |                        |
|------------|------------------------|
| Question 1 | Are you a good reader? |
| Question 2 | Do you like to read?   |
| Question 3 | Do you read at school? |
| Question 4 | Do you read at home?   |
| Question 5 | Is reading important?  |
| Question 6 | Is reading hard?       |

This research involved an in-class administration of a brief literacy questionnaire (see Table 1) at each of the three grade levels. The questionnaire, which was administered in each classroom room during a Language Arts or English period, included six items related to reading. Each item consisted of two parts. In the first part, students were simply asked to circle “yes” or “no” in response to questions such as, “Do you like to read?” and “Is reading important?” In the second part of each item, students were asked to explain, in writing, the reasons for their yes/no answers. Students completed the questionnaires anonymously.

Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. First, percentages were calculated for the yes/no component of each item. Next, a content analysis of the open-ended written component was conducted. As students’ written responses were read and reread, patterns related to the research questions emerged, thus forming categories for coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A database was organized for all coded responses. As responses to individual items were examined in relationship to the other items on the questionnaire, two distinct themes emerged: the role of power and the role of pleasure in literacy learning.

With the emergence of these two themes, the content analysis became more focused. Consequently, two of the original six questionnaire items were eliminated because they did not provide insight into the role of power or pleasure in literacy learning. The remaining four items included: “Do you like to read?” “Is reading important?” “Do you read at home?” and “Do you read at school?”

## Results

The content analysis of student's written responses yielded two distinct themes: the role of power and the role of pleasure in literacy learning. Results are reported according to these two themes.

### Reading is Empowering

**Table 2.** *Percentage of affirmative answers at each grade level (N = 160)*

| Question               | Grade 3<br>n=53 | Grade 7<br>n=59 | Grade 11<br>n=48 |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Is reading important?  | 98.11           | 91.53           | 97.92            |
| Do you read at school? | 96.23           | 94.92           | 91.67            |
| Do you like to read?   | 75.47           | 57.63           | 58.33            |
| Do you read at home?   | 92.45           | 62.71           | 54.17            |

Table 2 summarizes participants' responses to two questionnaire items: (1) Is reading important? and (2) Do you read at school? In both cases, the percentage of affirmative answers remained consistently high across grade levels.

#### *Is Reading Important?*

When asked if reading was important, approximately 98% of the third, 92% of the seventh, and 98% of the eleventh graders answered "yes." An analysis of students' written responses revealed two major justifications for this belief: reading is important because (1) it makes you smart, and (2) it helps you succeed in life.

*Reading makes you smart.* Students justified the belief that reading was important by claiming that reading and intelligence were linked. Approximately 52% of the third, 52% of the seventh, and 60% of the eleventh graders referenced this connection. For example, a seventh grader commented, "It helps you get smarter." Likewise, an eleventh-grade student replied, "Reading keeps your mind strong and sharp and may give you more information than if you did not read."

Not only did students claim that reading makes a person smarter, generally speaking, but they also claimed that reading improves a person's literacy skills, specifically. For instance, a third-grade participant responded, "Reading is important because you can't write if you can't read because how the heck are you going to know how to spell it." Similarly, a seventh-grade student replied, "I think reading

is important because you learn new words, know new stories, and can read more fluently.”

*Reading helps you succeed in life.* Students also justified the belief that reading was important by pointing to ways reading can help a person achieve success in life. Approximately 33% of the third, 41% of the seventh, and 32% of the eleventh graders cited examples of the connection between reading and success in life, including success in school and beyond. For instance, in reference to success in school, a seventh grader commented, “You need a good reading grade to pass high school or go to college.” Likewise, an eleventh-grade participant replied, “It is very important for your future maybe in college.”

In addition to linking reading with success in school, students also linked reading with success in life beyond school. For example, one third-grade participant explained, “You need to read so you can be a nurse or something else.” Similarly, a seventh-grader responded, “If you can’t read, you can’t get a job. You can’t read the menu at a restaurant, can’t drive!”

### *Do You Read at School?*

Just as the percentage of affirmative answers remained consistently high across grade levels with regard to the question, “Is reading important?”, so too did the percentage of affirmative answers remain consistently high with regard to the question, “Do you read at school?” Approximately 96% of the third, 95% of the seventh, and 92% of the eleventh graders reported that they read at school. Students’ explanations ranged from positive, to neutral, to negative. For instance, a seventh-grade student commented, “I like to read at school when I am in like a little group of five or four.” An eleventh grader reacted, “I’m at school, what choice do I have?”

### *Summary: The Empowering Benefits of Reading*

Across grade levels, students’ responses consistently highlighted the empowering benefits of reading. For instance, students articulated a belief in the connection between reading and intelligence. They also claimed that reading helps a person achieve success—both in school and in life beyond the classroom. Whether or not they *liked* to read aside, students reported believing that reading was important and were able to give concrete examples of its connection to personal empowerment.

### **Reading is Pleasurable...Sometimes**

Table 2 also summarizes participants’ responses to two additional items: (1) Do you like to read? and (2) Do you read at home? In both cases, the percentage of affirmative answers declined across grade levels.

### *Do You Like to Read?*

When asked if they liked to read, approximately 75% of the third graders answered “yes,” while only 58% of the seventh and 58% of the eleventh graders did. An analysis of students’ written responses revealed three major justifications for their reactions. These justifications revolved around three sets of considerations: (1) affective factors—those related to feeling and emotion, (2) educational factors—those related to learning and intelligence, and (3) time factors—those related to the amount of time it takes to read and to other options for filling one’s time.

*Affective factors.* Across all grade levels, students who reported liking to read, as well as students who did not, underscored the role of affective factors in determining their responses. For example, of the students who reported liking to read, approximately 61% of the third, 75% of the seventh, and 90% of the eleventh graders explained that factors such as “personal interest” and “choice” impacted their beliefs about reading. One third-grade participant highlighted the importance of personal interest, explaining, “I like to read because sometimes the book can be about history or it can be a fantasy or a legend or a fable. They are all very interesting.” An eleventh grader commented on the impact of choice, saying, “I really only like to read books that I pick out. A lot of the books we read for school aren’t really like my kind of books. I really enjoy science fiction.”

Of the students who reported not liking to read, 77% of the third, 68% of the seventh, and 37% of the eleventh graders referenced affective factors, including “personal interest” and “choice,” as they discussed their opinions. For instance, a seventh-grader wrote, “I don’t really like to read. I will usually start a book but never finish it because I sometimes don’t find the book interesting.” Finally, an eleventh-grade participant explained, “I’ll read magazines and stuff but not books.”

*Educational factors.* Across all grade levels, students who reported liking to read pointed to educational factors as they justified their feelings; approximately 31% of the third, 13% of the seventh, and 7% of the eleventh-grade participants explained that they liked to read because reading was linked to increased intelligence. For instance, one third grader explained, “I like to read because it is fun, you get to learn things and get facts.” Similarly, an eleventh-grade student commented, “Reading provides me with information that I do not know as well as expanding my vocabulary.” Educational considerations were not mentioned by students who reported not liking to read.

*Time factors.* The issue of “time” came up most frequently in the responses of students who reported not liking to read; approximately 31% of the third, 16% of the seventh, and 16% of the eleventh graders who did not like to read referenced

time. For example, a seventh grader explained, “I usually do not have time and don’t like to just read.” Likewise, an eleventh-grade participant revealed, “I do not like to read. It is just time consuming and I would rather do something more interactive.”

### *Do You Read at Home?*

Just as the percentage of affirmative answers declined across grade levels with regard to the question, “Do you like to read?”, so too did the percentage of affirmative answers decline with regard to the question, “Do you read at home?” While approximately 93% of the third graders reported reading at home, only 63% of the seventh and 54% of the eleventh graders reported doing so.

An examination of students’ written explanations revealed that the participating third-grade teachers regularly required students to read for pleasure at home. One third-grader explained, “I read at home...for 40 minutes because half of the reading is my homework and the other half is just to read.” The written explanations of the seventh and eleventh-grade participants revealed no such requirement. Nonetheless, some students revealed that they did take pleasure in reading at home. An eleventh-grader commented, “When I’m at home I can read things that interest me. I am not limited to what I can read at home like we are in school.” Other students reported, however, that they did not read at home. For instance, a seventh-grader explained, “I like being on the computer or X-box or playing outside with my friends rather than reading.”

### *Summary: Reading for Pleasure*

Although more elementary-level participants reported liking to read and reading at home than did their middle and high school counterparts, students across grade levels indicated that, under certain conditions, reading can be pleasurable. Students overwhelmingly pointed to “choice” and “personal interest” as determining factors. Students explained that, when given the chance to exercise choice or to read interesting material, they view reading as a pleasurable option for occupying their time.

## **Limitations**

Our study relied solely on data that were self-reported by the student participants. This fact proves limiting because, in a school setting, students may be inclined to report what it is they believe adults want to hear rather than being



completely honest about their feelings. The questionnaires, therefore, were filled out anonymously so as to provide as much room for honesty as possible.

## Discussion

The third, seventh, and eleventh-graders involved in our study agreed, almost unanimously, that reading was “important.” Participants pointed to the empowering benefits of reading—including, earning good grades, gaining admittance to college, and securing a job—as they justified this opinion. Because of this belief, most participants reported being willing to read at school. Whereas agreement existed across grade levels as to the importance of reading, such uniformity did not exist with regards to the enjoyment of reading; fewer middle and high school students reported “liking” reading than their elementary counterparts. Likewise, fewer middle and high school students reported reading in their free time.

Such results indicate that educators have done a good job convincing students of all ages that reading is important. It appears, however, that educators have not been as successful in convincing adolescent students that reading is pleasurable. This fact begs the question, “How can we convince middle and high school students that reading is not only important, but also pleasurable?” We believe the answer to this question involves providing students a context—a specific place and time within the framework of the school day—devoted solely to experiencing the pleasure of reading. We believe that within such a context, a culture can grow—a culture of literacy.

In laying plans for such a context, we suggest looking to an institution that has long been associated with literate culture: the coffeehouse. The coffeehouse dates back to the 1400’s when the first shop, Kiva Han, began serving coffee to the inhabitants of Constantinople (Paajanen, 2007). Eventually the concept of the coffeehouse spread to western Europe and, by the time of the Enlightenment, coffee had become the preferred drink of scientists, businessmen, writers, and politicians and coffeehouses had become “centers of self-education, literary and philosophical speculation, commercial innovation, and, in some cases, political fermentation” (Standage, 2005, p. 157). Men flocked to the coffeehouses in huge numbers to read the latest newsletters, chat with other patrons, and take part in literary or political discussions (Standage, 2005). How appropriate, then, that “coffeehouses were sometimes called ‘penny universities,’ since anyone could enter and join the discussion for a penny or two, the price of a dish of coffee” (Standage, 2005, p. 158). Ellis (2004) cites from Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* that suggests that,

although the coffeehouse existed to sell coffee, it “cannot simply be reduced to this retail function;” rather, it was also “an idea, a way of life, a mode of socialising, a philosophy” (p. xi).

Flash forward 400 years to the modern-day coffee shop: Starbucks. According to Sweet’s (2007) analysis, some things have not changed; he suggests that, much like the coffeehouses of old, “Starbucks has become an arbiter of pop culture, shaping popular tastes far beyond the flavor of a brewed drink” (p. 12). He explains that the money customers pay for a latte “is a kind of entrance fee exacted for participation in the Starbucks experience” (p. 69). This experience—set in an informal atmosphere complete with “festive decorations, aromatic surroundings, artsy lights, and comfy furniture” (p. 105)—recognizes that people crave engagement and connection.

Sweet (2007) explains, “Starbucks is fundamentally in the relationship business. Starbucks sells not coffee but connection” (p. 138). Santa (2006) makes a similar observation about teaching. She contends that successful teaching “has far more to do with human relationships and classroom community than with the content of our classes. In some ways, relationships are teaching” (p. 467). The results of our study lead us to believe that adolescents’ literacy engagement could be heightened if educators took better advantage of the motivating power of community. We also believe that the coffeehouse provides a fitting model for what that literary community might look like.

### **Using Café Culture to Address the Current “Mismatch”**

“Starbucks didn’t set out to reinvent coffee. They aimed to reinvent the coffee experience” (Sweet, 2007, p. 32). Likewise, we are not setting out to reinvent reading. Rather, we aim to reinvent the adolescent reading experience. As things currently stand, a “mismatch” exists between the educational needs of adolescent students and the instruction they receive (Ivey and Broadus, 2001). We believe the café model proposed here has the power to rectify various facets of this mismatch, thus increasing the likelihood that adolescents will associate reading not just with its empowering benefits, but also its pleasurable ones.

#### *Setting the Scene*

So what would this reinvented experience look like? To give you an idea, we invite you to visit one high school’s literary café. . . Looking around, you notice that the interior of the room is drastically different from other spaces in the school building. The traditional stark white walls and florescent lighting have been replaced by a warm palette of colors and softer lights. The standard-issue furniture has been

replaced by comfortable couches and chairs, which, instead of being arranged in straight rows, have been pulled into cozy circles. Eye-catching book displays offer a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction, including the most recent and popular books in addition to the timeless classics. Current magazines and newspapers are also plentiful. Over the soft jazz playing in the background, you hear the hushed but unmistakably animated voices of students: a pair discussing an article they have just read in the latest edition of *Time*, a small group making book recommendations, and another discussing plans for an upcoming author's visit. Other students and teachers sit alone, engrossed in a variety of newspapers, books, and magazines. One student is writing in a journal while another writes on the computer. Everyone is sipping something: hot chocolate, herbal tea, and fruit smoothies. The environment is comfortable and yet energized.

Powell-Brown (2006) calls reading a "tough sell" (p. 85). We believe, however, that the café model proposed here will make educators' job of "selling" reading to adolescents an easier one. After all, Starbucks does not have any trouble attracting customers, nor did the Enlightenment-age coffeehouse. Why? Because these establishments provide a context rich with "passion and relationship and meaningful experience" (Sweet, 2007, p. 9). We believe that such a context offers a much-needed venue for addressing aspects of the "mismatch between what students need and the instruction they likely receive" (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001, p. 353), thus helping to convince adolescents that reading is not just important, but also pleasurable.

### *Mismatch #1: Students Need Time for Reading, But the Schedule Does Not Permit It*

In elementary classrooms, "time" and "space" are often routinely devoted to free reading. Although this "time" goes by a variety of names—Sustained Silent Reading, Drop Everything and Read, and Read Any Place—it looks essentially the same: students enjoying books of their choosing in a relaxed environment. The "space" itself is also important. To that end, many elementary classrooms have designated "reading corners," complete with comfortable seating and attractive book displays, which provide children daily opportunities to experience the pleasure of reading. As students move into their middle and high school years, however, "time" and "space" come at a premium and, consequently, free-reading is often dropped from the curriculum (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

This is not as it should be, however, according to a joint position statement written by the International Reading Association and the National Middle School Association (2002). Both associations contend that adolescents should be given

free-reading opportunities on a daily basis. The café model provides just such free-reading opportunities; in essence, the café is simply a more grown-up version of the elementary-school reading corner. Its atmosphere combines the sensory appeal of the modern-day Starbucks with the intellectual flavor of the Enlightenment-age coffeehouse, thus “creating a space where reading practices go beyond the mundane and resemble the out-of-school literacies that a good many adults enjoy” (Beach, Appleman, Hynds, & Wilhelm, 2006, p. 34). The impact of providing an “out-of-school” environment has been documented. Providing students with a comfortable and relaxed setting for free-reading promotes reading motivation (Clark & Rumbold, 2006), thus underscoring its importance in the development of adolescent literacy.

### *Mismatch #2: Adolescents are Social, But School is Not*

Although providing “time” and “space” addresses one facet of the “mismatch,” the café model goes beyond simply creating an appealing physical space and then giving students time to spend there. To be successful, educationally speaking, the café must come to represent “an idea, a way of life, a mode of socialising, a philosophy” (Ellis, 2004, p. xi) which celebrates things literate. Furthermore, the café must come to represent a culture which “taps into the potential energy of social relations” (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006, p. 81) and acknowledges that reading is a social endeavor (Casey 2008/2009). Through opportunities for student-facilitated book discussions, poetry readings, authors’ visits, and Readers’ Theater performances, the café provides a context for students to interact with their peers around books on their own terms, thus promoting a degree of authenticity which can help make “the literacy learning in school resemble the passionate engagements students seek outside the classroom” (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006, p. 3).

