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by Kyle Webster

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COLORADO READING JOURNAL

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Note From the Editors

As your editors, and teachers ourselves, we spend a lot of time talking about the amazing teaching and learning we see in classrooms and after-school programs in Colorado. In this issue we highlight teachers who are passionate about their literacy instruction and share their effective and innovative teaching practices on grammar, multicultural math literature, book trailers, connecting readers to books, and the power of reading aloud classic literature. This issue also presents views on Response to Intervention (RtI) and ideas about effective instruction for readers, writing from the heart, and how to make families our partners in education.

We want to bring your attention to the authors featured in this issue and how they blur the line between being teachers of readers and writers and being readers

and writers themselves. In this winter issue, we celebrate remarkable teachers who share their passion for literacy in all aspects of their lives. These teachers spend as much time teaching the art and craft of literacy as they do immersing themselves in reading great books and writing for various purposes.

So as you read this issue, we invite you to consider the ways you are passionate about teaching and how this dedication impacts your instructional practices and relationships with students. We also encourage you to consider the importance of being a reader and writer first and a teacher second. As you make these connections and you become inspired to share, we would be honored for you to tell us about your classroom in the next issue of the *Colorado Reading Journal*.



Kimberli Bontempo, Suzette Youngs, and Christine Kyser



Call for Manuscripts

The *Colorado Reading Journal* is a peer-reviewed journal of the Colorado Council International Reading Association. The *Journal* is published in the winter and summer of each year. The *Journal* publishes articles that address topics, issues, and events of interest and value to teachers, specialists, and administrators involved in literacy education at all levels. The *Journal* seeks submissions for the categories below.

- **Departments (1,000–2,500 words in length, not including references):** These shorter articles should offer specific classroom practices that are grounded in research and can easily be implemented by readers. Submit to any of the following departments:
 - Songs & Poetry
 - Instructional Ideas to Support Diverse Learners
 - Children’s and Young Adult Literature in the Classroom
 - Digital Literacies and Innovative Classroom Practices
 - Effective Writing Instruction
- **Feature Articles (3,000–4,000 words in length, not including references):** These articles may include descriptions of instructional practices based on theory, research, and/or practical experience; research based on original investigations, commentaries on, or analyses of issues related to literacy practice; and profiles or interviews of literacy professionals, authors, and illustrators of children’s books.

We are especially interested in hearing from Colorado teachers who are willing to share classroom practices and ideas on how they are dealing with and/or incorporating 191/Teacher Effectiveness, READ Act, and Common Core.

For detailed information about submitting to the *Journal*, visit CCIRA.org, click on the “Resources” tab, and then select *Colorado Reading Journal*.



The *Colorado Reading Journal* is published twice a year by the Colorado Council International Reading Association as a professional benefit of membership. A single copy can be purchased for \$5. Remittances should be made payable to CCIRA and sent to Suzette Youngs, *Colorado Reading Journal*, McKee Hall 310, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639. Although the *Journal* is supported financially by CCIRA, advertisements are sold on a first-come, first-served basis to offset costs. For more information, contact Suzette Youngs at coloradoreadingjournal@gmail.com. For CCIRA membership information, contact Amy Ellerman at coloradoreadingjournal@gmail.com. The cost of a consolidated membership is \$35 per year and includes membership in both your local and state councils. For more information about CCIRA, visit our website: www.ccira.org.



The Power of Multicultural Mathematics Picturebooks

Stacy Loyd, Jenni Harding-DeKam, and Boni Hamilton

Multicultural mathematics books invite young mathematicians to engage with books in aesthetic and efferent ways.

Culturally responsive mathematics teachers take the student's worldview, cultural reference, and history into consideration when planning and implementing math instruction. Furthermore, such instructors create a framework for understanding math in which cultures are valued and students can see themselves (regardless of their culture or socioeconomic status) as mathematicians. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2012) endorses the belief that "all students need the opportunity to learn challenging mathematics from a well qualified teacher who will make connections to the background, needs, and cultures of all learners" (p. 2). Culturally responsive mathematics integrates the students' prior knowledge into math instruction in meaningful ways to increase understanding and comprehension. These connections to the students' lives allow mathematics to come alive through real-world associations.

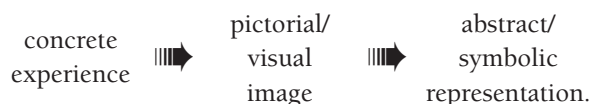
Engaging on different levels, multicultural mathematics books invite young mathematicians to engage with books in aesthetic and efferent ways. While aesthetic interactions are the lived experiences the book facilitates, efferent reading focuses on the knowledge or information gained from the experience with the book. Aesthetic and efferent involvement with text may be seen as the end of a continuum, along which young children's interactions with text may range (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Aesthetically, multicultural picturebooks represent a unique art form in children's literature, because they encompass artistic and imaginative representations of the variety of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups around the world. Through these books, young children can develop awareness and understanding of cultural groups outside

of their own. For children from nondominant cultures, the books also can affirm their own cultural identities (Mendoza & Reese, 2001). In other words, multicultural picturebooks can serve the dual purpose of a mirror to reflect one's own culture and of a window for learning about other cultures (Sims Bishop, 1997).

Multicultural picturebooks extend students' literary experiences beyond the lived experiences of the various members of the learning community. "The characters and situations in books introduce children to what the world may look like through others' eyes and offer a chance to further construct their own views of self and the world" (Mendoza & Reese, 2001, Uses of Children's Literature section, para. 3). With a rich resource of multicultural picturebooks, all members of the learning community can expand their cultural references and worldviews, and color their cognitive histories in pluralistic ways.