### *Mismatch #3: Students Like to Choose, But Teachers Like to Dictate*

Not only does social interaction increase motivation (Wigfield, 2000) and engagement (Dreher, 2002/2003), but so too do choice and personal preference (Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). The Position Statement for the Commission on Adolescent Literacy of the International Reading Association underscores the importance of choice and preference. Its authors, Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, and Rycik (1999), contend, “Choosing their own reading materials is important to adolescents who are seeking independence” (p. 5). They go on to argue that adolescent students should be given opportunities to read a wide variety of materials including those “tied to popular television and movie productions; magazines about specific interests such as sports, music or cultural backgrounds;

and books by favorite authors” (p. 5). Similarly, Krashen (2004) espouses the power of “light reading”—a kind of reading, he claims, “schools pretend does not exist” (p. 92)—including comic books, teen romances, and magazines. Such materials are typically not included on schools’ required reading lists (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999) and yet, Krashen argues, these texts can serve as a “conduit to heavier reading” (p. 116) by providing the motivation and linguistic competence needed for handling more demanding texts. After all, “when the definition of legitimate text becomes limited, educators also limit what students might be able to access that could spark their interests and become the impetus for lifelong learning” (Botzakis, 2009, p. 58). The café model proposed here provides a context which revolves around free-choice reading, thus encouraging autonomy in adolescent readers.

### Feasibility

Perhaps you are now interested in the idea of opening a café in your middle or high school, but are not sure about the feasibility of such an endeavor. Thankfully, other schools have already paved the way, proving that such an undertaking can be extremely successful. For instance, Hastings High School, located in Houston, Texas offers its students a before-school café (Loller, 2007). The café is located in the library and run by librarian John Witmer. Witmer reports that, before the opening of the cafe, they were “running about 6,000 visits per year to the library and checking out about 3,000 books.” Now, however, they are “running about 65,000 visits and checking out about 45,000 books” (Loller, 2007, ¶ 16). While cafés can be run by school staff, other schools are getting students involved, too. For example, the Cougar Café, located in Centennial High School in Franklin, Tennessee, is run by its marketing students (Loller, 2007). Likewise, the Kokopelli Kafes, located in Waunakee Middle and High Schools, in the Madison, Wisconsin area, are run by students in the special education program (Kittner, 2006).

Memorial High School, also located in the Madison area, was recently awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Foundation for Madison’s Public Schools to work with Ancora Coffee to open a school coffee shop (Kittner, 2006). While such monies would certainly facilitate the opening of a café, more modest funds also suffice; the Kokopelli Kafe started with a budget of only \$300.

## Final Thoughts

Some may argue that reading instruction needs to emphasize the kinds of “skills” traditionally believed to empower students. While we acknowledge that these kinds of skills do have a place in reading instruction, we also resonate with the following:

Educators who teach reading and writing skills without addressing student engagement are unlikely to yield substantial improvements. As anyone who has spent time with middle and high school students can attest, attempting to build the skills of disengaged adolescents is a futile enterprise. Whether expressed as defiant noncompliance or passive “checking out,” the student who refuses to learn will succeed in that effort. (Learning Point Associates, 2005, *Why Focus*, ¶ 1)

Some might react to the café model proposed here by claiming that it puts too much emphasis on “pleasure” by extending reading instruction into the realm of comfortable furniture, appetizing drinks, popular books and magazines, and conversations with friends. For those who do not believe such things do much to contribute to an adolescent culture of literacy, we share the following reflection, written by Danny Brassell (2006), a professor of teacher education at California State University:

Growing up, I was never much of a reader. I earned good grades, but I absolutely detested reading. . . . Anytime I thought about libraries I conjured up images of musty encyclopedias, uncomfortable furniture, and old ladies constantly insisting that I lower my voice. To me, a trip to the library was about as desirable as a visit to the dentist. (p. 92)

The results of the current research indicate that Brassell’s sentiment is not uncommon amongst today’s adolescent students. Consequently, we believe that, when combined with more traditional forms of literacy instruction, the café model holds great potential for the reinvention of the adolescent reading experience because it isolates a time and space for students to enjoy the things adult readers do. By providing a context, within the typical school day, for students to experience the pleasure of reading, they will develop the reading habit and, consequently, will begin to think of themselves as readers. When this happens—when reading becomes an integral part of students’ identities—they are empowered. Thus, the café model

nurtures not just the pleasurable benefits of reading, but, ultimately, the empowering ones as well.



## References

- Atwell, N. (2007). The pleasure principle. *Instructor*, 116(5), 44-46. Retrieved March 2, 2010 from EBSCOhost database.
- Baker, L., Dreher, M. J., & Guthrie, J. T. (2000). Why teachers should promote reading engagement. In Baker, L., Dreher, M. J., & Guthrie, J. T. (Eds.). *Engaging young readers: Promoting achievement and motivation* (pp. 1-16). New York: Guilford Press.
- Beach, R. W., Appleman, D., Hynds, S., & Wilhelm, J. (2006). *Teaching literature to Adolescents*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Botzakis, S. (2009). Adult fans of comic books: What they get out of reading. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53(1), 50-59.
- Brassell, D. (2006). Mr. Hobb's extraordinary approach to teaching reading. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(2), 92-95.
- Casey, H. K. (2008/2009). Engaging the disengaged: Using learning clubs to motivate struggling adolescent readers and writers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(4), 284-294.
- Cassidy, J., Garrett, S. D., Barrera, E. S. (2006). What's hot in adolescent literacy 1997-2006. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(1), 30-36.
- Clark, C., & Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for pleasure: A research overview*. National Literacy Trust.
- Dreher, M. J. (2002/2003). Motivating teachers to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 56(4), 338-340.
- Edmunds, K. M., & Bauserman, K. L. (2006). What teachers can learn about reading motivation through conversations with children. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(5), 414-424.
- Ellis, M. (2004). *The coffee house: A cultural history*. London: Weidenfield & Nicolson.
- Gambrell, L. B. (1996). Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. In N. D. Padak, et al. (Eds.), *Distinguished educators on reading: Contributions that have shaped effective literacy instruction* (pp. 432-445). International Reading Association.
- Guthrie, J. T. (1996). Educational contexts for engagement in literacy. In N. D. Padak, et al. (Eds.), *Distinguished educators on reading: Contributions that have shaped effective literacy instruction* (pp. 414-429). International Reading Association.

- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson. & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 403-422). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Heins, E. L. (1980). From reading to literacy. In R. D. Robinson (Ed.), *Readings in reading instruction: Its history, theory and development* (pp. 258-263). Boston: Pearson.
- International Reading Association. (2002). *Supporting young adolescents' literacy learning: A joint position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Middle School Association*. [Brochure]. Newark, DE: Author.
- Ivey, G. (1999). A multicase study in the middle school: Complexities among young adolescent readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(2), 172-192.
- Ivey, G., & Broadus, K. (2001). "Just plain reading": A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 350-377.
- Kittner, G. (2006, May 5). Students operate business selling cups of Joe at school. *The Wisconsin State Journal*. Retrieved October 31, 2007 from EBSCOhost database.
- Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lapp, D., & Fisher, D. (2009). It's all about the book: Motivating teens to read. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(7), 556-561.
- Learning Point Associates. (2005). *Using student engagement to improve adolescent literacy*. Naperville, IL: Author.
- Lenters, K. (2006). Resistance, struggle, and the adolescent reader. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(2), 136-146.
- Loller, T. (2007, October 30). High school libraries offer coffee shops. *The Associated Press*. Retrieved October 31, 2007 from <http://www.google.com>
- McKenna, M. C., Kear, D. J., & Ellsworth, R. A. (1995). Children's attitudes towards reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(4), 934-956.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moore, D. W., Bean, T. W., Birdyshaw, D., & Rycik, J. A. (1999). *Adolescent literacy: A position statement*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Moore, D. W. (1996). Contexts for literacy in secondary schools. In D. J. Leu, C. K. Kinzer, & K. A. Hinchman (Eds.), *Literacies for the 21st century: Research and practice*. 45th yearbook of the National Reading Conference (pp. 15-46). Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- Nell, V. (1988). *Lost in a book: The psychology of reading for pleasure*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press.
- Newkirk, T. (2003, February 5). Writing and pleasure. *Education Week*, p. 33.
- Paajanen, S. (2007). The evolution of the coffee house. Retrieved September 14, 2007, from <http://coffeetea.about.com/od/history1/a/shophistory.htm?p=1>



- Pflaum, S. W., & Bishop, P. A. (2004). Student perceptions of reading engagement: Learning from the learners. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(3), 202-213.
- Pitcher, S. M., Albright, L. K., DeLaney, C. J., Walker, N. T., Seunarineasingh, K., Mogge, S., Headley, K. N., Ridgeway, V. G., Peck, S., Hunt, R., & Dunston, P. J. (2007). Assessing adolescents' motivation to read. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(5), 378-396.
- Powell Brown, A. (2006). Why can't I just see the movie? *Intervention in school and clinic*, 42(2), 84-90.
- Reeves, A. R. (2004). *Adolescents talk about reading: Exploring resistance to and engagement with text*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Santa, C. (2006). A vision for adolescent literacy: Ours or theirs? *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 49(6), 466-476.
- Smith, M. W., & Wilhelm, J. D. (2006). *Going with the flow: How to engage boys (and girls) in their literacy learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Standage, T. (2005). *A history of the world in six glasses*. New York: Walker & Company.
- Strommen, L. T., & Mates, B. F. (2004). Learning to love reading: Interviews with older children and teens. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(3), 188-200.
- Sweet, L. (2007). *The gospel according to Starbucks: Living life with a grande passion*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.
- Teale, W. H., & Gambrell, L. B. (2007). Raising urban students' literacy achievement by engaging in authentic, challenging work. *The Reading Teacher*, 60(8), 728-739.
- Wigfield, A. (2000). Facilitating children's reading motivation. In Baker, L., Dreher, M. J., & Guthrie, J. T. (Eds.). *Engaging young readers: Promoting achievement and motivation* (pp. 140-158). New York: Guilford Press.
- Worthy, J., Moorman, M., Turner, M. (1999). What Johnny likes to read is hard to find in school. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(1), 12-27.

## About the Authors

Formerly a classroom teacher, Brandi Gribble Mathers now serves as an Associate Professor of Education at Geneva College where she has taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in literacy and assessment. Brandi would like to acknowledge Dr. Evangeline Newton for graciously lending her expertise to this project.

Amanda J. Stern graduated from Geneva College. She currently teaches 7th Grade English Language Arts at Springfield Middle School in Williamsport, Maryland. Her professional interests include curriculum and instruction, literacy, and linguistics.





## **The Professional Development Practices of Two Reading First Coaches**

**Charlotte A. Mundy, Ph.D.**

University of Alabama

**Dorene D. Ross, Ed.D.**

University of Florida

**Melinda M. Leko, Ph.D.**

University of Wisconsin – Madison

---

### **Abstract**

To establish job-embedded, ongoing professional development recent policies and initiatives required that districts appoint school-based coaches. The Reading First Initiative, for example, created an immediate need for coaches without a clear definition of coaches' responsibilities. Therefore, the purpose of this case study was to investigate how two Reading First coaches interpreted and enacted their professional development responsibilities. Cross-case analyses identified similarities and differences in coaches' enactments. Findings revealed that while each coach engaged in similar professional development responsibilities (e.g. modeling, observing, and classroom walkthroughs) their approach to these responsibilities differed – collaborative versus expert driven. These differences in approaches indicate that the preparation for coaches should include development of knowledge about how teachers learn and methods and strategies for developing and implementing effective professional development within schools.

---

### **Introduction**

In recent years professional development has shifted from the one-time workshops that offered little to no follow through and were often disconnected from

teachers' classrooms to professional development that is job-embedded, ongoing, systemic, related to the work and challenges teachers face in classrooms, and carried out by people familiar with the context of teachers' work (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; Fullan, 2001; Guskey, 2000; 2002; Little, 1993; Wood & McQuarrie, 1999). This type of job-embedded, ongoing professional development is based on the assumption that "the most powerful learning is that which occurs in response to challenges currently being faced by the learner, which allows for immediate application, experimentation, and adaptation on the job" (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997, p. 52). To establish more job-embedded, ongoing professional development, specifically in the area of reading, recent policies have required that schools and districts appoint school-based reading coaches. An example of such a policy was the Reading First Initiative – the largest federal initiative to implement coaching—which aimed to improve reading outcomes for K-3 students in low performing schools. The expectation was that coaches would offer authentic and individualized learning situations that would provide differentiated job-embedded support for teacher learning (Knight, 2007).

NCLB (2001) and subsequently Reading First directly impacted the professional development that was provided to teachers and sparked interest in the use of reading coaches to provide contextualized professional development. In one of the first reports designed to examine Reading First coaches, Deussen and colleagues (2007) surveyed and interviewed K-3 teachers and coaches in 203 schools in Alaska, Arizona, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. The researchers identified five categories of coaches: data-oriented, student-oriented, managerial, and two types of teacher-oriented – one focused on working with individual teachers and the other focused on working with groups of teachers. Once identified, coaches' educational background, prior experiences, school size, and state of employment in relation to coach category were explored. After investigating these possible relationships, Deussen and her colleagues found that the only statistically significant relationship was between how coaches performed their role (coach category) and the state in which coaches worked. The responsibility of states to organize, plan, and deliver professional development and technical assistance to reading coaches within Reading First schools was a possible reason for the relationship between coach category and state of employment. Thus, this finding revealed the responsibility and opportunity of states to influence how coaches work within their schools and districts.

In the state of Florida, where this study took place, the *Just Read, Florida!* office developed a model that described the reading coach's role, responsibilities, and minimum requisite qualifications. According to this model, coaches were

responsible for providing initial and ongoing professional development to teachers in the five areas of reading (as defined by the National Reading Panel (2000) – phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), as well as administering and analyzing instructional assessments. Florida’s model outlined minimum qualifications for reading coaches including: bachelor’s degree, advanced coursework or professional development in reading, and a state endorsement or certification in K-12 reading. Coaches who were not endorsed or certified in reading had to work toward that goal by completing a minimum of 60 reading in-service hours or 6 semester hours of college coursework in reading per year for 3 years. The expectation was that coaches with these credentials would possess expert knowledge in reading; however, this potential expertise does not necessarily translate into expert knowledge in teacher education or professional development even though providing professional development to teachers was a prominent responsibility of Reading First coaches.

In a recent study designed to investigate how Reading First coaches spent their time and their rationales for this time distribution, Bean and colleagues (2010) found a majority of coaches’ time was focused on establishing whether students were obtaining effective reading instruction. Their findings also indicated that the more time coaches spent working with teachers, the greater the percentage of students who scored at proficiency in reading. This finding corroborates much of what the coaching literature supports – that coaches can have a positive impact on instruction and possibly student achievement, given the right circumstances (Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitiz, 2003; Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2009). The “right circumstances” can include the following factors: coaches’ personality, time available for interactions with teachers, and ability to exercise flexibility within state/federal standards (Poglinco, et al., 2003). In general, to maximize the positive impact of school-based coaching, it is suggested that coaches need a more detailed job description, excellent communication skills, experience as a teacher, ongoing principal support, prior training on coaching and standards based reform, and success in working with adults (Deussen et. al, 2007; Walpole & Blamey, 2008).

In general, coaches need an understanding of how teachers learn to develop and deliver effective professional development. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) provide a helpful framework for conceptualizing the development of teacher knowledge. Included in this framework are three theories of how knowledge develops in teachers – knowledge-*for*-practice, knowledge-*in*-practice, and knowledge-*of*-practice. Knowledge-*for*-practice is based on the idea that knowing more (e.g. subject matter,

theory, pedagogy) leads to more effective practice. It is assumed that the knowledge teachers need to improve their practice can be learned from an outside source, and teaching is viewed as a process of applying recently acquired knowledge to practical situations. The second conception of teacher learning is knowledge-*in*-practice, which is based on the idea that what competent teachers know is demonstrated in their practice, reflections, inquiries, and narratives. It is assumed that the knowledge teachers need to improve their practice comes from enhancing their own understandings of their actions. The third conception of teacher learning is knowledge-*of*-practice. The basis of this conception is that teachers generate knowledge through the reflective integration of theory and practice by “making their classrooms and school sites places for inquiry, connecting their work in schools to larger issues and taking on a critical perspective on the theory and research of others” (p. 273). The knowledge-of-practice conception highlights the relationship between knowledge and practice and the theoretical aspects of both. Although the terminology coined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle might not be used when planning professional development, it is reasonable to conclude that assumptions about how teachers learn will ultimately affect how professional development is provided to teachers.

Recent policies have promoted more situated professional development that utilizes coaches as a way to offer professional development that is connected to teachers’ everyday responsibilities. Situated learning is thought to be a powerful context to support teacher learning (Borko, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Joyce and Showers, 1995), and though contextualized professional development is no doubt better than having teachers sit through all-day workshops, until recently little attention has been given to preparing coaches to effectively deliver this type of professional development. The purpose of this study therefore, was to examine how two Reading First coaches, in similar school contexts but with different professional experiences approached their professional development responsibilities. The following questions guided this investigation: (a) how do Reading First coaches enact professional development responsibilities? (b) What are the similarities and differences in how Reading First coaches enact professional development responsibilities?

## Methodology

The goal of qualitative research is to understand the world from the perspective of those who live in it (Hatch, 2002). Hence, qualitative methods were well suited for a study of how Reading First coaches enact professional development. Participant selection for this study was purposeful to provide information-rich cases

(Patton, 2002). This study focused on reading coaches who worked full time in Reading First elementary schools within a north central Florida school district. The county literacy director was asked to recommend coaches whom they believed possessed the characteristics and knowledge of skilled reading coaches. Participation was voluntary and all names have been replaced with pseudonyms. A summary of coaches' prior experiences, educational backgrounds, and school contexts is included in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.** Reading coach information

| RC     | Educational Background  | Years as teacher | Years as RC | Years at school |
|--------|---|------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Janice | B.A in journalism<br>Graduating in summer 2009 with a M.A. in special ed. and a reading endorsement | 2*               | 2           | 7               |
| Sarah  | B.A. in elementary ed.<br>M.A. in elementary ed.<br>reading endorsed                                | 17*              | 7           | 12              |

\* Janice was also a reading tutor for 3 years; Sarah was also a teacher on assignment and reading facilitator for 6 years

Note. RC: Reading Coach, B.A.: Bachelor of Arts, M.A.: Master of Arts

**Table 2.** School context

| RC     | School               | County | Free/reduced lunch rate | Minority rate | Total students | Total teachers |
|--------|----------------------|--------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Janice | Jefferson Elementary | A      | 85%                     | 98%           | 520            | 45             |
| Sarah  | Sanders Elementary   | A      | 74%                     | 71%           | 540            | 44             |

## Data Collection

The primary data sources were interviews and observations conducted with two, female reading coaches during a 6-month time period. Four formal interviews (lasting 45 to 65 minutes) were conducted with each coach. A set of guiding questions focused each interview on different aspects of the role of coaching, as well as the events that took place during observations. The first interview focused on each coach's background knowledge and perception of her role. The second interview focused on events that occurred during the first observation, how each coach spent her time, and the challenges perceived within the coaching role. The third interview focused on events from the second observation, job satisfaction, and professional development provided *by* the coach and *to* the coach. The fourth interview focused on events from the third observation and the relationships among the reading coach and teachers, administrators, district and state personnel.

Each coach was observed three times. Observations were pre scheduled in order to view the key responsibilities that the coaches described in the first interview. In addition, observations helped contextualize the interview responses and assisted in the formation of subsequent interview questions. Each observation lasted approximately seven hours, the average length of an elementary school day. Informal interviews occurred during observations and extensive field notes were taken throughout observations. Data collection occurred concurrently with data analysis, and to ensure trustworthiness and credibility triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analyses, member checking, and reflective journaling were used.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is viewed as a search for patterns. In this study, Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) was used as a way to guide analysis procedures. Within the DRS model, the following four levels of analysis are identified: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and identification of key themes. Prior to data analysis we constructed two files, one for each case. All transcripts, field notes, and artifacts were coded using semantic relationships and placed into the appropriate case file. Once the initial coding was complete we set up two Excel files that served as the domain worksheets for each coach. The codes from each coach's transcripts and field notes were then categorized and placed into the appropriate domain worksheet. An example of a domain is provided in Table 3.

---



**Table 3.** *Example of strict inclusion domain*

| Included terms   | Semantic relationship | Cover term               |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| off-site workshops<br>co-planning<br>walkthroughs<br>modeling<br>data meetings | is a kind of          | Professional development |

Once each coach's codes were placed into the domain sheets, we had an initial overview of how coaches defined and enacted their roles. We then began taxonomic and componential analysis, which allowed us to look across the cases.

Taxonomic analysis serves as a method to search for ways domains are organized and related to one another (Hatch, 1984). As we looked across the coaches' domains we recognized that certain domains were similar in their organization and structure. For example, professional development activities such as modeling, walkthroughs, and observing teachers were coaching activities that were referenced frequently (both through interview transcripts and observational field notes) throughout each coach's domain worksheets. Once such a similarity was found we would apply a structural question such as, "What are all the types of professional development?" and "Is professional development a stage in something else?" We continued this process throughout our comparison of the coaches' worksheets.

Once the similarities among the cases were found we began the process of looking for contrasts among the coaches' domain worksheets – componential analysis. We took the coaches' domain worksheets and made a list of all the contrasts that could be found within the domain. For example, while both coaches conducted classroom walkthroughs one coach placed a sticky note on the teacher's desk at the end of the walkthrough and the other took notes on a clipboard and exited the classroom often times with no communication with the teacher. Thus, componential analysis allowed us to view the different approaches each coach had to enacting their professional development responsibilities. This step was repeated multiple times as we looked for contrasts among the coaches' worksheets. Finally, key themes were identified when the following were true: the theme reoccurred in two or more domains, it applied to numerous situations, and had a high degree of generalizability. We identified these key themes by engaging in a systematic comparison of the completed domains both within and across cases. Upon the completion of these steps we found that many of the coaches professional

development responsibilities were centered on the basal series<sup>1</sup> that was recently adopted by their county. Additionally, we found that while the coaches engaged in similar coaching responsibilities (modeling, observing, and teacher walkthroughs) offered through individual, grade level, and school wide professional development, their reasons for doing so and interactions with teachers varied. Detailed descriptions of the coaches' approach to professional development are presented in the cases below.

## Janice

Janice was beginning her second year as the Reading First coach at Jefferson Elementary. Prior to becoming the reading coach, she had 2 years of teaching experience and 3 years of experience as a reading tutor. As a relatively new coach, her understanding of the role continued to develop as she attended coaches' meetings and trainings offered by her district and the *Just Read, Florida!* office. Janice's understanding of education in general was also being enhanced through the master's program she was currently completing. The following sections provide examples of Janice's enactment of her professional development responsibilities.

Jefferson Elementary adopted a new basal series (Scott Foresman) in the fall of 2008. This adoption led Janice to increase her classroom modeling, walkthroughs, and observations in order to help teachers become familiar with the new series and ensure they received sufficient support and feedback. Janice walked through classrooms daily, and as a result noticed that Ms. Jones, a second year teacher, was struggling to implement reading strategies from the new basal series and explained, "After observing her reading instruction, I wanted to use that as an opportunity to model for her." For an entire week Janice used Ms. Jones' 90-minute reading block to model from the basal reading series. The modeling session began on a Monday with Janice teaching the complete reading block and Ms. Jones observing her instruction. Ms. Jones and Janice met afterwards to discuss Janice's instruction, particularly what elements were effective and what elements Ms. Jones might incorporate when she teaches lessons in the future. For the next 3 days Janice and Ms. Jones divided up the instructional responsibilities and began to co-teach the reading block. By Friday Ms. Jones had taken over the instructional responsibilities for the reading block and Janice became the observer. Janice and Ms. Jones discussed the reading instruction

---

<sup>1</sup>The state of Florida is a textbook adoption state and within this particular county it was mandated that all teachers use the basal as their primary tool for reading instruction. Examining the coaches' opinion of the basal series was not the purpose of this study. While the effectiveness of basal series is a worthwhile topic for investigation it is beyond the scope of this paper.

throughout the week – changing and modifying elements to best fit the needs of the students and the teachers’ individual teaching styles.

The extended modeling allowed Janice to work collaboratively with Ms. Jones while also increasing her own knowledge of the basal. Janice explained, “It gave me the opportunity to become familiar with the new curriculum to enhance my knowledge and better be able to recognize what elements teachers might struggle with.” The extended modeling session also benefited Ms. Jones as Janice described, “her students were all grouped homogenously but they’re not really all the same. It is a whole process of trying to get her to really know her students and meet their needs.” In addition to modeling, Janice arranged for teachers to observe other teachers who felt more successful with the series. Thus, while Janice viewed her role as a support to teachers, she also understood that support did not always need to come directly from her; rather, she could also empower teachers to support each other.

As reading coach, Janice observed, modeled, and provided feedback, but when asked which coaching responsibility she enjoyed most, Janice quickly replied, “I love being in the classroom modeling!” Her love of modeling was supported in the data. By far, Janice’s largest domain was modeling. Our observational field notes frequently documented her modeling in teachers’ classrooms, which made it an important topic in subsequent interviews. For example, when asked to describe why she enjoyed modeling she spoke of a second year teacher, Mr. Lopez. On a walkthrough she observed Mr. Lopez’s whole group instruction was 5 minutes when it should have been closer to 20 or 25 minutes and stated, “That was what prompted me to find out, because after I went back he said, ‘I don’t do that part’, but then said he’s doing it at another time.” She explained that after the walkthrough and brief conversation with Mr. Lopez, her next step of support would be,

To find out the reasonings and why he chose to do it that way and then kind of talking it through as to what might be a better approach, or why it was presented in this way in the curriculum. I found that to be more helpful as opposed to saying you didn’t do this and you probably should have done that, so I will start off with the reasoning behind it, and do you think I could possibly come in and we could try to do this that and the other? I try to work with teachers from that perspective.

Janice believed Mr. Lopez struggled because of the new curriculum and explained, “I think he sees phonemic awareness and phonics as the same, not understanding

that they are two separate skills, so that's where I'll go in and model and show him the difference." When asked if she thought it would be beneficial for Mr. Lopez to view another teacher's instruction, she hesitated and then replied, "yes, and I've done that, but I don't know that he – I hate to say it, but that he doesn't know what to look for." However, Janice was reflective and shouldered part of the responsibility stating, "what I can do a better job at is giving him the focus of what to look for such as, "when she gets to this part, that's the part I'm talking about, or notice the difference in the way she does this or that."

While a great deal of Janice's professional development domain sheets focused on one-on-one interactions with teachers, she also delivered grade level and school wide professional development. Grade level professional development was typically directly applicable to teachers' classrooms. For example, the primary teachers wanted more emphasis on phonics while the intermediate teachers wanted a greater emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension. School wide professional development remained the same throughout the school year and focused on one of the five areas of reading. At the time of this study, school wide professional development was focused on a book study involving fluency. Although teachers were generally receptive to individual and grade level professional development, they were more resistant to school wide professional development, which they viewed as "just another meeting that takes away from their time." Janice, however, valued school wide professional development stating,

I understand their reservations and their wanting to get work done in their own classrooms, but if you look at it (school wide professional development) it does pertain to them, because unfortunately we do have some fourth graders that really never mastered phonemic awareness or those types of things. So working with teachers outside your grade level can give you insight.

Janice repeatedly demonstrated her flexibility in attempting to meet teachers' needs. She was cognizant that her primary role was to support and motivate teachers so they could support their students. Janice's commitment to giving teachers the support they needed to scaffold student learning was a driving force behind her role as reading coach. Her ability to identify teachers that needed extra support and then work with them to strengthen instruction were key parts of her coaching role.

## Sarah

Sarah was beginning her sixth year as the Reading First coach at Sanders Elementary. Prior to becoming a coach, she had over 20 years of teaching experience. Sarah believed that within Reading First the coach's job was defined as, "training teachers, providing professional development, and modeling in classrooms" adding, "that is what the majority of our job should be." Like Janice, Sarah provided school wide, grade level, and individual professional development. School wide professional development was utilized for brief tutorials, such as how to access the Performance Monitoring and Reporting Network, and to present information from Reading First trainings.

Sarah reported that school wide professional development was provided on an "as needed" basis because it was more beneficial to meet with teachers by grade level. She stated, "I'd almost prefer to do it by grade level and then you can make it specific to their needs." For example, a new phonemic awareness intervention was being implemented in kindergarten. Sarah provided the initial training and explained the next step was to "let them try the program for a week or two and then I'll bring them back together and I will go over things they didn't know to ask before using the program." Sarah explained that she met with the teachers during their 45-minute team meeting to get a better understanding of how they were implementing the new intervention and let them know that "I will be coming around to each class to check and see how the program is being implemented." Sarah clearly wanted the kindergarten teachers to focus on grade level expectations and implementing the program with fidelity, though this was not specific to just this kindergarten program. Repeatedly, when looking through her domain sheets, we saw similar language (e.g. implementing to fidelity and making sure they're doing the program right) used whenever she referred to her professional development responsibilities.

The need for teachers to focus on grade level expectations and implement programs to fidelity led Sarah to provide a lot of one-on-one professional development, which included in-class follow up from school wide and grade level professional development. She also conducted observations, walkthroughs, modeling, and provided feedback, all of which increased in frequency due to the school's adoption of a new basal series. Sarah increased walkthroughs and observations "to see if teachers were breaking up into small groups, how small group instruction was taking place – if it was taking place." Sarah's observations of teachers' instruction often turned into modeling sessions. She explained that she often asked teachers to give her a small group to run because

It helps me when I sit there and try to do some of those activities with the kids so I can see what level the kids are actually on. Like take for instance that first grade class we worked with, you know a certain number of those kids are probably going to be red (indicating below grade level) and typically we wouldn't have kids in red so much the second time we do DIBELS, but I could see where we could and that makes me realize that we need to get that intervention up and running, because there were a lot of students like that.

Sarah felt it was part of her professional development responsibility to ensure students were placed in appropriate reading groups and that teachers were implementing the basal series with fidelity. When teachers struggled to implement "best practices" she found it rewarding to support them stating,

I like when you get somebody that's not doing well and they listen to everything you say. To see somebody turn around and sometimes it takes 2 or 3 years, but to see somebody that you worked with over the years and realize wow they are really doing a great job.

In describing in-class professional development and the teacher selection process she explained, "This year we have three new people teaching kindergarten so I'm trying to work with them." However, Sarah felt new teachers needed varying levels of support stating, "For some, I just pop my head in and kind of see that they are doing fine. . . or I help them with their intervention materials and make sure they are doing the programs right." Others required more time. Miss Smith was a new teacher who needed additional support. After observing Miss Smith's 90-minute reading block, Sarah outlined steps for providing support. These steps included the following: using a light-speed microphone, shortening whole group instruction, using larger letter cards, placing items at students' eye level, better use of the board, using age appropriate centers, and organizing materials before instruction. Realizing these comments might be overwhelming she explained,

I wouldn't want to hit her with everything at once so I'm choosing two things. Like I went in today and she's using a light speed so that's fixed, I'm going to shorten whole group and create better centers and center management. I

think if I start with those areas it'll help. I'm starting with big areas and fine-tuning it down.

When providing in-class support Sarah tended to take on the role of expert, and in the case of Miss Smith this meant telling her how to make instruction more effective and fixing her errors.

Sarah told us that she defined her role as a support to teachers. She relied on her "expert" knowledge (developed through past experiences and trainings) to provide her teachers with support. She believed that by drawing on her own expertise as well as the expertise of the Reading First program developers she could help teachers strengthen classroom instruction.