As an efferent experience, multicultural picturebooks can be a key component of a culturally responsive mathematics curriculum. A powerful instructional pathway to mathematical thinking is



Multicultural mathematics picturebooks can build upon students' concrete experiences and provide authentic support during the visual phase of mathematical understanding (Murphy, 1999). Such books motivate students to learn, provide a meaningful context for mathematics, celebrate it as a language, demonstrate that math develops from human experience, foster the development of number

Table 1. Guiding questions for book selection

• Does the text possess literary qualities: coherent plot, relatable characters, authentic setting, and clear theme?
• Does the book represent a positive view of authentic cultural traditions, realistic everyday life, and/or accurate historical events from the perspective of the cultural group?
• Are the themes and values of the book consistent with the culture of the characters?
• Does the picturebook accurately represent the mathematics concept and promote mathematical thinking?
• Does the picturebook move students toward meeting grade-level mathematics expectations and standards?
• Can the mathematical concept be taught in a culturally relevant way through the book?
• Do the illustrations support and extend the text features, cultural authenticity, and mathematics concepts?

sense, and integrate mathematics into other curriculum areas (Whiten & Wilde 1992, 1995; Raymond, 1995; Jennings, 1992; Clarke, 2002; Shatzer, 2008).

Many teachers are required to meet the Common Core standards in mathematics and the English language arts. These standards encourage teachers to make interdisciplinary connections as students learn mathematical concepts in real-world contexts. They require students to read, write, and discuss ideas. Picturebooks can be a powerful vehicle for providing the necessary meaningful context for learning (see appendix).

Selecting Inviting Books

Multicultural picturebooks portray people who have been marginalized in society. In addition to people from diverse cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds, such books can encompass people whose gender, sexual orientation, or disability separate them from mainstream society (Salas, Lucido, & Canales, 2001). While any picturebook may show illustrations of diverse people, multicultural books depict cultural aspects that teach about the diversity of people.

Selecting picturebooks to support both multicultural learning and mathematics conversation requires thoughtfulness and sensitivity because books must be evaluated for literary quality, multicultural representation, and mathematical content. Teachers need rigorous criteria for choosing multicultural mathematics picturebooks (see Tables 1 and 2 for a more detailed set of questions). A book that stereotypes a culture or misrepresents a mathematics concept may defeat the purpose of using multicultural mathematics picturebooks.

Selecting picturebooks to support both multicultural learning and mathematics conversation requires thoughtfulness and sensitivity.



Serving Two Purposes

This article demonstrates how one kindergarten teacher used a multicultural mathematics book to serve two purposes: (1) giving children a window into another culture and (2) opening space for children to think mathematically.

The students in Stacy Loyd's classroom are white and have limited experiences with other cultural groups. To build awareness of and appreciation for cultural diversity, Loyd often uses multicultural literature with the students. Active transactions with picturebooks are a regular learning experience in this learning community. During each



Table 2. Considerations for multicultural mathematics picturebook selections

Multicultural mathematics picturebooks must be evaluated for suitability on several levels: as a blend of literature, multicultural representation, and mathematical content.

Literary considerations:

- Does the text possess literary qualities: coherent plot (which may be simple), relatable characters, authentic setting, and clear theme?
- Do the illustrations support and extend the text features?
- Does the text with illustrations provide sufficient complexity to generate curiosity?

Multicultural considerations:

- Is the setting—whether depicting everyday living, cultural traditions, or historical events—authentic and realistic?
- Are characters portrayed positively within their cultures?
- Are themes and values consistent with the culture?
- Does the picturebook avoid stereotyping cultural groups?
- Are historical events, if included, presented accurately from the perspective of the cultural group?
- Does the picturebook reflect cultural diversity as an asset?
- Are the illustrations authentic, realistic, and positive *from the perspective of the cultural group*?

Mathematics considerations:

- Does the picturebook accurately represent the mathematics concept?
- Does the book promote mathematical thinking?
- Does the text provide multiple entry points for mathematics conversation?
- Are the illustrations mathematically accurate and sufficiently complex to invite conversation about mathematics?

Multicultural mathematics picturebook considerations:

- Can the mathematical concept be taught in a culturally relevant way through the book?
- Do the illustrations support and extend the text features, cultural authenticity, and math concepts?
 - Does the picturebook move students toward meeting grade-level expectations and standards?

read-aloud experience, these kindergarten learners are invited to orally share their “noticings” and “wonderings” as they collectively interpret literary art. Loyd chose the book *One Leaf Rides the Wind* (Mannis, 2002) to engage students in mathematics thinking and multicultural understanding. *One Leaf* won the 2003 International Reading Association award as best picturebook. As children’s literature, the complex text, composed of both lyrical haikus and factual explanations of cultural practices, is enhanced by the lush illustrations that convey the peace and tranquility of Japanese gardens. As a multicultural text, the book presents cultural practices in an authentic and realistic setting of a traditional tea garden. This is not representation of everyday life but rather an opportunity to explore and appreciate elements of traditional Japanese culture. The mathematical content provides multiple entry points for students, including counting, composing and decomposing numbers, and patterns. Overall, the book achieves a well-balanced representation of literature, culture, and mathematics.

Kindergartners’ Experience with *One Leaf*

After completing their daily calendar routine, 20 kindergartners gathered on the reading carpet and began orally sharing their noticings as the teacher held up Celeste Mannis and Susan Hartung’s beautiful picturebook. Even though it was during “mathematics time” and the title privileges mathematics by beginning with “One,” these young mathematicians (student names are pseudonyms) did not approach the text mathematically.

Mike: I notice that the setting is not United States. I think it is China.

Loyd: Excellent noticing, Mike. You are right; the setting is not United States. It is a beautiful garden in Japan.

Susan: (looking at the cutout image on the back cover) I notice that it is going to be an adventure story, because the little girl is trying to get the leaf and the leaf is blowing up too high.

Loyd: Yes, [reading the text at the top of the back cover], “One Leaf rides the Wind. Quick as I am, it’s quicker! Just beyond my grasp.”

Sky: (*coming up and touching the brown leaf on the back cover*) It’s silly that you are reading a fall book in the springtime.

As the teacher, Loyd was excited that their initial observations were not mathematical. Students were approaching the text not as a math learning activity but as a story to be experienced. A cultural journey to be celebrated.

In a calm, quiet tone, Loyd slowly began to read the poetic text written in haiku.

One leaf rides the wind.
Quick as I am, it’s quicker!
Just beyond my grasp.

Loyd continued reading, giving students ample time to explore Hartung’s illustrations before turning each page. To promote an aesthetic reading of the poetic text, she chose not to read the informational cultural text at the bottom of each page during this first reading.

Students quietly listened to the first five poems. However, upon seeing the sixth image the mathematics conversation began.

Outside the teahouse,
Six wooden sandals gathered
Neatly in a row.

Brad: There’s six sandals. She’s holding part of them and part of them are on the ground.

Lily: There’s more on the ground.

Levi: You can count them by twos.

Mark: There is two more kids inside.

Loyd: How do you know?

Mark: Because there are four shoes outside.

Loyd: How do you know they are kids’ shoes?

Mark: Because they are the same size as the girls.

Sarah: Why is she wearing socks with flip-flops?

Katie: I have a wondering. Why is she taking her shoes off in the garden?

Read-Alouds Part of Curriculum

By this time in the year, interactive read-alouds (Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey, 2004) were a natural part of the kindergarten learning community. The mathematical conversations did not need to be teacher directed, because picturebooks and read-alouds are natural parts of the mathematics curriculum. Students had been practicing the cognitive and linguistic tools of “noticing” and “wondering,” which leads to rich conversations that strengthen mathematical understandings. Statements by the teacher typically clarified or revoiced students’ contributions.

The first reading of the text was completed without any more mathematics conversations. Immediately upon finishing the text, students requested Loyd read it again. “This time let’s see the author’s and illustrator’s mathematics thinking,” said one student. Each page guided a conversation about the mathematics the students were seeing displayed in the rich illustrations.



For example,

On a lacquered tray
Seven sweet surprises lie.
Hungry tummies growl.

Shalya: You can see the garden out the window.

Benjamin: What kind of food is it?

Loyd reads the informational note at the bottom of the page.

Every movement and gesture of the tea ceremony reflects the principles of harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility. The tea master prepares frothy green tea and a simple meal. Sweet cakes made from rice, soybean paste, or pureed chestnuts are molded into the shapes of seasonal flowers, fruits, and leaves and served after the meal.

Loyd: They are little sweet rice treats.

Aden: (*counts out loud the seven treats*) [It was nice to be able to have a category of items that were not visually identical].

Jake: The girl gets three and the bird gets three, and one is left over.

Susan: Maybe the green thing is just a decoration so that there is none left over.

Sarah: Is the tea for the bird too?

Katie: I notice the tea cups are different from ours. They look shorter and don't have a little thing to hang on to.

Levi: I think they are more round so they still have good capacity.

Mike: I thought the tea was green?

Susan: Maybe that is just the kind of tea, not a real color.

The culminating section of the story not only results in the little girl being quick enough to grab the leaf but provides a panoramic view of the entire garden complete with all the items counted in the book. This provided an excellent summative counting experience for the young learners.

After completing the mathematical reading of the text, Mike asked Loyd to read it again so we could discover "the real information about Japan." This third reading gave students an opportunity to learn more about the Japanese garden as a contemplative place that is an important part of a beautiful culture rich with mathematics. Multiple readings of multicultural math books are opportunities to strengthen literary and mathematical understandings. Each reading creates new opportunities for students to notice and wonder aloud about additional aspects of the book. These multiple readings can occur over time or collectively during one mathematics period. After these three readings, the book went into the book basket, from which children are free to borrow, and individual students explored it—counting, comparing, talking, and thinking about mathematics and Japanese gardens.

Conclusion

As teachers continue to meet the Common Core standards, multicultural picturebooks can facilitate interdisciplinary connections between mathematics and the English language arts in real-world contexts. As students view, read, and discuss ideas presented in the multicultural picturebooks, they are invited to value mathematics and practice problem solving as they explore a variety of mathematical concepts in culturally responsive ways.





Stacy Loyd has been a classroom teacher for more than 20 years and is academic dean at Heritage Christian School in Fort Collins. Stacy earned an Ed.D. from the University of Northern Colorado with an emphasis in reading. She enjoys promoting reading for pleasure and facilitating aesthetic read-aloud experiences for learners of all ages.



Dr. Jenni Harding-DeKam is a former elementary school teacher and instructional technology specialist. Jenni currently coordinates the Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Education Licensure Program, working with multiple partner schools across Colorado. She is passionate in several areas of education, including mathematics instruction, quality instruction for children, improving teacher education, diversity in classrooms (including ethnomathematics and multicultural picturebooks), culturally responsive classrooms, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning for English learners, and doctoral advising.



Boni Hamilton has taught all grade levels, pre-K to undergraduate, in multiple settings and content areas. Boni earned an Ed.D. from the University of Northern Colorado with an emphasis in elementary education and a dissertation focus on students' self-concepts in writing. She is now halfway through a Ph.D. program at the University of Colorado Denver where her focus is urban education and mathematics. Her second book on integrating technology in schools is in publication and due out in early 2015.

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Appendix. Colorado Academic Standards Addressed

Using multicultural picturebooks creates a thematic learning experience where several content areas are learned at once. This specific lesson addresses the following standards.

- **Mathematics:** Students compose and decompose quantity to build the foundation of addition and subtraction, create problem models that reveal relationships and meaning, and solve problems through the creative use of imagination.
- **Language arts:** Students explore texts and illustrations to find answers to questions of interest, communicate their ideas, and use evidence to support, challenge, or change thinking.
- **Social studies:** Students ask questions, share information, and discuss ideas to understand how the lives of people are similar and different, apply knowledge of geography to interpret texts and actions, and consider how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places.
- **Science:** Students understand how living things interact with each other and their environment.
- **Visual arts:** Students observe, analyze, recognize, and evaluate visual information to connect to their communities and recognize multiple interpretations of art elements and design.