## **Discussion**

Both Janice and Sarah viewed professional development as a way to support teachers in fostering effective classroom instruction. While they shared similar understandings of why they provided professional development, they differed in how it was provided. Sarah's professional development focused on showing and telling teachers what to do. The key assumption behind her practice was that showing and telling would increase teachers' knowledge and this knowledge would improve teachers' instruction. In contrast, Janice and her teachers made joint decisions about how to make classroom instruction more effective. The assumption behind Janice's practice was that teachers learn when they examine their own practice and participate in the decision making process. The differences in how Janice and Sarah enacted professional development were indicative of their different perspectives on how teachers acquire knowledge.

Although neither coach's professional development approach fit perfectly within Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) conceptions of teacher learning, there were enough similarities to draw comparisons. The professional development approach adopted by Sarah was generally consistent with the conception of *knowledge-for-practice*. That is, she took on the role of expert. Sarah viewed a Reading First coach as a leader in the school. She felt that her knowledge of the Reading First guidelines (e.g. DIBELS assessment, formation of reading groups, and fidelity to the reading series) made her an expert in how reading instruction should take place in the classroom. Furthermore, Sarah believed that if she explicitly told teachers how to improve their instruction, then instruction would improve. For example, when Sarah was providing Miss Smith with additional support she made a list of the things that

needed improvement. She then selected the items she deemed most important, and in Miss Smith's case stated, "I am going to start with like really big areas and then gradually fine tune it down." Sarah demonstrated a similar approach when working with teachers to implement the new kindergarten intervention – walking through classrooms to make sure the new program was being implemented with fidelity, but not assisting them in modifying it to fit the needs of their students or their individual teaching styles. Implicit in her approach to professional development was the view that she was the expert who decided what teachers needed to know and identified the elements of instruction that need improvement. This expert-driven approach focused Sarah's attention on what her teachers were teaching, not what they were learning.

Because Sarah was the more experienced teacher and coach this finding was surprising to us. We assumed, albeit incorrectly, that Sarah's years of experience and knowledge of reading would lead her to approach professional development in a more collegial and collaborative fashion. Instead it seemed that her years spent sitting through traditional professional development translated into her delivering professional development in a similar expert driven manner. Although Sarah's professional development was contextualized, (i.e. she was on site) it did not meet the expectations of providing teachers with authentic learning situations (Deussen et al., 2007; Knight, 2007), as her teachers rarely chose the topics for professional development or worked with Sarah to problem solve instructional challenges.

In contrast to Sarah, Janice's approach to professional development generally represented a conception of knowledge-*in-practice*, as she worked collaboratively with her teachers. Her approach to professional development was collaborative, working with teachers and providing opportunities for them to reflect on their actions within the classroom. In her work with teachers she frequently asked them to explain the reasoning behind their instructional decisions, attempting to better understand their practice and to help them clarify their own thinking. Janice did not believe she could rely on telling or showing teachers what to do, rather, she believed her role was to work with teachers, help them understand their instructional decisions, and then make a joint plan to develop effective classroom instruction. For example, when working with Mr. Lopez, she first wanted to understand why he was leaving out certain components of his reading instruction. She then worked with him and together they altered the reading instruction in a way that aligned with both of their beliefs and goals. Thus, Janice believed that through strengthening teachers' understanding of their practice, she would also strengthen their instruction.



Initially when the county literacy director recommended Janice as a skilled reading coach – we were concerned about her lack of experience. She was a relatively novice teacher who was now in the position of being a novice coach, how could she possibly support teachers' instruction in a meaningful way when she had such limited time in the classroom? Surprisingly, and perhaps as a result of her lack of experience, she did not take a traditional approach to professional development. Unlike Sarah, she had not experienced 20+ years of traditional professional development. Furthermore, at the time of this study Janice was enrolled in a master's program and perhaps as a student herself she could more easily put herself in the position of her teachers and think about how best to facilitate learning.

Overall, Janice and Sarah both understood their role as providing support to teachers primarily through professional development. Despite this shared understanding of the role, they demonstrated different approaches to professional development, which in turn illustrated different conceptions of how teachers learn. Janice enacted a collaborative approach to professional development, while Sarah's approach was more expert driven. Janice's approach of supporting and collaboratively working with teachers is established in the research a more effective way of working with teachers to get them to change and modify instructional practices (van Eekelen, Boshuizen, & Vermunt, 2005; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2009).

Although Sarah also spoke of supporting teachers, her strategy of simply telling teachers what to do mirrors professional development practices that are commonly criticized for resulting in shallow implementation and limited sustainability because teachers are viewed as technicians rather than professionals (Butler, Lauscher, Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Gersten, 1995; Joyce & Shower, 2002; Putnam & Borko, 2000). And though it could be argued that contextualized professional development is better than de-contextualized professional development, when coaches take on the role of expert, it places them in the role of decision maker. This makes it difficult for teachers to take ownership of their learning. In developing requirements for the knowledge and skills needed by reaching coaches, states that require coaches to be reading endorsed might succeed in increasing their reading knowledge, but this does not ensure that they are adequately prepared to work effectively with teachers. As the larger body of professional development literature suggests, reading coaches also need to be better prepared to deliver effective professional development, (Bean, 2007; Borko, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

## Implications

Providing job-embedded ongoing professional development is a key component of the coaches' role (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Knight, 2007); however, becoming an effective coach requires both knowledge of reading and knowledge of the skills and strategies of coaching (Knight, 2007). The coaches in this study had a desire to support teachers. Their commitment to supporting teachers suggests that an explicit focus on how to create effective inquiry focused professional development in their preparation for the coaching role might have enabled them both to develop more effective approaches to professional development. Interestingly it seemed that years of experience did not equal more effective coaching. This seems to indicate that while time in the classroom is no doubt important, of equal importance is knowledge of how to effectively work with adults and facilitate situated learning. Janice intuitively had a stronger sense of how to support her colleagues through collegial interaction, but neither had gained knowledge of the skills and strategies of effective coaching as part of their professional development for becoming a reading coach.

Sarah and Janice's preparation, or lack thereof, was not atypical for coaches. States, districts, and universities, however, have the opportunity to better prepare coaches for their roles. This preparation should include development of knowledge about how teachers learn, methods and strategies for developing and implementing effective professional development within schools, and the skills and strategies used by effective instructional coaches. In addition, the delivery model for professional development for coaches must model highly effective practices in professional development. Coaches are unlikely to develop new strategies unless they experience professional development that engages them in critical inquiry around their own practice. Neither coach in this study received this type of professional development. In fact, both received professional development grounded in the knowledge-for-practice conception that Sarah also used. Professional development largely consisted of presentations of knowledge about reading and strategies for reading instruction with an expectation that the coaches would teach the content to their teachers. This suggests that those providing professional development for coaches also need stronger preparation for their roles.



## References

- Bean, R.M., Draper, J.A., Hall, V., Vandermolen, J., & Zigmond, N. (2010). Coaches and Coaching in Reading First Schools: A Reality Check. *The Elementary School Journal*, 111(1), 87-114.

- Bean, R.M. (2007). *The promise & potential of literacy coaching*. Retrieved May 6, 2008 [http://www.pacoaching.org/files/Research%20Findings/bean\\_coaching\\_annenberg\\_doc.pdf](http://www.pacoaching.org/files/Research%20Findings/bean_coaching_annenberg_doc.pdf).
- Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher*, 33(8), 3-15.
- Butler, D.L., Lauscher, H.N., Jarvis-Selinger, S., & Beckingham, B. (2004). Collaboration and self-regulation in teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 435-455.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S.L. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 249-305.
- Deussen, T., Coskie, T., Robinson, L., & Autio, E. (2007). "Coach" can mean many things: Five categories of literacy coaches in Reading First (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007-No. 005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>
- Dole, J.A. & Donaldson, R. (2006). What am I supposed to do all day?: Three big ideas for the reading coach. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(5), 486-488.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record*, 103(6), 1013-1055.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The meaning of educational change (3rd ed.)*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Guskey, T.R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 8, 381-391.
- Guskey, T.R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hatch, J.A., (1984). *The social goals of children: A naturalistic study of child-to-child interaction in a kindergarten*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, Gainesville.
- Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development (3rd ed.)*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1995). *Student Achievement Through Staff Development: Fundamentals of school renewal*. New York: Longman Publishers.
- Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Little, J. W. (1993). Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15(21), 129 -151.
- Lyons, C.A., & Pinnell, G.S. (2001). *Systems for change in literacy education: A guide to professional development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- National Reading Panel. (2000). Teaching children to read [Online]. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Retrieved from <http://www.national-readingpanel.org/Publications/publications.htm>
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Poglinco, S.M., Bach, A.J., Hovde, K., Rosenblum, S., Saunders, M., & Supovitiz, J.A. (2003). *The heart of the matter: The coaching model in America's Choice schools*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, Consortium for Policy Research in Education. Retrieved from [www.cpre.org/Publications/AC-06.pdf](http://www.cpre.org/Publications/AC-06.pdf)
- Putnam, R.T., & Borko, H. (2000). What do new views of knowledge and thinking have to say about research on teacher learning? *Educational Research*, 29(1), 4-15.
- Sparks, D., & Hirsh, S. (1997). *A new vision for staff development*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.
- Spradley, J.P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- U.S. Congress. (2001). No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Public Law 107-110, 107th Congress. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Van Eekelen, I.M., Boshuizen, H.P.A., & Vermunt, J.D. (2005). Self-regulation in higher education teacher learning. *Higher Education*, 50, 447-471.
- Walpole, S., McKenna, M.C., Uribe-Zarain, X., & Lamitina, D. (2010). The relationships between coaching and instruction in the primary grades: Evidence from high-poverty schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 111(1), 115-140.
- Walpole, S., & Blamey, K.L. (2008). Elementary literacy coaches: The reality of dual roles. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(3), 222-230.
- Wood, F.H., & McQuarrie, F. (1999). On-the-job learning. *Journal of Staff Development*, 20(3), 10-13.
- Zwart, R.C., Wubbels, T., Bergen, T., & Bolhuis, S. (2009). Which characteristics of a reciprocal peer coaching context affect teacher learning as perceived by teachers and their students? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(3), 243-257.

### **About the Authors**

Charlotte A. Mundy, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Elementary Literacy Education at the University of Alabama, Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

Dorene D. Ross, Ed.D. is a Professor of Curriculum, Teaching, and Teacher Education Unified Elementary Pro Teach at the University of Florida, School of Teaching and Learning.

Melinda M. Leko, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Education.





## **Building Conceptual Understanding through Vocabulary Instruction**

**William H. Rupley, Ph.D.**

Texas A & M University

**William Dee Nichols**

University of Maine

**Maryann Mraz**

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

**Timothy R. Blair**

University of Central Florida

---

### **Abstract**

---

Instructional design is an integral part of a balanced approach to teaching vocabulary instruction. This article presents several instructional procedures using research-based vocabulary strategies and explains how to design and adapt those strategies in order to reach desired learning outcomes. Emphasis is placed on research-based principles that guide effective vocabulary instruction and on the importance of incorporating vocabulary instruction into all phases of the reading lesson framework— before, during, and after reading (Blair, Rupley, & Nichols 2007; Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz 2011). Vocabulary instruction should encourage students to make associations and accommodations to their experiences and provide them with varied opportunities to practice, apply, and discuss their word knowledge in meaningful contexts (Beck & McKeown, 2002; Rupley & Nichols, 2005). The ultimate goal of teaching vocabulary is for the students to expand, refine, and add to their existing conceptual knowledge and enhance their comprehension and understanding of what they read (Baumann, Font, Edwards, & Boland, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). This article seeks to provide educators with both

a theoretical framework and practical classroom instructional suggestions for doing so.

---

### **Building Conceptual Understanding through Vocabulary Instruction**

Vocabulary knowledge closely reflects children's breadth of real-life and vicarious experiences. Students cannot comprehend well without some knowledge of the concepts that are represented by the print (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Padak, Newton, Rasinski, & Newton, 2008). As noted by Rupley, Logan, and Nichols (1999), "Vocabulary is a shared component of reading and writing—it helps the author and the reader to comprehend through their shared meanings of words" (p. 337). The link between vocabulary and comprehension is strong throughout students' education and can often be attributed to differences in their comprehension capabilities. Students who are successful at decoding can, and often do struggle with comprehension when they encounter too many words for which they have limited or no meaning (Biemiller, 2003). A child's reading vocabulary is likely to increase at the rate of 3,000 to 4,000 words a year, resulting in a reading vocabulary of greater than 25,000 words by eighth grade (Graves, 2004). Not having access to the meaning of words representative of the concepts and content of what they read causes difficulty in children's comprehension of texts, limits their ability to make a connection with their existing background knowledge, inhibits their capacity to make coherent inferences, and impacts their ability to reason. Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge that is rich and well developed contributes significantly to fluent reading (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997).

Reading instruction that focuses on the growth of children's vocabulary results in enhancing their abilities to infer meanings and to better comprehend what they read (Baumann, et al, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). Daneman (1991) clearly presented the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension and the mutual benefits that they share in promoting children's reading development. As students' vocabulary grows their ability to comprehend what they read grows also; furthermore, as their comprehension capabilities grow so do their abilities to learn the meaning of new words from context.

The words that readers know represent the concepts and information available to them to understand what they read. Knowledge of words can be thought of as "hooks" upon which the reader hangs ideas; therefore, vocabulary knowledge supports the reader's understanding and interaction with the author, which in turn promote the formation and validation of concepts and new learning. Vocabulary



can also be thought of as the glue that holds ideas, content, and stories together and facilitates making comprehension accessible for readers. A classroom example to illustrate the relationship between understanding and vocabulary knowledge is the use of a graphic organizer to help students infer the meanings of unknown words. When students come across a word that they don't know the meaning of they can stop and write the word in the first column of the organizer. Then students can record what they infer the word means and what they learned in the second column. In the third column students can write what evidence helped them infer the meaning of the unknown word from the text.

| <u>Unknown Word</u> | <u>Inferred Meaning</u>                                 | <u>Evidence</u>                                  |
|---------------------|---|--|
| conspiracy          | when many people keep something hidden the truth hidden | generations have kept                            |
| sinister            | horrible, evil  | the characters go through a lot just to cover up |

## Words that Should Be Taught

Are there too many words to teach? This question was posed by McKeown and Beck (2004) and is surely an important one to consider given the general agreement that children are exposed to approximately 3,000 new words a year in their reading. With so many new words and the cumulative effect that they have as children progress through school how does a teacher decide which words to teach. McKeown and Beck recommend that words be considered in a hierarchical fashion, one that they refer to as having three tiers. Tier one words are the most basic words that rarely require attention given to their meaning—*home, school, bike*. Tier two words are those that occur with a high degree of frequency and are found across a variety of language domains, examples would be words such as *typical, classic, characteristic*. Tier three words are limited in their frequency and are limited to domains of specific content—*magistrate, appellate, atoll*. The words that are encountered in authentic reading activities that could be classified as Tier two words are those that should be the focus of instruction and result in the greatest impact on expanding the vocabulary knowledge of the students.

Word knowledge can be viewed as a “continuum from no knowledge, to a general sense, such as knowing that *mendacious* has a negative connotation; to narrow, context-bound knowledge; to having knowledge but not being able to access it quickly; to rich decontextualized knowledge of a word meaning” (Beck & McKeown, 1991, p. 272). A form of simple-level word knowledge is definitional. Definitional knowledge is word knowledge based upon a definition, such as coming from a dictionary, thesaurus, glossary, word bank, vocabulary web site, or other individuals. Often, however, definitions do not help a reader understand the contribution of an unknown word to meaning. To comprehend, a reader needs some idea not only of a word’s meaning, but also of the ways the meaning contributes to the cohesiveness of the ideas or information represented.

Readers’ experiential and conceptual backgrounds are exceptionally important in vocabulary development. Background knowledge enables readers to develop, expand, and refine the concepts that words represent. Vocabulary knowledge is developmental and is related to background experiences. Tennyson and Cocchiarella (1986) note two phases in the learning of concepts that are applicable still today. The first phase is the formation of concepts in relation to attributes, making connections with existing concepts. The second phase is using procedural knowledge, which is “the classification skills of generalizing to and discriminating between newly encountered instances of associated concepts” (p. 44). In phase 1, individuals may undergeneralize or overgeneralize as a result of their limited experiences with the concept. Vocabulary grows when students have abundant opportunities to encounter new words and examples that are representative of the word in rich contextual settings. Individuals do not use restricted definitions of words as they engage in reading activities, but construct meaning in terms of word meanings for the concepts that represent their background knowledge.