The combination of these standards allows for a complex and profound learning experience for kindergarten students.



From Gamers to Readers: How to Engage Reluctant Readers

Courtney Luce and Charles Luce

Based on research, adolescent boys are less likely to read or score well on national and international reading assessments, but one teacher found success using video games to “sell” reading to his eighth graders.

I am often in awe of my husband's teaching. Because we are both secondary language-arts teachers, conversations in our house are often filled with ideas and problem solving to help each of us in our classrooms. I confess, though, my ideas are always pragmatic and simplistic, and his are progressive and creative. I know this not just based on what he tells me, but because I have been in his room when he is teaching. If you walk into Chuck Luce's eighth grade reading classroom, it resembles more of a coffee shop than a traditional classroom.

Kids recline in loveseats, feet up on the edges, books in hand, engrossed in text. This is not sustained silent reading like when kids pretend to read texts in a quiet reading room. Many of us have had our fair share of struggles with students in these environments. They mindlessly flip through the book or hold steady at the same page for 20 minutes, eyes glazed over and with their minds somewhere else. Reluctant readers are reluctant to read no matter what the situation. But last year, Chuck, with the help of his student teacher Jake Yergert, found a way to engage even his most reluctant eighth-grade boys. Now, during silent reading time, his students speed through pages and when they are done talk excitedly about what they have read.

A simple Google search will show the lack of a positive link between boys and reading. Searching “Boys and Reading” brings up some telling sites such as “Boys and

Reading: Is there any hope?” or “Why boys don't read” and “Me read? No way!” Based on research, adolescent boys are less likely to read or score well on national and international reading assessments than their female peers, and the gender gap continues to grow as they get older. In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report (2012) based on Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores, boys were behind girls in reading by one full year regardless of the country or

socioeconomic status. From this report, it is clear that it is not just American boys who have fallen behind but boys in all industrialized nations. While the current buzz seems to deal with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2013), gender gaps in reading far outweigh the gender gaps in math and science. In fact, an abundance of

*An abundance of research
is beginning to show that
the educational gender gap
is growing because of
literacy problems.*



research is beginning to show that the educational gender gap is growing because of literacy problems. Boys comprise a smaller representation on college campuses at all degree levels but a larger percentage of dropout rates at all levels (Whitmire & Bailey, 2010).

This is not to say that the issue is not recognized. In fact innumerable researchers are attempting to deal with the “reluctant boy/male reader.” Suggestions include reading more with toddler boys. Two economists, Michael Baker and Kevin Milligan, in a National Bureau of Economic Research

(2013) paper, demonstrate that parents read, on average, 100 hours more per year with female preschoolers than with male. These economists blame this disparity in literacy in large part to struggles and gaps in schooling and even with later financial strife.

Other reading professionals believe the issue is in the texts—from the types that schools choose (narrative versus informational or classics versus contemporary) to the ones popular in society (vampire texts versus sports novels). Jon Scieszka (2014) writes on his website that males do not read because they struggle to find books that interest them. Author Robert Lipsyte (2011) shares the sentiment by claiming that “Books with story lines about disease, divorce, death and dysfunction sold better for girls than did similar books for boys” and that this changed the landscape of what gets published in young adult fiction. Publishers buy what people read, and right now girls are reading.

Many websites are trying to tap into readers’ common themes and intertextual connections. Amazon.com and Goodreads.com cross-reference texts all the time. If you purchase a book you like on Amazon, the site suggests other books by stating “Customers who bought this also bought ...” These recommendations are great after you are able to get books into students’ hands to make these connections. However, with reluctant readers the teacher has to help find that first book a student may like.

Chuck and Jake were trying to make that first connection and get into their students’ hands books that would inspire them to read other books. However, many of their boys were not reading any books for fun. These two teachers—manly, hairy, football-watching men who would describe themselves as avid readers—were struggling to connect to the boys in their own classroom. They both modeled reading and tried to sell adventurous plot lines and courageous characters, but neither teacher made an impact on their reluctant male readers. Then one day, by accident, they made a difference.

Finding Common Ground

Jake, trying to learn the ropes of teaching, did what he could to try to build rapport with students. Being an avid reader from an upper-middle-class community, he sometimes struggled to find common ground with readers in his classroom. However, like many young men, he was interested in video games. One day, while talking to C.W., Jake brought up some of his favorite video games. Suddenly, they were speaking the same language and realized they had much more in common than either thought. Then Jake asked C.W. what his favorite books were, and C.W. said, “I can never find a book to read.” From that conversation, Jake saw an opportunity. By knowing which

video games C.W. played, Jake had an idea of what interested him. From there he was able to suggest books that had similar themes and topics to the games C.W. was playing. Jake began to post a category on the white board that said “From Gamers to Readers.” Every day he was in the class, he would write “If you like [video game title], then you would love reading [book title].”

Chuck began to bring this type of exchange into his conversations with readers in other places, such as conversations in the library or lunchroom. He explains what one of these discussions looked like:

After the initial encounter with C.W., we quickly saw there were endless possibilities using this method of reaching out to recommend books to all readers. For instance if students liked certain storylines in TV shows or movies, we could list off-book titles that probably inspired the TV show or movie. Here is an exchange that occurred on one of the biweekly library check-out days:

Chuck: Did you find something to check out yet?

Student: No, there’s nothing good here.

Chuck: What!? Nothing? How can this be?

Student: Well, nothing I think is good.

Chuck: If you weren’t at school right now, what would you be doing?

Student: Playing video games at home.

Chuck: Which one?

Student: *Halo*.

Chuck: What do you like about it?

Student: Well, the fighting part, but I also like trying to solve the missions. I also like how you pretty much play from two perspectives.

Chuck: Sounds cool. So you like things that have different perspectives, missions, and fighting?

Student: Yeah, pretty much.

Chuck: Well, I know we don’t have the *Halo* books in this library but I have another book suggestion that has all those things you mentioned. The book is *Legend* by Marie Lu. Let’s go read the back of it.

I had to talk the student through what he liked about the video game because I wasn’t

Table 1. Titles cross-referenced in class

If you like this video game...	Then you'll love these books!
<i>Elder Scrolls/Skyrim</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> by J.R.R. Tolkien • <i>The Hobbit</i> by J.R.R. Tolkien • <i>Eragon/Inheritance</i> cycle by Christopher Paolini • The Wheel of Time series by Robert Jordan • Redwall series by Brian Jacques • <i>Eyes of the Dragon</i> by Stephen King
<i>Assassin's Creed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Way of Shadows</i> trilogy by Brent Weeks • <i>The Guns of the South</i> by Harry Turtledove • <i>The Doomsday Book</i> by Connie Willis • <i>The Thief Lord</i> by Cornelia Funke
<i>Halo</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Halo</i> novelizations by Eric Nylund • <i>Ender's Game</i> by Orson Scott Card • <i>Legend</i> by Marie Lu. • <i>The Supernaturalist</i> by Eoin Colfer
<i>Bioshock</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anthem</i> by Ayn Rand • <i>Atlas Shrugged</i> by Ayn Rand • <i>Brave New World</i> by Aldous Huxley • <i>Metro 2033</i> by Dmitry Glukhovsky • The Dark Tower series by Stephen King
<i>Half-Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brave New World</i> by Aldous Huxley • <i>1984</i> by George Orwell • <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> by Ray Bradbury • <i>A Clockwork Orange</i> by Anthony Burgess • <i>The Thief of Always</i> by Clive Barker

familiar with *Halo*. Once he began telling me the components of the game, I instantly started thinking about books that could work. From there we would just channel our inner cheesy infomercial selves, saying to students “If you liked [blank], you’d love [blank].”

It worked. Soon kids who had not been reading were checking out these titles from the library. Jake and Chuck both loved the results they were seeing and decided to create a chart in their class to use as a reference. C.W., who told us he could never find anything to read, said, “Now I use ‘if you like ... then you’ll love ...’ chart whenever I’m done with a book and need to find a new book.” C.W. is now a gamer and a reader. He is not the only one. Suddenly students were choosing books from the chart, adding their own ideas, and making amendments to the chart. This visual even sparked great conversations about text. As students read books from the list, they would argue about whether the book was anything like the video

game. Children who had not been reading texts were suddenly having in-depth discussions about theme, plot, characters, and setting. Table 1 shows some of the titles they cross-referenced in their class.

What You Can Do in Your Classroom

Video games aren’t the only media that teachers can use; teachers can also pull from popular themes in movies, television shows, or other forms of pop culture that intrigue students. Oftentimes we limit students by selecting books by categories, such as athletes like books about sports and musicians like books about music. However, by finding out their other interests and specifically what types of media the students are already consuming, teachers may expand the text recommendations they make to their readers. Here is what this might look like in your class.

Take an interest inventory. Survey your students to find out what themes and topics they enjoy in other

Table 2. Literary elements found in video games

Game	Literary elements	Concepts
<i>Skyrim</i> (<i>Elder Scrolls</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous quests • Antagonist: Alduin, the world eater • Underlying major conflict that needs to be resolved • Character development through improving their skills • Played in first- and third-person perspectives • Complex plot with twists • Opportunity to interact with other characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character classism • Independence from imperialism • Civil war • Capital punishment • Self-improvement
<i>Assassin's Creed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quests/missions push forward the plot • Interactions with historical figures • Complex/engaging plot • Flashbacks • Played in first- and third-person perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knights Templar • Megacorporations • Capitalism • Ancestral lineage • King Richard I • Geography of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Masyaf – Jerusalem – Acre – Damascus • Parkour
<i>BioShock</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-person perspective • Story propelled by completion of objectives • Utopias • Moral dilemmas • 1960s setting • Surprising plot twists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character classism • Sole survivor of major catastrophe • Artwork inspired by the art deco period • Storyline based on the idea of objectivism by Ayn Rand in <i>Atlas Shrugged</i>
<i>Call of Duty</i> (<i>Modern Warfare 2</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-person perspective • Story propelled by completion of campaigns • Flashbacks and foreshadowing • Plot twists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil War • Geography of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Middle East – United Kingdom – Azerbaijan – Russia – Ukraine • British SAS commandos • Coup d'état • Black operations • Assassinations • Ultranationalism

types of media. Ask questions like: Which television show is your favorite? What do you like about it (characters, topics, themes, etc.)? What is your favorite type of movie (action, romance, comedy, drama)? Why do you like these types of movies? What types of video games do you play? Which game is your favorite? When you read, what types of media or themes hold your interest (books, magazines, Facebook articles, blogs, etc.)?

Find common ground. Books are based on common themes and topics found in all media in which teens are engaged. If the interest inventory shows they have a strong desire to play video games that deal with war and strategy, then identify books that do the same (see Table 2). Work with other teachers and the media specialist in your school to try to find good text matches for what interests your students. For example, if a student enjoys spending time on Facebook and watching movies that involve gossip, a teacher can cross-reference the *Pretty Little Liars* series on a chart in his or her class.

Build a reference board. This board should be placed in an open space where students can easily access it. On the board the teacher should put popular themes and ideas from the interest inventory and cross-reference them by stating “If you like [movie title, television show, or video game title], then you might also like [book title].”

Make the board expandable and interactive. This could be an opportunity to further build a literacy community in your classroom. Add to the list as you get ideas from reading, other teachers, and your media specialist, and allow students to add to the list as they read new titles.

Send a list home to parents. As your list grows, you could send a list home so that parents can help support their readers or maybe even find books that will interest them.