### **Explicit Vocabulary Instruction**

Teaching vocabulary should include explicit instruction and appropriate guided practice in specific skills along with broad reading opportunities and other language activities. Research supports the explicit teaching of word meanings for struggling and average readers (Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, Ruby, Crevecoeur, & Kapp (2010); Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). Learning either a new word, or concept for that word, requires an active process. Students learn and process new words to the extent the new words relate to other words and concepts already known by them. Connections between previously learned vocabulary words and new words

encountered in reading help students begin to understand relationships among words (Bromley, 2007). When instruction is based on strengthening these connections, students are not just asked to provide an abstract definition of a word, but make connections between the newly encountered word, their past experiences, and how these past concepts fit with the stories and informational texts they are currently reading (Rupley & Nichols, 2005). For example, teachers can ask students to think of words (angry, happiest) people have said to them that make them react in a certain way. Before reading a story, students can be directed to think about words that affect the feelings and actions of the main characters. After reading the story, ask the students to write these words and what effect each word had on the feelings and actions of the main characters. An abundance of active strategies to learn new words can be found in Allen's work (1999) and that of Frey and Fisher (2009). Research (Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe, 2006; Goerss, Beck, & McKeown, 1999) supports the use of instruction that encourages students to make associations and accommodations to their experiences and provides varied opportunities for students to practice, apply, and discuss their word knowledge as a means for learning new vocabulary. As students enlarge their background knowledge, they increase their knowledge of words. Biemiller (1999) noted that students can learn two to three new words a day when the instructional strategies are based on active processing and applied in context. For this reason, explicit vocabulary instruction that use contextual analysis, concept wheels, semantic word maps, webbing, semantic feature analyses, relationships among words, and structural features of words are valuable tools. These strategies when matched with the appropriate instructional design that allows for discussion over the new words and concepts can become part of before, during, and after reading activities (Blamey & Beauchat, 2011). This active process of learning new words is also enhanced when teachers use technology-based instruction. Dalton and Grisham (2011) describe specific strategies using digital tools and the Internet to foster vocabulary growth.

### **Context Clues**

Use of context clues refers to deciphering the meaning of the word from the context in which the word is found. Context clues often have limitations because using them requires some knowledge of the context and how the meaning of the words combine to facilitate author and reader interaction. However, in an analysis of 21 instructional studies focused on improving children's skill in deliberately deriving word meaning from context, Fukkink and de Glopper (1998) found that context clue instruction appeared to be more effective than the other vocabulary

instructional types they identified (cloze instruction, general strategies, definitions, and practice only).

Use of context clues is best taught by explicit instruction in which the teacher models the procedure, uses familiar written examples, and provides scaffolding as students become proficient in using contextual analysis. Modeling means that the teacher thinks out loud, talks through the processes used in the application of context clues, thus providing instruction in the use of the strategies and supporting students' attempts to apply them in their reading. Class discussions with students about how they derive word meanings from context, and what they do if context does not work, helps them understand the strengths and limitations of the process (Greenwood & Flanigan (2007).

An illustration of modeling the use of context clues follows. Assume that we read a sentence containing an unknown word: "Anthony was positive his \_\_\_\_\_ would let him go." Assume that this is the opening sentence of a story. Many words might complete the idea when this is all that is known. Is Anthony being held prisoner? The word could be *captors*. Is he thinking of getting permission? The word might be mother, father, friends, or teacher.

If the reader notes something about the unknown word, a valuable clue may be revealed. For instance, in "Anthony was sure his p \_\_\_\_\_ would let him go." then, mother, father, teacher, and friends can be eliminated because of the initial letter clue, but several possibilities remain, such as pal, playmates, partners, and parents.

When the sentence does not provide contextual clues, the reader should continue reading the additional text to determine if it helps to reveal the word's meaning. The context following the sentence reads: "Mother and father both agreed that they would let Anthony go to the game." Thinking about the unknown word in the earlier sentence leads the reader to recognize it as parents, because the latter sentence refers to mother and father, who are parents.

Rarely does a sentence alone provide sufficient context to unlock the meaning of unknown words: For example, "Although their sojourn was brief, it was enjoyable," "It was a moot point and the judge did not allow it," and "Most teachers today use an eclectic approach for teaching reading." If we consider the context supplied both before and after an unknown word, the meaning is more likely to be revealed.

The importance of context clues is recognized by the fact that it is usually the context in which the word appears that determines its meaning. Students may

know such words as aid, blue, mine, broadcast, and fence, and they can know several meanings for each word and still not be familiar with many others.

Students may understand what blue means in “The boy had a blue coat” but not be familiar with “The boy felt blue when his aunt left.” They may understand “Grandfather rode the horse” but not “The coach warned the boys not to horse around,” “That’s a horse of a different color,” or “The mayor accused the council of beating a dead horse.”

The relationships of words to each other and the subtle meanings that the same word conveys depend upon the context in which a word appears and the reader’s background knowledge. Following are several activities for promoting students’ interest in vocabulary development. While they all illustrate the importance of context in defining words, please note that context ranges from the highly concrete, such as labeling naming objects and pictures, to more abstract activities associated with guided writing.

Learning meanings and multiple words for the same object can be fascinating and highly motivating for young children. Many primary-grade classrooms that we visit have words written in context and displayed throughout the classroom. For example, the door in one classroom was labeled in the following manner:

This is the *doorway* to our room.

This is the *entry* to our room.

This is the *entrance* to our room.

This is the *gateway* to our room.

This is the *portal* to our room.

Different teachers help students realize that many words have several meanings according to how they are used. Many teachers we have observed illustrate this concept with simple words (such as can, stick, run, and set). As the teachers ask for different usages, they write the students’ responses on the board or a chart. At the same time, they attempt to fix the various meanings by using other words and concepts from stories the students have read and their experiential/conceptual backgrounds. For example:

I *can* spell my name. (Can means “able.”)

Mother is going to *can* some peaches. (Can means “to preserve.”)

*Can* it Joe. (Can means “stop talking.”)

If you are late one more time, the boss will *can* you. (Can means “to dismiss from a job.”)

Why don’t you trade in that old tin *can* and get a new car? (Can means “a battered old car.”)

Able readers integrate information as they read to construct meaning. If context is not enough to figure out the meaning of an unknown word, skilled readers use their language knowledge and word knowledge to help them infer meaning. However, knowing a word in its fullest sense goes beyond simply being able to define the word or get some gist of it from the context. Associating experiences and concepts with words contributes significantly to comprehension (Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2011).

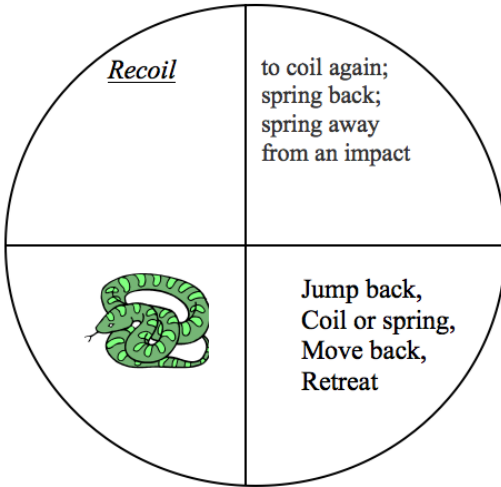
Instructional activities that visually display new words can be a beneficial means for increasing students' vocabulary knowledge. Some of those strategies—concept wheel/circle, semantic mapping, and webbing—are discussed below.

### Concept Wheel/Circle

A new word is visually represented in a way that illustrates the connection between existing conceptual knowledge and the new word. For example, the word *recoil* could be introduced in a way that emphasizes its relation to the study of reptiles. Students could brainstorm and discuss words that come to mind for recoil. The teacher would guide the discussion in a manner that helps students to conceptualize both the word and its varied meanings (meanings could range from snakes recoiling for self-protection, a spring on a mechanical device recoiling, or a person recoiling or pulling back from something out of uncertainty, and so forth). When the discussion is ended, the teacher lists words that appropriately fit with recoil on the whiteboard, overhead or doc-cam. Each student can be directed to look in a textbook at the use of the word in context, listen to a glossary definition read by the teacher, and then select three words from the list to help in remembering the word and making a connection to the new concept.

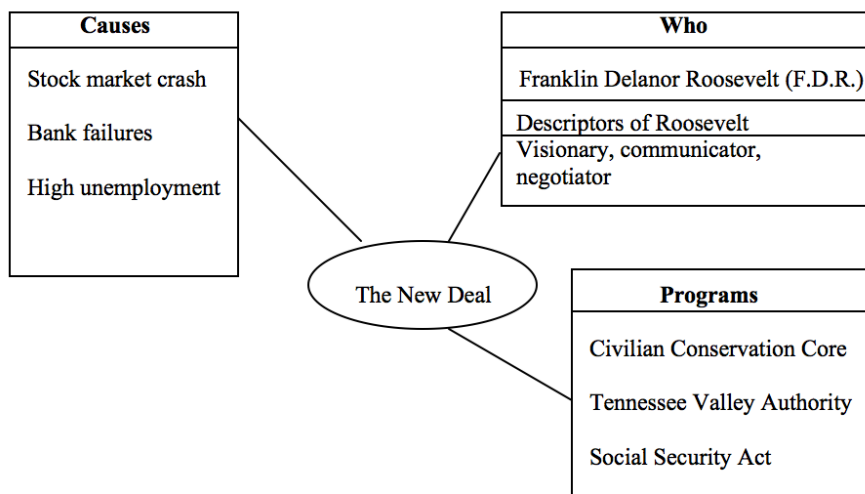
The concept wheel can be used in alternative ways as well. Students can be given a wheel without the vocabulary word and brainstorm and discuss what would be an appropriate word for the concepts. Teachers can use a wheel that is partially completed with words and have students suggest other words. Also, completed wheels can be used to have students identify the content area wheel and discuss what they know about the concepts represented. Figure X.1 represents an example of a concept wheel for the word *recoil* that uses the definition for the word, a list of brainstormed words and a picture clue to help remember the word.

**Figure X.1** Concept Wheel for the word recoil



### Semantic Mapping

Semantic mapping can be used for explicit and active vocabulary instruction. Semantic mapping structures information categorically so that students can more readily see relationships between new words and concepts and their existing background knowledge. Upon completion of the semantic map, the teacher discusses and uses written examples with the students about how the new vocabulary words relate to words that they already know. Students thus understand better the content of the topic they will cover or the story they will read. The semantic map presented in Figure X.2 for the social studies topic of FDR's New Deal shows how teaching selected words prior to reading can help students activate their background knowledge, relate existing knowledge to new concepts, and understand how new words and concepts are related. Teachers should stimulate class discussion to guide students' thinking about the relationships between the target word and their experiences.

**Figure X.2** *Semantic Map for F.D.R's New Deal*

The procedure for developing a semantic map for vocabulary instruction includes the following:

- Selecting a word or concept that is central to a topic or story.
- Writing the central word on the chalkboard or a chart.
- Brainstorming words related to the central theme or topic and writing these words.
- Grouping the words into categories and labeling these categories.
- Noting additional words essential to the topic and placing these additional words in the appropriate categories.



**Webbing**

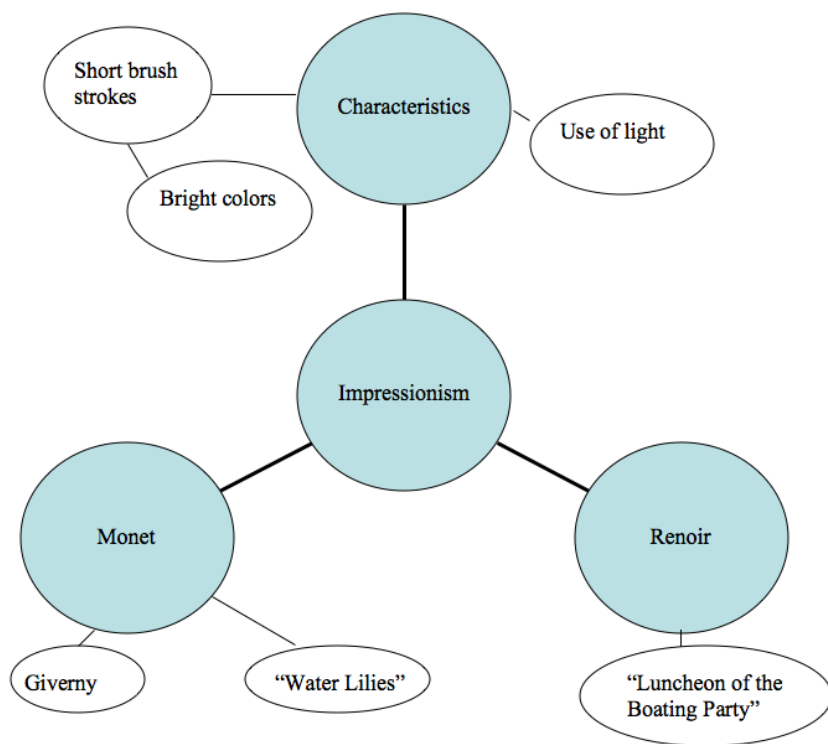
Webbing graphically illustrates how to meaningfully associate word meanings and how to make connections between what students know about the words and how the words are related. Webbing makes it possible for students to see the relationship between words and concepts that they have already read or experienced. To help promote concept acquisition and vocabulary knowledge, teachers can leave the center word blank. Students can begin to understand the relationship of words in the web by choosing and discussing words that might complete the center word. The web in Figure X.3 was done with the teacher directing the students to think of words that could be associated with Impressionist Art. As noted in the web, their responses ranged from specific artists and paintings to characteristics of the Impressionist movement. Webbing can be used to introduce a lesson to determine students' vocabulary and concept knowledge. Cells can be linked by a variety of relationships, such as synonyms, antonyms, expanded concepts, connotations, and preciseness.

**Semantic-Feature Analysis**

Semantic-feature analysis can help students understand relationships among words and relate their background knowledge to the new words. Semantic-feature analysis is most appropriate for words related by class or common features. Figure X.4 is an example used during a study of vertebrates.

To implement a Semantic-feature analysis, list several familiar words that are related. Next, guide students in a discussion of features that are associated with those words. As students suggest features, write those ideas across the top of the board or chart, creating a matrix that the students can complete in terms of whether or not the features are present (+), absent (-), or unknown (?). As the students broaden and refine their concepts, add words and features to the list and analyze them with the students.

**Figure X.3** *Semantic Web for Impressionism*



Semantic-feature analysis can be used with narrative reading materials to analyze characters, settings, plots, and so forth. The strategy is also effective in the content areas when introducing new topics, reviewing topics, and integrating topics across different subject areas. The arrays can be developed and enlarged as students' knowledge backgrounds expand.

**Figure X.4** Semantic-Feature Analysis for Vertebrates

|             | Warm Blooded | Cold Blooded | Land-based | Water-based | Metamorphosis | Lungs  | Live young |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------|------------|
| <b>Fish</b> | -            | +            | -          | +           | -             | -      | -<br>+     |
| Amphibians  | -            | +            | +          | +           | +             | -<br>+ | -          |
| Reptiles    | -            | +            | +          | -<br>+      | -             | +      | -<br>+     |
| Birds       | +            | -            | +          | -<br>+      | -             | +      | -          |
| Mammals     | +            | -            | +          | -<br>+      | -             | +      | +          |

### Teaching Relationships Among Words

Skilled readers integrate information as they read to construct meaning. If context is not enough to explain an unknown word, skilled readers may use their knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and root words to determine the meaning. They may use their knowledge of related words to get the “gist” of the word that is new to them. They perform these operations so rapidly and automatically that they are often not aware of them.