Tap into the power of recommendations in your class. Once you start to amass titles, begin to promote them through engaging book talks. When Chuck finishes a book, he presents it to his class, and then the sales pitch begins. He again taps into the infomercial salesman, holding up the book and telling students “Whoa! I just finished/started this book, and all I can say is wow! If you like _____, then you will love this book!” Then he starts to give them a bit of exposition and the book’s conflict to hook them. This whole pitch comes with dramatic pauses and overblown expressions. His whole goal is to get readers interested in the plot so that he can convince them to read it. He says, “No matter what, if I can get books in their hands, then I can sleep at night.”



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Who Wouldn't Want to Read That?

Designing Book Trailers in the Classroom

Kyle Webster

In fourth grade, writing standards are heavily focused on expository writing. Book trailers are a way to introduce this genre in an engaging way.

As a class, we watched the book trailer for *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Riggs (2011). The trailer includes a spectacular presentation of invisible boys and girls who can produce fire, among other peculiarities, and are hiding from some terrible evil. Its multimodal ensemble entices viewers to read the book. As one student announced, "Who wouldn't want to read that?" My students' excitement was testament to the power of book trailers and the multimodality, in which a combination of sounds and images make the book alluring.

A book trailer unit is supported by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), in which students create multimodal compositions that can enhance their learning and comprehension. Specifically, my students were able to "add audio recordings and visual displays to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas and themes" (CCSS: RWC 1.1e "Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely" [CCSS: RWC 3.1b.v]). This unit provided an avenue for my students to choose high-interest engaging literature and share their love of great books with their peers through multimodal composing.

In fourth grade, our writing standards are heavily focused on expository writing. Book trailers are a way to introduce this genre in an engaging way. I established the

objectives and used my reader's and writer's workshops as instructional time. Objectives or "I Can" statements included

- I can create a book trailer that is written for an intended audience and for a very specific purpose.
- I can distinguish the differences between design elements and the genre of a book trailer.
- I can communicate information and ideas to an audience using a variety of tools (word choice, details, design elements, etc.) and multiple media resources (text, graphics, video, and audio).

Introducing the Unit

In my reader's workshop, I had the students look at the book trailers as readers, but in the writer's workshop they viewed them as writers. I introduced the book trailer unit by showing my students a variety of book trailers, including one for *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (Riggs, 2011). I then showed the students a trailer I made for Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (2012) and told them that they would be making something like this. To get students thinking about the genre, I began by asking them what they noticed about the trailer.

Before they created their own, we needed to analyze the elements of a book trailer. We looked at the mentor book trailers and listed the characteristics: music, text, pictures/illustrations, book cover, author/title, credits, critical review, author/book website, transitions, narration, time, emotion, video.

After unpacking the mentor trailers, each student was given a Chromebook and then instructed to go to my



Scan the QR code to watch a trailer for *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*.

Directions to Create a YouTube Channel

Creating an account

1. Go to www.youtube.com.
2. Click the blue sign-in button.
3. Create an account.
4. You are ready to use YouTube!

Uploading a video

1. Go to www.youtube.com.
2. "Upload" in top right-hand corner.
3. Select the files you want to upload and choose "private."
4. When you have selected the files you want, you can add the title, description, thumbnails, and more for the video.
5. Press the blue "publish" button when the video is done processing.
6. Enjoy your videos!

YouTube channel (See sidebar for directions on how to create a YouTube Channel) where I uploaded exemplars and past trailers made by former students. We then immersed ourselves in a study of book trailers, reading and viewing them. The students wrote down what they noticed in each and added the following to the characteristics list:

- showed the book cover
- named the author
- had music of some sort
- had narration

We talked about the differences between elements within the exemplars; for example, how the transitions were not about the content but enhance the design. We discussed what would happen if we took away the transitions

Table 1. Anchor chart

Genre elements	Design elements
Reviews	Transitions
Author/title	Music
Text	Pictures/illustrations
Emotion	Video
Author/book website	Narration
Credits	Time

and whether it would impact the meaning of the trailer. These discussions led students to understand that design and content work together but are not the same. As a class we developed the anchor chart (Table 1).

We discussed the purpose of the book trailer, and the class came to the consensus that it was to persuade someone to read that book. We then analyzed the design elements—the music, photographs, and so forth—and how they enhanced the book trailer and were used within this genre. To unpack design characteristics and genre characteristics a little more, we used the Modality Checklist (Williams, 2014) from the *Colorado Reading Journal* Summer 2014 edition. The students used this list to check off their own observations, and we ended the discussion with how the entire "ensemble" worked to help create an appealing trailer. The class determined that if one of the modes was missing from the trailer, the appeal of the book would diminish. The more elements the trailer had from the checklist, the more that students were persuaded to read the book. When they created their own trailers, the students used the checklist as a guide.

Collaborating to Make a Book Trailer

To model the process, I read aloud *The Spider and the Fly*, based on the poem by Mary Howitt and illustrated by Tony DiTerlizzi (2002). As a class, we then explored the use of golden lines (Litcircles.org). A golden line is a direct quote or line from a piece of literature that is meaningful, thought provoking or surprising, and promotes an individual's overall understanding of the book. They help students develop a deeper meaning that they later incorporated into their trailers. The following lists the students' choices for golden lines from *The Spider and the Fly*:

- "Will you come into my parlor?" said the Spider to the Fly.
- "For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."
- "I have a little looking-glass upon my parlor shelf, if you'd step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."
- So he wove a subtle web in a little corner sly, and set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.
- Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.

We then did a word storm (Serafini & Serafini-Youngs, 2006), which helps the students pull out the themes of the book to gain more understanding of the meaning. In a word storm, students generate a list of words

Table 2. Word storm for *The Spider and the Fly*

Vanity	Convince
Wit	Cunning
Persuasiveness	Deceiving
Thoughtless	Smart
Suspicious	Scary
Ferocious	Selfish
Cleverness	Trickster
Rumor	Dead
Fearless	

that represent their interpretation of a piece of literature. See Tables 2 and 3 for examples of whole-class word storms.

Next I conducted a mini-lesson about theme and what the book is trying to get the reader to think about, combining the ideas from the golden lines and the word storm. While the word storm discovered themes, the golden lines highlighted quotes from the text that meant something to the reader.

Creating Their Own

After working to identify the genre and the design features, I had the students choose their favorite books. Experts on their books, they knew a lot about the genre, characters, plot, and other elements. The students then chose golden lines and did a word storm identifying the themes of their books.

The next step in this unit was to have the students view different trailers for their books. We went to the computer lab and searched on YouTube. Their assignment was to look at what other creators put in their trailers and to decide if the trailer persuaded them to read the book. As designers, they analyzed them to determine if the trailer was a summary of the plot or if it included interpretations. They made lists on Google Docs of what they noticed and referred to them later in the unit.

After they looked at the book trailers, we returned to the students' individual books and created scripts for their book trailers using the word storm and the golden lines. Many of my students struggled with creating a script that demonstrated their interpretation as opposed to writing a summary. For example, Emma (all names are pseudonyms) used the words from her word storm and golden lines for her book trailer of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (Lewis &

Table 3. Word storm for *Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures*, by Kate DiCamillo and K.G. Campbell

Almost like a silent movie
Comics—taken from the book
Music—jazz (mystery), “For You” by Phillip Phillips
Book cover
Quotes from critics
Vacuum
Onomatopoeia
Main characters introduced
HOLY BAGUMBA!
Holy unanticipated occurrences!
Did not give away much of the plot
Author Kate DiCamillo
Moving pictures
Sound effects
Narration
Illustrator
Summary of the book, at least what happened to Ulysses
Questions
Award winning
Natural-born cynic
Cat, parakeet, typewriter, doughnut, poetry

Baynes, 1995): “It all started with a wardrobe. Four siblings. One prophecy. One evil. Betrayal. A war. Will they survive? ... ‘And of course you want to know what happened to Edmund.’” Emma used the words *wardrobe*, *siblings*, *prophecy*, *evil*, *betrayal*, *survive*, *war*, and a golden line—all pulled from her word storm and her golden lines (see Figure 1).

Once I approved the script, they were able to begin storyboarding (Williams, 2014), which uses sketches and words to map out each scene of the movie in order to plan the movie. Students revised and edited before they began designing trailers with iMovie.

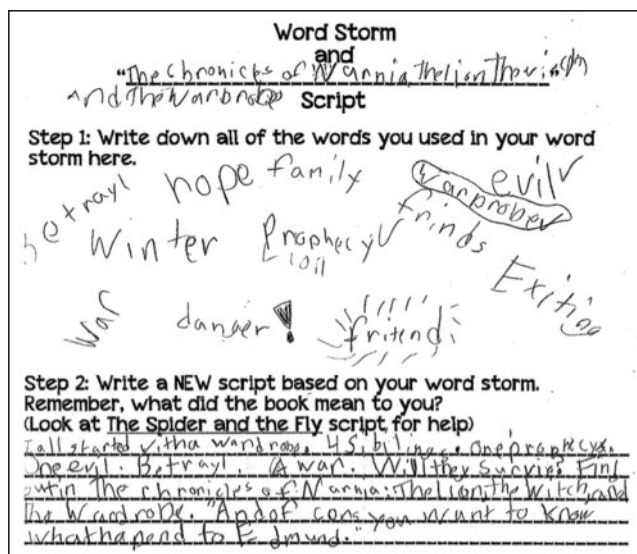


Figure 1. Emma's work

Utilizing iMovie

Once the storyboards were finished, our class went to the computer lab every day to work on the trailers. During the first mini-lesson in the technology lab, I worked collaboratively with the technology teacher to show the students the basics of iMovie and what design features were available. The design options for iMovie were transitions, titles, maps and backgrounds, and sound effects. Our technology teacher then reviewed the technology “I Cans” that are associated with creating an iMovie, such as “I can find relevant, high-quality graphics to use in my book trailer” and “I can bookmark my graphics to create credits later” (Figure 2).

I gave free rein to the students on that first day to create whatever they wanted. Their learning target for the day was, “I can familiarize myself with the design elements of iMovie.” The technology teacher instructed the students in how to get pictures from the Internet. After only one hour working with iMovie, the students had created ensembles of music, backgrounds, images, text, and transitions.

The students then began collecting pictures, creating skeletons for their trailers, finding book reviews from critics, discovering music that fit the mood, and editing/revising. As the students began to collect their pictures, we conducted a mini-lesson on how to bookmark the pictures so students could easily trace the sources for their credits. We reviewed the relevant terms—*high quality* and *pixels*; 600×400 or higher pixels work the best with trailers or else the pictures get too blurry. At this point, the students were self-sufficient and I provided support only as needed.

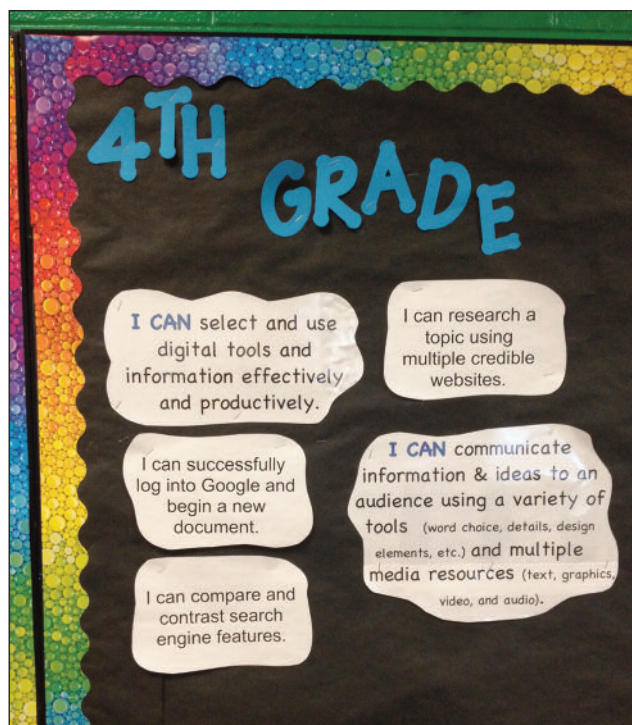


Figure 2. Technology standards for fourth grade

Publishing the Book Trailer

When the students were ready to publish, we went through a checklist of items that included length (at least one minute), book cover, reviews, website, author/illustrator, grammar, and the “Does it make sense?” question. I then had them “share” the movie as a computer file. Finally, the students “dropped” it into a shared folder that I could access in the classroom.