To help students understand the relationships among words, use words that differ in degree (such as *tiny*, *minute*, and *small*) and ask students to discuss them and generate other words that fit the examples. An assortment of instructional strategies and activities can teach relationships among words. By building connections between “old” vocabulary words and “new” words found in their reading, students begin to understand relationships among words they encounter. Students are not asked to simply supply words that fit the example, but instead begin to make connections that build on their existing vocabulary knowledge. For example, Matthew just finished reading *The Last Dinosaur* and used *enormous* to describe the size of the dinosaur. His teacher asked him what else could be described as enormous. He responded by mentioning King Kong, the sky, and the Grand Canyon. Clearly, he knew the word and what it represented. This knowledge could lay the foundation for learning other words associated with *enormous*—*massive*, *gigantic*, *gargantuan*, and so forth.

Such discussion and activities that relate these new words and concepts to past readings and presents them in relation to text help to expand students' vocabularies in a meaningful way.

Teachers can provide students with several words that are related and ask them to identify other words appropriate to the given words. The words supplied by the students can be similar or opposite in meaning and should be based on their reading of both narrative and informational texts.

Similar meanings can include:

tall, large. . . (elevated, immerse, soaring)

work, toil. . . (labor, function, job)

want, desire. . . (crave, prefer, hope)

Opposite meanings can include:

tall, large. . . (diminutive, petite, compact)

work, toil. . . (rest, recreation, sleep)

want, desire. . . (disgust, dislike, hate)

Combinations of meaning can include:

tall, petite. . . (elevated, compact, immense)

work, rest. . . (job, sleep, recreation)

want, need. . . (prefer, demand, requirement)

Direct the students to provide context and write their context sentence for each of the words. After the students understand the relationships between the words, have them provide additional words that retain similar meaning in the sentences. The following example is based on a science unit dealing with reptiles that the children had read that related to the concepts associated with big and small:

In our chapter on reptiles the authors discussed the rapid size changes that alligators go through. In the text there is a photograph of a zoologist holding a baby alligator. It was so \_\_\_\_\_ that she could hold it in her hands. It was an amazing difference between the size of the babies and the mother and it made us wonder how such a little thing could grow up to be so \_\_\_\_\_.

Students can supply words that relate to other stories they have read about size. For example, Annalyse might use the word gigantic to describe the mother alligator, while Addie might choose the word humongous to describe her. Teachers can direct students to think about words that are the opposite of those supplied for either sentence. Words such as minute, tiny, little, and so forth could be used to complete the first sentence.

Additional activities can be developed around the concept of related words. For example, write the word *remote* on the board. Have students develop two lists:

one that contains words that are similar in meaning to the word *remote* and one that contains words that are opposite in meaning.

For example:

| <u>Related</u> | <u>Different</u> |
|----------------|------------------|
| distant        | near             |
| undiscovered   | adjacent         |
| inaccessible   | close            |
| isolated       | occupied         |

Next, use sentences to illustrate the similarities and differences in word meanings. Note the changes in meaning for the words substituted for *remote*. Again encourage students to use their knowledge of stories they have read to construct sentences for the target word.

Bob thought the building was *remote*.

Bob thought the building was *inaccessible*.

Bob thought the building was *close*.

Bob thought the building was *near*.

## Word-Association Vocabulary Instruction

Word-association vocabulary instruction enables students to learn the meanings of several connected words. Students can add new words to their existing vocabulary and understand relationships between the concepts that words represent.

This approach can be followed in teaching synonyms, antonyms, context clues, roots, prefixes, suffixes, and concept classifications (such as animals, size, actions, and story themes). Word-association strategy applies to all school subjects. Following are a few suggested activities to help promote meaningful vocabulary growth.

The teacher identifies new words that students will encounter and are important for them to learn. Words that contain the same root, prefix, or suffix, and words in concept classifications can form the basis for expanding meaning vocabularies. Teach these new words by relating them to similar words the students already know. In content areas, such as mathematics, relate new words to known concepts in meaningful context and use examples that part of the students' background knowledge.

Research (Goerss, Beck, & McKeown, 1999) supports the notion that, in order to learn and retain new vocabulary, students need to be involved in active

learning that requires them to make associations between word learning and their experiences, as well as opportunities to practice, apply and discuss their word knowledge. In an interest area, such as ice hockey, new words can be connected to known words. For example using words such as *score*, *scoreboard*, *check*, *pass*, *save*, *hold*, *hook*, *net*, *penalty time out*, and *offside* students can illustrate word relationships with similar roots, prefixes, or suffixes.

Classify words that students know from their reading of literature, basal stories, and content area textbooks in terms of similar properties and introduce new words that relate to the known properties. For example, a part of thematic unit on World War II might use the following to provide an overview of some of the countries involved:

| Country       | Continent     | Affiliation | Major Language                        |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Great Britain | Europe        | Allies      | English                               |
| Canada        | North America | Allies      | English                               |
| Switzerland   | Europe        | Neutral     | French, German, Italian, Swiss-German |
| Japan         | Asia          | Axis        | Japanese                              |

### Structural Features of Words

Instruction in structural features of words looks at visual patterns and meaning that changes as a result of adding inflectional endings (e.g., -s, -ed, -ing, and -ly), prefixes (e.g., ex- and pre-), and suffixes (e.g., -ment and -ous). Students often define new words by the extent to which the new word relates to other words and concepts already known to them. Connections between previously learned vocabulary words and new words encountered in reading help students understand relationships among words. When instruction is based on strengthening these connections, students are not asked to provide an abstract definition of a word, but instead are asked to make connections between the newly encountered word, their past experiences, and how these past concepts fit with the stories and informational texts they are currently reading.

Teachers can generate instructional activities for the area of structural features of words that build on what students know and generate several variations of a

known word to enhance the learning of new words. For example, teach affixes (prefixes, suffixes, and inflection endings) to help students relate the new to what they know. Using word families (derivations of known words, such as depend—dependable, undependable, dependent, and independent) can enhance understanding of the meaning relationships among derived words within a family and promote independent word learning.

Teachers can introduce prefixes and their effects on meaning by presenting sentences containing prefixes. Focus students' attention on what happens to the meaning of a known word when a specific prefix is used. The following story illustrates the use of the prefix un-

*Once upon a time, on a dark, dark night Addie and Annalyse set off walking to town and on the way they met a kind old woman. The kind woman would not reveal her name, but told the girls that they would meet a guardian in the woods who would not be so kind. Addie and Annalyse knew that the woman spoke true because they had met this creature before and they had never met anyone or thing as unkind and unfriendly as this guardian. Addie and Annalyse helped the kind old lady regather herbs and roots that the guardian had taken from her and then safely escorted her to her cottage. Along the way the kind old lady shared a secret for getting past the unfriendly and unkind guardian of the woods. Upon safely arriving at the cottage the girls helped the old lady unload her herbs from her basket and loaded the contents on the shelf and set off to complete their trip to town.*

1. Addie and Annalyse's actions were \_\_\_\_\_ to the old lady they met in the woods. (kind, unkind)
2. The two girls treated the old lady in a \_\_\_\_\_ way. (friendly, unfriendly)
3. It was \_\_\_\_\_ of the Guardian of the woods to take the old lady's herbs and roots. (kind, unkind)
4. Addie and Annalyse helped the old lady \_\_\_\_\_ her basket once they arrived safely to the old lady's cottage. (load, unload)

Teaching students how to recognize and analyze word parts that may be familiar to them before they read a text can serve to make vocabulary more comprehensible. When students express an interest in word-building using roots, prefixes, and suffixes, construct activities to extend their understanding of word families and the effect that affixes have on word meaning. To build words, read the definition for a word that students already know. It is important that they have meaning for the base-word. Then ask the students to think about what they know about the prefixes and suffixes. Give short definitions to make new words. The following example uses the prefixes and suffixes (-ed, un-, -ment, -able, im-) with the root words *employ* and *impress*:

*employ*

employed, unemployed, employment, unemployment, unemployable, employable

*impress*

impressive, unimpressive, impressionable, unimpressionable

Using the root words and one or more of the prefixes and suffixes provided, students might create the following list of words and their accompanying definitions.

employed: having a job

employment: occupation or activity

unemployed: not having a job

unemployable: not able to obtain a job

impressive: accomplished or noteworthy

impressionable: easily influenced

unimpressive: not accomplished or noteworthy

Provide opportunities for students to apply different prefixes in meaningful context. Depending on students' needs, the teacher can introduce the activity with sentences and then proceed to using connected text from stories that the students have read. Listed below are examples of sentences that illustrate the use of prefixes:

1. Brian thought the new student was not kind  
Brian thought the new student was \_\_\_\_\_. (kind, unkind)
2. The teacher said to write the story again.



- The teacher said to \_\_\_\_\_ the story. (write, rewrite)
3. The distribution of materials did not seem fair to the workers.  
The distribution of materials seemed \_\_\_\_\_ to the workers.  
(fair, unfair)

## Conclusion

Meaning vocabulary is a major factor in reading comprehension. The words that readers know represent the concepts and information that they have available to help them comprehend as they read. Readers who know a word in its fullest sense can associate experiences and concepts with the new word.

Providing students with strategies that enable them to visualize and connect between past experiences and new concepts is critical for effective vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary instruction should be ongoing. It should cut across grade levels and subject areas and be embedded before, during, and after the reading of texts and the introduction of concepts (Graves, 2011).

We support a position that recognizes both wide reading and explicit vocabulary instruction in vocabulary development. We feel that the key is to (1) select appropriate words that children will encounter while reading, (2) teach students to relate words to their own background knowledge, (3) provide students with opportunities to discuss word uses, attributes, and meanings and (4) use visual aids that will help students organize, synthesize and understand word concepts. Students must be taught strategies that will allow them to integrate new word meanings with their existing knowledge in order to build strong conceptual representations of vocabulary across multiple contextual settings.



## References

- Allen, J. (1999). *Words, words, words: Teaching vocabulary in grades 4-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Anderson, R. C., & Freebody, P. (1981). Vocabulary knowledge. In J. T. Guthrie (Ed). *Comprehension and teaching: Research reviews*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Baumann, J. F., Font, G., Edwards, E. C., & Boland, E. M. (2005). Strategies for teaching middle-grade students to use word-part and context clues to expand reading vocabulary. IN E. H. Hiebert, & M. L. Kamil (Eds.), *Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice* (pp. 179-205). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Beck, I., & McKeown, M. (1991). Conditions of vocabulary acquisition. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 789-814). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Beck, I., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York: Guilford.
- Blair, T. R., Rupley, W. H., & Nichols, W. D. (2007). The Effective Teacher of Reading: Considering the What and How of Instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 60, 432-438.
- Blamey, K.L., & Beauchat, K.A. (2011, September). Word Walk: Vocabulary Instruction for Young Children. *The Reading Teacher*, 65, 71-75.
- Biemiller, A (2003 April). *Teaching vocabulary to kindergarten to grade 2 children*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Biemiller, A. (1999). *Language and reading success*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.
- Blachowicz, C. I. Z., & Fisher, P. (2006). *Teaching vocabulary in all classrooms* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bromley, K. (2007). Nine things every teacher should know about words and vocabulary instruction. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(7), 528-537.
- Coyne, M., McCoach, B., Loftus, D., Zipoli, S., Ruby, R., Crevecoeur, Y., & Kapp, s. (2010) Direct and Extended Vocabulary Instruction in Kindergarten: Investigating Transfer Effects. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 3, 93-120
- Cunningham, A. E. & Stanovich, K. E. (1997). Early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experience and ability 10 years later. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 934-945.
- Dalton, B. & Grisham, D.L. eVoc strategies:10 ways to use technology to build vocabulary. *The Reading Teacher*, 64, 306-317.
- Daneman, M. (1991). Individual differences in reading skills. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 512-538). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2009). *Learning words inside and out, grades 1-6: Vocabulary instruction that boosts achievement in all subject areas*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Fukkink, R. G., & de Glopper, K. (1998). Effects of instruction in deriving word meaning from context: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 68, 450-469.
- Graves, M. F. (2004). Teaching prefixes: As good as it gets? In J. F. Baumann & E. J. Kame'enui (Eds.) *Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice* (pp. 81-99). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Graves, M.F. (2011). Vocabulary Instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(7), 541-541.
- Greenwood, S.C., & Flanigan, K. (2007). Overlapping Vocabulary and Comprehension: Context Clues Complement Semantic Gradients. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(3), 249-254.
- Goerss, B. L., Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (1999). Increasing remedial students' ability to derive word meaning from context. *Reading Psychology*, 20, 151-175.
- Nichols, W. D., & Rupley, W. H. (2004). Matching instructional design with vocabulary instruction. *Reading Horizons*, 45, 1, 55-71.
- McKeown, M. G. & Beck, I. L. (2004). In J. F. Baumann & E. J. Kame'enui (Eds.) *Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice* (pp. 13-27). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Padak, N., Newton, E., Rasinski, T., & Newton, R. (2008). Getting to the root of word study: Teaching Latin and Greek word roots in elementary and middle grades. In A. E. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about vocabulary instruction* (pp. 6-31). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Rupley, W. H., & Nichols, W. D. (2005). Vocabulary instruction for the struggling readers. *Reading Writing Quarterly*, 21, 3, 239-260.
- Rupley, W. H., Logan, J. W., & Nichols, W. D. (1999). Vocabulary instruction in a balanced reading program. *The Reading Teacher*, 52, 338-346.
- Stahl, S. A., & Fairbanks, M. M. (1986) The effects of vocabulary instruction: A model-based meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 56, 72-110.
- Tennyson, R., & Cocchiarella, M. (1986). An empirically based instructional design theory for teaching concepts. *Review of Educational Research*, 56, 40-71.
- Thompson, R. A. (1999). Balancing vocabulary instruction with teacher-directed and student-centered activities. In S. Blair-Larson & K. Williams (Eds.), *The balanced reading program* (pp. 24-36). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Vacca, R. T., Vacca, J. L., & Mraz, M. (2011). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum*. Boston: Pearson.

### **About the Authors**

William H. Rupley, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture and Affiliate Faculty Member in Educational Psychology, University Regent's Fellow, and Distinguished Research Fellow at Texas A & M University.

William Dee Nichols is Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Maine.

Maryann Mraz is Associate Professor and Doctoral Program Coordinator at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Timothy R. Blair is Professor of Literacy and Reading Education at the School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership for the College of Education, University of Central Florida.







## Great Books for Late Summer Reading

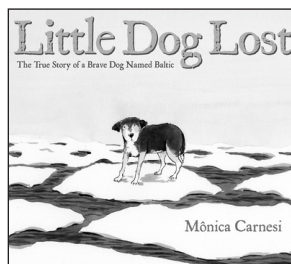
Terrell A. Young, Ed.D. & Barbara A. Ward, Ph.D.

For decades now, reading experts have expressed concern that the competence gained by struggling readers during the academic year is lost during the summer months. While academic enrichment and remediation programs can reduce that loss, one of the best practices to build better readers is by having them read during breaks from school. At least one study clearly supports this suggestion. In his study of 1,600 elementary students in the mid-Atlantic area, researcher James Kim (2009) found that regardless of previous achievement level or race or socioeconomic level, children who read more books performed better on reading comprehension tests in the fall than their peers who had read one or no books over the summer. As one result of this study, Kim and White (2008) and White and Kim (2008) offer helpful ways to keep youngsters reading during the summer. While some districts create a required summer list, others design incentive programs. Still others actually mail a packet of books to their students. Perhaps small book clubs initiated to stem the tide of the summer slump in reading could combine reading engaging trade books with young readers' social nature. Whatever you decide to do, don't let this be The Summer of No Reading. Hasten to a library or bookstore and pick out a book that will foster the love of reading in your household or community. Below we share some of our favorite books for summer.

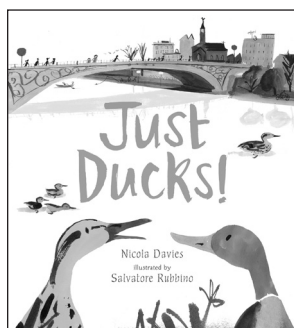
### Grades K-3

Carnesi, Monica. (2012). *Little dog lost: The true story of a dog named Baltic*. Penguin Young Readers Group/Nancy Paulsen Books. 32 pages, \$15.99, ISBN: 978-0-399-25666-0.

Animal lovers will relish this true tale of a lucky dog whose story ends well. But it didn't start out that way, and it certainly could have had a tragic ending. Somehow, a dog, later named Baltic, ends up on a sheet of ice floating on the Vistula River in Poland. When passersby spot the dog, they mount a failed rescue effort, and the chunk of ice with Baltic on it flows swiftly to-



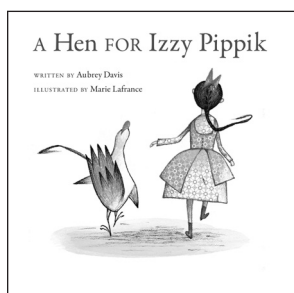
ward the Baltic Sea. Eventually, after many attempts during which Baltic ends up being dunked into the icy water, the crew of a nearby ship captures the plucky canine. One man even takes a small boat to Baltic's precarious perch and then brings him back to become a part of the ship's crew. Back matter includes information about this dog that somehow managed to survive his icy adventure. The endpapers feature a map showing Baltic's involuntary watery journey in 2010. Young readers may draw inspiration from the heroism of dog and humans and smile as they examine the watercolor, pen, and ink illustrations, all paying tribute to this plucky little canine that never gave up. Since no one ever came forward to claim Baltic, how he ended up on that ice remains a mystery. What isn't a mystery is the heroism of Baltic and his new crew.



Davies, Nicola. (2012). *Just ducks*. Illus. by Salvatore Rubbino. Candlewick. 32 pages, \$15.99, ISBN: 978-0-763-65936-3.

Luckily for her, a little girl wakes each morning to the sounds of the mallard ducks that live nearby. While some might find the sounds annoying, she finds comfort in their constancy, knowing that the ducks will awaken her each day. Each day she and her mother visit the park and admire the ducks' antics of the ducks while the constant utterances of the water-loving—and

sometimes loud—creatures weave across some of the pages in mixed media illustrations. In fact, some pages are literally filled with the ducks' "quack-quuuuack, quack-quaack-quack" (p. 6), as well as the girl's astute observations about each duck's "secret patch of blue" (p. 15), the different colorings of males and females, how they find food and what they do at night. Each page contains the main storyline as well as facts about ducks in a smaller font size. Back matter includes an index directing readers to specific pages to learn about duck facts and a note about the 120 different types of ducks that exist in the world. Clearly, both author and illustrator have spent a great deal of time observing ducks; that attention to detail is evident in this appealing title.



Davis, Aubrey. (2012). *A hen for Izzy Pippik*. Illus. by Marie LaFrance. Kids Can Press. 32 pages, \$16.95, ISBN: 978-1-554-53243-8.

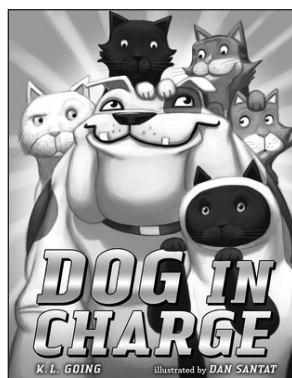
Doing the right thing isn't easy, especially when it seems that everyone else is urging you to do something else. When a chicken with emerald green feathers ends

up on her doorstep, Shaina searches everywhere for its owner. After finding a damaged wooden crate on the street, Shaina figures that Izzy Pippik, the chicken's owner, must have lost her. Certain that he will return for the chicken, she refuses to allow anyone to harm the bird even as her mother eyes the bird for a possible meal. After the beautiful bird lays an egg, Shaina steadfastly maintains that the chicken and its chicks all belong to Izzy Pippik, who will come for them any day now. Eventually, the chicks become chickens, and the town is overrun with Izzy Pippik's chickens. In a strange twist of fate, the town becomes known because of those free-roaming chickens, and by the time Izzy Pippik finally does return, no one wants to give up the birds that have brought good times back to the town. In the end, Pippik does the right thing, rewarding Shaina's honesty, and the townspeople and chickens live happily ever after. This delightful story features a determined, honest girl intent on making sure those chickens come home to roost in the right place even while almost everyone tries to change her mind. The soft pencil and Photoshop colored illustrations are appealing as well.

---

Going, K. L. (2012). *Dog in charge*. Illus. by Dan Santat. Dial. 40 pages, \$16. 99, ISBN: 978-0-803-73479-1.

As is the case of many well-trained canines, Dog loves earning the praise his family showers on him whenever he does something good. Or maybe he simply loves the dog treats they give him as a reward. Things go awry when his family leaves him in charge while they go to the store. The family's five cats, sedately lined up on the couch as the door closes, disappear to explore the house, and things quickly go to the dogs, make that, cats. Expected to keep the cats in line, Dog is off on a mission to hunt them down, and as they run from him, Dog creates quite a mess, none of which would have occurred if he had let those sleeping cats lie. In the end, desperate to rein them in, he drags out a bag of cat treats, which he can't resist consuming. Exhausted from his labors and with a full tummy, he falls asleep. While he drowns, the cats come to his rescue and clean up everything. Pet lovers will adore this story since both the author and the illustrator clearly know the habits of felines and canines, especially when their human companions are away. The cartoon-like illustrations of cats hiding



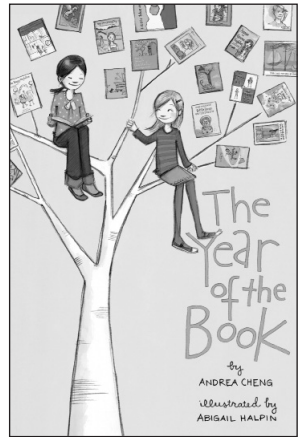


under the bed covers, leaping from clothes hampers, and then curling up next to Dog are delightful. Young readers will want to reread this one because they know that Dog actually isn't in charge of much of anything.

## Grades 4-6

Cheng, Andrea. (2012). *The year of the book*.  
 Illus. by Abigail Halpin. Houghton Mifflin Books for  
 Children. 160 pages, \$15.99, ISBN: 978-0-547-68463-5.

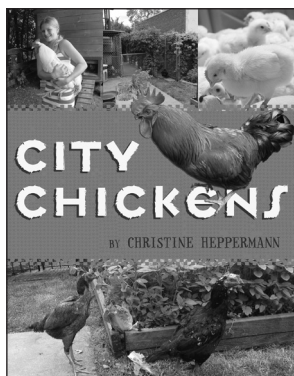
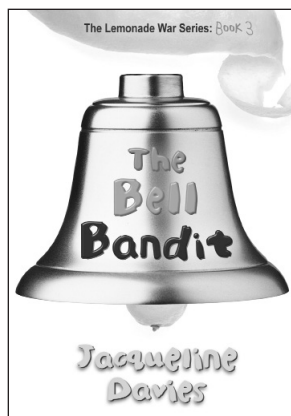
Fourth grade is lonely for Anna Wang as she watches her friend Laura draw away from her, spending more time with bossy mean girl Allison who tells everyone what to do and makes fun of Anna, her personality and her homemade lunch sack. When Laura seems to be making efforts to rekindle their friendship, Anna isn't sure whether to trust her overtures. Instead, she finds companionship and insight into human nature in the children's classics she is reading. When Laura's home life leaves Laura vulnerable, Anna takes a risk and extends the hand of friendship to Laura just when she needs it most. The author portrays Anna lovingly, and readers will feel drawn to her, taking sustenance from her own family and the books she reads, but also longing for a physical friend. Her kindness is evident in the way she greets the school crossing guard, Ray, even visiting him when he has an accident. The added layer of Anna's initial reluctance to learn how to speak and write Chinese plus her refusal to believe that Laura might actually be interested in her culture make this book memorable and useful in classroom conversations about trust and acceptance. The title covers important themes subtly while portraying family dynamics accurately. If this is Anna's year of reading, it is also a year filled with self-discovery. The pen-and-ink illustrations have been colored digitally, making the book resemble those of Grace Lin. Readers can extend their enjoyment of the book by following the directions and visuals for several of the craft projects Anna undertakes.



---

Davies, Jacqueline. (2012). *The bell bandit*.  
Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 192 pages, \$15.99,  
ISBN: 978-0-547-56737-2.

One of the strengths of the Lemonade War series is that the author's created siblings Jessie, 9, and Evan, 10, are as complex as real-life children, and the situations they face are equally multi-faceted. In this title, the Treskis have driven to the Lake Placid home of their grandmother during the Christmas holidays because their grandmother accidentally set the house on fire. Clearly, something is wrong, and once she returns home from the hospital, she is increasingly disoriented. Her periods of recognizing her beloved grandchildren and even her own whereabouts contrast vividly with periods of confusion during which she slips into the past. Jessie befriends a neighbor boy named Maxwell while the two of them try to figure out the whereabouts of the huge bell that usually sits atop Lovell's Hill. Jessie suspects the Sinclair boys of taking the bell, which has an important part in a New Year's Eve community ritual. While spying on the Sinclairs, they find them torturing a frog in the same way they have bullied Maxwell in the past. Evan comes to Jessie's defense against the boys while he is trying to find his grandmother who has wandered away from home. Strong writing, interesting characters, and two children whose lives are suddenly changed by events beyond their control make this title quite powerful. Readers may want to read the previous two titles before this one in order to understand the dynamics between Jessie and Evan better.

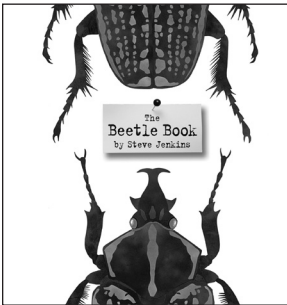



---

Heppermann, Christine. (2012). *City chickens*.  
Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 64 pages, \$16.99,  
ISBN: 978-0-547-51830-5.

This short, informative title about Chicken Run Rescue, a Minneapolis shelter for abused and abandoned chickens founded by Mary Britton Clouse and her husband Bert, describes the pleasures and perils of life as a chicken today. The Clouses have turned their backyard and house into a comfortable place where chickens may

thrive until someone adopts them. Readers will regard chickens differently once they have read this book and may even consider creating their own nests for the feathery creatures often left behind by their former owners. As the author points out, those fluffy chicks hatched in many classrooms tend to be abandoned once they become hens and roosters. The photographs and accompanying stories of these chickens will bring smiles to many faces, and the fact that they have names such as Billiam and Roseman reminds readers that chickens, like other living creatures, have personalities and feelings and deserve to be handled with love and respect. One particularly interesting story involves 106 chicks found dumped in a ditch alongside a highway in 2008. The chicks had been removed from a biology lab and left outside in the cold. The lab didn't want them back since their removal would have affected the integrity of their experiment. Mary came to the rescue of the chicks, one of whom came to be called Billiam. The anecdotes about these feathered creatures and the kindness of their rescuers are sure to prompt empathy as well as gratitude for this couple determined to make a difference in the world. The author admits that she adopted two chickens of her own.



Jenkins, Steve. (2012). *The beetle book*.

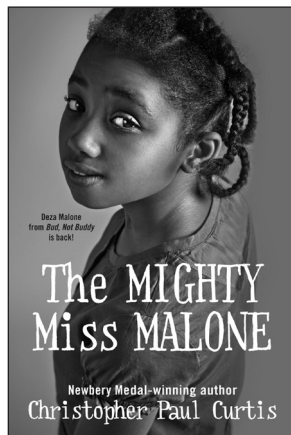
Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 40 pages, \$16.99,  
ISBN: 978-0-547-68084-2.

Steve Jenkins never fails to delight readers with his torn- and cut-paper collage illustrations of various inhabitants of the natural world. In this case, he focuses on beetles in a title sure to lure young readers because of the incredible detail and the ornate colors the illustrations contain. Readers are likely to return to its pages to gaze in amazement at the world's largest beetle, the titan beetle with its powerful jaws, and the colorful African goliath beetle. The aptly named violin beetle looks just like its namesake, but it emits an acid that won't leave any potential predator humming sweet strains. As with his other titles, Jenkins includes interesting beetle snippets, making readers able to supply trivia about beetles on demand. Beginning with two pages about the variations of beetles, the book explains what beetles are, what makes them special, and even solves the mystery of the sounds emitted by some beetles such as the Fijian long-horn beetle and the Madagascar hissing cockroach. This is another visually stunning book complemented with text that doesn't overwhelm young readers, making it an essential classroom purchase. An added bonus is that once readers discover Jenkins' books, they have a large collection of reading material from which to choose.

## Grades 7-8

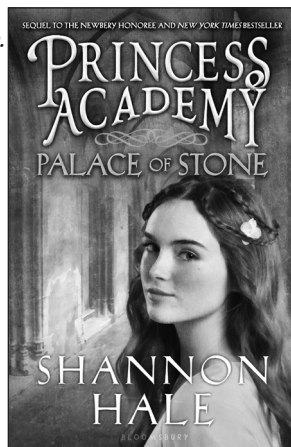
Curtis, Christopher Paul. (2012). *The Mighty Miss Malone*. Wendy Lamb/Random House. 307 pages, \$15.99, ISBN: 978-0-385-73491-2.

Curtis introduced readers to Miss Deza Malone in *Bud, Not Buddy* (Delacorte, 1999). Even though it is the middle of the Great Depression, Deza felt that her life was pretty good in Gary, Indiana. After all, she has loving parents, food to eat, the best teacher in the universe, and a first-rate best friend in Clarice Anne Johnson. As the smartest girl in her class, Deza loves school and is happy that her learning can continue when Mrs. Johnson asked the two friends to come for special summer tutoring. But things change and change quickly for the Malones. Her father is first hurt badly in a boating accident and then leaves for Michigan to find work, Deza's mother loses her job, and soon Deza, her brother Jimmie, and her mother are headed to Michigan to find her father, work, and food. Their journey introduced them to hardship after hardship, struggle after struggle, and disappointment after disappointment. Deza and her mother persevere and hope that one day their family will be reunited.



Hale, Shannon. (2012). *Princess Academy: Palace of Stone*. Bloomsbury. 336 pages, \$16.99, ISBN: 978-1-59990-873-1.

Miri and the other Mount Eskel Princess Academy girls are invited to spend a year in Asland where they can help Britta prepare for her royal wedding. Yet, the invitation offers even more, for each girl has other opportunities presented to her. For Miri, it is the opportunity to attend the university, Queens Castle, where she can quench her thirst for learning and, one day, become a teacher in Mount Eskel. To add to her joy, Peder is also going to Asland to be an apprentice to a master stone carver. While studying at Queens Castle, Miri learns much more than rhetoric and ethics—she learns how one's words could be used to cause harm to loved ones, how those who appear to be friends are not always so, and how a few good people working together can create great



good to benefit many. While Asland is filled with cries for a revolution, Miri and her friends from Mount Eskel experience their own, smaller individual revolutions. Once again, Shannon Hale weaves a story that does not disappoint her readers.

---

Lawson, Julie. (2012). *Ghosts of the Titanic*.

Holiday House. 169 pages, \$16.95, ISBN: 978-0-8234-2423-8.

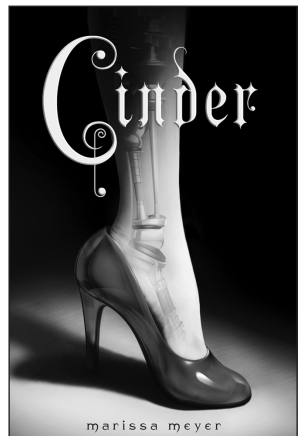
Twelve-year-old Kevin is the class clown and is always in trouble at school with his teachers and at home with his father. Kevin's father wants him to excel at soccer like his older sister Courtney, but Kevin's passion is swimming. A school unit on the Titanic and a trip to see a museum exhibit have captured Kevin's attention and whetted his appetite to learn more about the famous ship and its passengers. The family travels from their home in Victoria, British Columbia to Shearwater Point, Nova Scotia after Kevin's father mysteriously inherits seafront property from a stranger. Unbeknownst to Kevin, Halifax is the final resting place of 150 people who perished when the grand ship sank. Kevin's story becomes intermeshed with the stories of seventeen-year-old Angus Seaton, a sailor charged with retrieving the bodies and personal effects of Titanic victims, and a seventeen-year-old girl's haunting pleas for help.




---

Meyer, Marissa. (2012). *Cinder*. Feiwel and Friends/Macmillan. 400 pages, \$17.99, ISBN: 978-0-312-64189-4.

Marissa Meyer's science fiction transformation of the "Cinderella" story introduces a Chinese cyborg, Linh Mei, or Cinder, as her friends know her. Being a cyborg earns Cinder second-class status from most people in New Beijing as well as the disdain of her stepmother. Yet, all of the technology pulsing throughout her body has some obvious benefits. For instance, she can easily detect someone's dishonesty, and she has the reputation of being the best mechanic in New Beijing. This reputation actually attracts a prince to her in hopes that she can repair his android before the annual ball. When the Letumosis pandemic threatens her stepsister's life, Cinder is "volunteered" for plague research that no one has ever survived. It is during this testing that Cinder learns she is

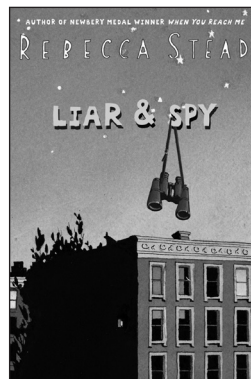


more than just a cyborg. While readers will relish the connections between this modern twist of a well-known story, they will also delight in the unique perspective the author takes.

---

Stead, Rebecca. (2012). *Liar & Spy*. Wendy Lamb/Random House. 192 pages, \$15.99, ISBN: 978-0-385-73743-2.

Georges experiences many changes when his father loses his job; his mother begins to work extra shifts at the hospital; his former best friend Jason drops him to hang with the cool kids at school; Dallas, the local bully, chooses him as his new target; and his family must sell their beloved home and move into an apartment. At the apartment complex, Georges meets Safer who trains him to become a spy and becomes his only friend. Georges is assigned to carefully observe the comings and goings of one of the tenants. As Safer asks more and more of him, Georges wonders how far is too far to go for your only friend? Rebecca Stead's *Liar & Spy* is full of surprises as well as life-changing questions such as this one.



## Grades 9-12

---

Anthony, Julie. (2012). *Chopsticks*. Illus. by Rodrigo Corral. Razorbill. 304 pages, \$19.99, ISBN: 978-1-595-14435-5.

The couple happily embracing on the cover might fool readers into thinking this is just another sweet teen romance. While there is a romance at its heart, the title also explores the thin, sometimes nonexistent line between sanity and insanity. The story begins with the disappearance of piano prodigy Gloria Fleming from a New York rest facility and then moves backward in time to offer clues to how things went so wrong for this talented pianist. After wowing New York and European audiences on her tour, Gloria inexplicably begins playing "Chopsticks," a sign that she is troubled. On one hand, blame could be placed on Gloria's father who seems determined to make his daughter a star. Perhaps it could be laid at the hands of Francisco, a boy from Argentina who moves next door to the



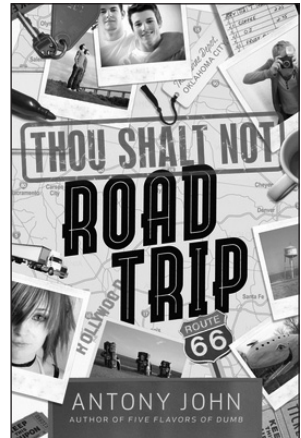


Flemings. Or perhaps Gloria's downward spiral began with the death of her mother many years before. The story is told visually with only scraps of text, newspaper clippings, phone text messages, IM messages, pages from *The Bell Jar*, and YouTube links, all hints about Gloria's whereabouts. At first fairly innocuous, the images become increasingly disturbing, offering clues to the madness that seems to fill the pages and perhaps Gloria's own life. Teen readers will love the visual clues, the lovers' stolen hours, and the uncertainty of what they just read or experienced. At times it seems as though the lines between the identities of Gloria and Francisco are completely blurred. This highly original visual and textual romp through someone's life feels voyeuristic and requires a reread to see what just happened.

---

John, Antony. (2012). *Thou shalt not road trip*. Dial. 336 pages, \$16.99, ISBN: 978-0-803-73434-0.

Sixteen-year-old Luke's publisher sends him on a publicity tour when the book he wrote chronicling his spiritual journey starts selling and gaining attention. Due to a scheduling glitch, Matt, Luke's older brother, will be responsible for getting him to the book signing venues on time, but Matt has his own agenda involving his girlfriend Alex. Matt rents a Hummer and heads across the country along Route 66. The fact that Fran, a girl on whom Luke once had a crush, comes along adds to the complications. The descriptions of the book signings during which Luke must field difficult questions and sign until his arm aches are spot-on as are the complaints Luke utters throughout the scenic detours on which Matt takes his fellow passengers. Luke is portrayed realistically, floundering from one mistake to another, disappointing and betraying himself and others. Luke is, after all, a seeker, and if he isn't sure exactly what he believes or how firm that belief may be, his seeking is typical of an adolescent. Threaded through the storyline is the very real consideration of how much an author owes to his/her readers, an issue worth pondering in this time in which authors have written partially fictionalized memoirs. Also, worth noting is the media frenzy that ensues once Luke is found to be less than forthright about his book and some of the events occurring on the trip. Once again, readers will be astonished at how quickly the media—or social network, for that matter—can create or destroy some-



one's image. Although the problems Luke is facing seem resolved rather quickly in the end, this title is thoughtful and encourages readers to reflect on their own actions and beliefs. While tackling serious issues, this title does so with humor and moments of bonding between siblings and friends.

## References

- Kim, J. (2009). Summer reading and summer not: Fighting the summer reading slump. Retrieved from <http://www.uknow.gse.harvard.edu/teaching/TC321.html>
- Kim, J. S., & White, T. G. (2008). Scaffolding voluntary summer reading for children in grades 3 to 5: An experimental study. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 12(1), 1–23.
- White, T. G. & Kim, J. S. (2008). Teacher and parent scaffolding of voluntary summer reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(2), 116-125.



### **About the Authors**

Barbara A. Ward and Terrell A. Young are dedicated bibliophiles who love teaching as much as reading. Ward is on the faculty at Washington State University in Pullman, and Young at Brigham Young University in Provo.



# **Author Index** **Volume 51**

| <b>Author</b>  | <b>Issue</b> | <b>Page</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Armitage, Connie J.<br>California University of Pennsylvania | 2            | 149         |
| Blair, Timothy<br>University of Central Florida              | 4            | 298         |
| Cassidy, Jack<br>Millersville University                     | 2            | 93          |
| Chang, Sau Hou<br>Indiana University Southeast               | 1            | 63          |
| Diehl, Holly L.<br>California University of Pennsylvania     | 2            | 149         |
| Dail, Alanna Rochelle<br>Syracuse University                 | 3            | 209         |
| DeBruin-Parecki, Andrea<br>Old Dominion University           | 1            | 41          |
| Dyches, Tina Taylor<br>Brigham Young University              | 2            | 93          |
| Esteves, Kelli J.<br>Butler University                       | 1            | 21          |
| Grisham, Dana L.<br>National University                      | 3            | 181         |
| Heath, Melissa Allen<br>Brigham Young University             | 2            | 93          |
| Huang, Su Hua<br>Midwestern State University                 | 3            | 229         |
| Leko, Melinda<br>University of Wisconsin-Madison             | 4            | 279         |
| Mathers, Brandi Gribble<br>Geneva College                    | 4            | 259         |

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| McGee, Lea<br>The Ohio State University                      | 3 | 209 |
| Moulton, Emily<br>Falcon School District                     | 2 | 93  |
| Mraz, Maryann<br>University of North Carolina at Charlotte   | 4 | 298 |
| Mundy, Charlotte A.<br>University of Alabama                 | 4 | 279 |
| Nettles, Diane H.<br>California University of Pennsylvania   | 2 | 149 |
| Nichols, William Dee<br>University of Maine                  | 4 | 298 |
| Ortlieb, Evan<br>Texas A & M University                      | 2 | 93  |
| Paige, David D.<br>Bellarmine University                     | 1 | 1   |
| Peterson, Christine<br>California University of Pennsylvania | 2 | 149 |
| Prater, Mary Anne<br>Brigham Young University                | 2 | 93  |
| Quatroche, Diane J.<br>Indiana State University              | 2 | 93  |
| Ross, Dorene D.<br>University of Florida                     | 4 | 279 |
| Rupley, William H.<br>Texas A & M University                 | 4 | 298 |
| Smetana, Linda<br>California State University East Bay       | 3 | 181 |
| Squibb, Kathryn<br>Old Dominion University                   | 1 | 41  |
| Stern, Amanda J.<br>Geneva College                           | 4 | 259 |

|                             |   |     |
|-----------------------------|---|-----|
| Ward, Barbara A.            | 1 | 81  |
| Washington State University | 2 | 171 |
|                             | 3 | 247 |
|                             | 4 | 322 |
| Wepner, Shelley B.          | 2 | 93  |
| Manhattanville College      |   |     |
| Whitten, Elizabeth          | 1 | 21  |
| Western Michigan University |   |     |
| Young, Terrell A.           | 1 | 81  |
| Brigham Young University    | 2 | 171 |
|                             | 3 | 247 |
|                             | 4 | 322 |

# Article Index

## Volume 51

| Article  | Issue | Page |
|--|-------|------|
| 16 Minutes of “Eyes-on-Text”<br>Can Make a Difference: Whole-Class<br>Choral Reading as an Adolescent<br>Fluency Strategy<br><i>David D. Paige</i>                           | 1     | 1    |
| A Mixed Method Study of the Effectiveness<br>of the Accelerated Reader Program on<br>Middle School Students’ Reading<br>Achievement and Motivation<br><i>Su Hua Huang</i>    | 3     | 229  |
| Assisted Reading with Digital Audiobooks<br>for Students with Reading Disabilities<br><i>Kelli J. Esteves</i><br><i>Elizabeth Whitten</i>                                    | 1     | 21   |
| At-Risk Preschool Children:<br>Establishing Development Ranges<br>that Suggest At-Promise<br><i>Lea McGee</i><br><i>Alanna Rochelle Dail</i>                                 | 3     | 209  |
| Books for Laughing Out Loud for Children<br>and Young Adults<br><i>Barbara A. Ward</i><br><i>Terrell A. Young</i>  | 2     | 171  |
| Building Conceptual Understanding<br>through Vocabulary Instruction<br><i>William H. Rupley</i><br><i>William Dee Nichols</i><br><i>Maryann Mraz</i><br><i>Timothy Blair</i> | 4     | 298  |
| Bullies in Recent Books for Children<br>and Young Adults<br><i>Terrell A. Young</i><br><i>Barbara A. Ward</i>  | 1     | 81   |
| Café Culture: Promoting Empowerment<br>and Pleasure in Adolescent Literacy<br>Learning   | 4     | 259  |

*Brandi Mathers*  
*Amanda J. Stern*

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| Grade Level and Gender Differences in a<br>School-Based Reading Tutoring Program<br><i>Sau Hou Chang.</i>  | 1 | 63  |
| Great Books for Late Summer Reading<br><i>Terrell A. Young</i><br><i>Barbara A. Ward</i>   | 4 | 322 |
| How Are Colleges and Universities Preparing<br>Reading Specialist Candidate for<br>Leadership Positions in the Schools?<br><i>Shelley B. Wepner</i><br><i>Diane J. Quatroche</i>                       | 2 | 103 |
| Literacy: The First Decade of the<br>New Millennium<br><i>Jack Cassidy</i><br><i>Evan Ortlieb</i>  | 2 | 93  |
| Promoting At-Risk Preschool Children's<br>Comprehension through<br>Research-Based Strategy Instruction<br><i>Andrea DeBruin-Parecki</i><br><i>Kathryn Squibb</i>                                       | 1 | 41  |
| Portrayals of Bullying in Children's Picture<br>Books and Implications for Bibliotherapy<br><i>Emily Moulton</i><br><i>Melissa Allen Heath</i><br><i>Mary Anne Prater</i><br><i>Tina Taylor Dyches</i> | 2 | 119 |
| Revitalizing Tier 2 Intervention with<br>Graphic Novels<br><i>Linda Smetana</i><br><i>Dana L. Grisham</i>  | 3 | 181 |
| The Allure of Animals<br><i>Terrell A. Young</i><br><i>Barbara A. Ward</i>   | 3 | 247 |
| The Professional Development of<br>Two Reading First Coaches<br><i>Charlotte A. Mundy</i><br><i>Dorene D. Ross</i><br><i>Melinda Leko</i>  | 4 | 279 |

The Three-Phase Reading Comprehension  
Intervention (3-RCI):A Support for  
Intermediate-Grade Word Callers  
*Holly L. Diehl*  
*Connie J. Armitage*  
*Diane H. Nettles*  
*Christine Peterson*

2

149



## **History and Mission of Reading Horizons**

*Reading Horizons* began in 1960 as a local newsletter and has developed into an international journal serving major colleges, universities, and individual subscribers across the United States and Canada as well as a host of other countries. The journal serves as a forum for ideas from many schools of thought dedicated to building upon the knowledge base of literacy through research, theoretical essays, opinion pieces, policy studies, and syntheses of best practices. *Reading Horizons* seeks to bring together school professionals, literacy researchers, teacher educators, parents, and community leaders as they work collaboratively to widen the horizons of literacy and the language arts.

## **Submitting Manuscripts**

Manuscripts should be submitted electronically to the journal at [spls-horizons@wmich.edu](mailto:spls-horizons@wmich.edu). Please send one copy with full author(s) information, one clean copy with no identifying information, and an abstract. All bitmap image files used must be submitted as separate hi-resolution (300dpi) files in jpg or tif format. Embedded images in articles accepted for publication will be deleted from the final publication unless submitted in this manner. Manuscripts should be approximately 25 pages in length, not counting references and figures, double-spaced, and using 1.25 margins and 12-point font. Manuscripts will be acknowledged within two weeks of receipt. Manuscripts must follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*, 5th Edition. Those not written in this style will be returned without review.

## **Editorial Policies**

After in-house review by the editor, and if accepted for review, manuscripts will be sent to two members of our Editorial Advisory Board for blind review. Author(s) will be informed of our decision within four to five months of submission. Criteria used for evaluating and reviewing manuscripts are significance of the contribution to literacy/language arts research and instruction, clarity of writing, and sound methodology process used.





---

## Check List and Author Copies

Upon acceptance, a checklist will be provided to you that will guide you through *all* the requirements necessary when submitting your final draft for publication. You will be required to complete this checklist to ensure that all materials and procedures are followed and no critical information is missing from your final document. Author(s) will receive two copies of the journal in which the article appears.

---

*Reading Horizons* (ISSN 0034-0502) is published quarterly by the Dorothy J. McGinnis Reading Center and Clinic in the College of Education and Human Development at Western Michigan University. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Reading Horizons*, WMU, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5197.

*There is no more crucial or basic skill in all of education than reading.*

DOROTHY J. MCGINNIS READING CENTER & CLINIC  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN





## Subscriptions

**BACK ISSUES:** While available, back issues may be purchased from *Reading Horizons* at \$8.00 per hard or electronic copy. Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilm International, 300 Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor MI 48108.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** *Reading Horizons* is a quarterly journal of the College of Education and Human Development at Western Michigan University. The journal depends on subscriptions for its operation, and has maintained a moderately priced rate over many years. We invite your subscription and your support. Please subscribe — and encourage your colleagues and library to subscribe — by copying this page and sending it to Circulation Manager, WMU-Reading Horizons, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5255. Please make your check payable to *Reading Horizons*. Send all questions to *Reading Horizons* at [spls-horizons@wmich.edu](mailto:spls-horizons@wmich.edu).

### TYPE OF SUBSCRIPTION

**Individual:**    \_\_\_ \$25 (1 yr)    \_\_\_ \$47 (2 yrs)    \_\_\_ \$60 (3 yrs)

Sub-total \_\_\_\_\_

**Institutional:**    \_\_\_ \$35 (1 yr)    \_\_\_ \$65 (2 yrs)    \_\_\_ \$100 (3 yrs)

Sub-total \_\_\_\_\_

### Shipping & Handling:

Canadian: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00    International \_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Country/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_











Dorothy J. McGinnis Reading Center and Clinic  
College of Education and Human Development  
Western Michigan University  
1903 W. Michigan Ave.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5197