The students reflected on their work and their growth as learners. Using the computer camera feature (Photo Booth), students recorded their thoughts on their favorite aspects of making book trailers, what they would change next time, and how this helped them with writing. To complete the unit, we published the trailers by posting them on YouTube. I uploaded each video and created a playlist of the trailers, which I then shared on my website.



Scan the QR code to see the Room 205 book trailer playlist.

Room 205 Film Festival

For the culminating activity, we had a film festival in the classroom, complete with popcorn and drinks. This

was a chance for the students to show off what they created and to hold a question-and-answer session about the trailer and book. I invited parents, the principal, and other classes so students could share what they learned and entice others to read their books.

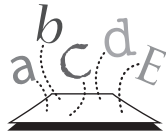
I enjoyed teaching this unit and I saw growth in comprehension, their familiarity with technology, speaking skills, persuasive writing technique, and their love of reading. I encourage all teachers to embark on the Book Trailer adventure.



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Crafting Writing With Brush Strokes

Julie E. Schrauben

In this article, I share my experiences teaching students to write descriptively by using writing strategies called brush strokes.

Driving through the city, crowded and polluted. Seeing children, small, alone, and hungry begging for money. Looking at children not even ten years old, being a mother towards their younger siblings seeing their expression on their faces, sad and hopeless. Wondering if their [they're] even going to be able to provide food for their brothers and sisters. I'm gazing out my window seeing nothing but poverty. Driving through the city, crowded and polluted.

Cara (not her real name), a ninth grader, created this writing excerpt during the first few weeks of her freshman year. As a reader, I have an intense and strong reaction to this piece. I feel as if I have been granted access to this real or imaginary city that Cara describes. My reaction is partly shaped by Cara's specific word choice, or precise language, the imagery evoked through detail, the smooth flow or cadence within each sentence, and the overall tone of the piece.

How was this writing created or crafted? Cara's demonstration of writing skills is apparent from simply reading her description of driving through a city. A teacher may consider Cara a gifted writer or simply a student who enjoys writing. Regardless of students' backgrounds, skills, or knowledge as writers, English language arts teachers can use specific strategies to assist all writers in creating or crafting writing that speaks to readers. In this article, I will share my experiences teaching students to write descrip-

tively by using writing strategies called brush strokes. I will also discuss using one of Harry Noden's (2011) specific brush strokes, Adjectives-out-of-Order, to teach high school writers about an author's craft.

What Are Brush Strokes?

Noden's brush strokes are five tools that have the potential to improve student writing, especially descriptive writing: Painting With Participles, Painting With Absolutes, Painting With Appositives, Painting With Adjectives-out-of-Order, and Painting With Action-Verbs. Truly, the brush strokes can be used in any kind of writing and across multiple subject areas. Table 1 gives an overview of each stroke.

Many professionals, including writers, use the word *craft* in reference to their work. Although the word elicits ideas of skilled practices such as winemaking, woodworking, painting, or drafting, some authors refer to *craft* artistically when describing their own writing. While various types of craft exist in writing (e.g., the rhythm or cadence of sentences or a strong lead), Noden approaches this topic by exam-

ining a specific aspect of craft, which is grammar.

The modern-day teacher, whether at the elementary or secondary level, may struggle with the concept of diagramming or fill-in-the-blank worksheets in association with teaching grammar. Reflecting on my personal school experiences, I recall how traditional skill-and-drill rote practice of grammar had not increased the length of time

Although craft elicits ideas of skilled practices such as winemaking, woodworking, painting, or drafting, some authors refer to craft artistically when describing their own writing.



Table 1. Brush stroke definitions

Brush Stroke	Definition
Painting With Participles	An “ing” verb placed at the beginning or end of a sentence
Painting With Absolutes	Simply combining a noun with an “ing” participle
Painting With Appositives	A noun that adds a second image to a preceding noun
Painting With Adjectives-out-of-Order	Leaving one adjective in its original place, while shifting two others after the noun
Painting With Action Verbs	Eliminating passive voice and reducing verbs of being (e.g., am, is, was, were, be, being, been). Verbs in passive voice communicate little or no action and tell rather than show.

I wrote, improved how I wrote, or refined a great amount of my writing skills.

Noden’s perspective of the brush strokes juxtaposes typical skill-and-drill ways of learning about and using grammar in writing. He suggests that writers are analogous to painters and that writers paint specific images by using artistic elements of grammar, called brush strokes. Although the brush strokes can be considered traditional features of grammar, I also consider them specific types of an author’s craft that allow writing to become descriptive and vivid. Learning how to write descriptively in multiple contexts is critical because a large cluster of K–12 standards in the Common Core State Standards requires students to demonstrate precise language and phrases, provide relevant descriptive details, and create sensory images (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). The brush strokes offer teachers a versatile means to teach purposeful grammar lessons and to have students apply brush strokes to their writing in a meaningful way.

My Approach to Teaching Strokes

I followed a general approach or pattern as I taught each of the five brush strokes. This pattern, of course, can

be tweaked or adapted to each individual teacher’s needs or the needs of his or her students. As a teaching tool, the brush strokes allow teachers flexibility aside from the typical skill-and-drill practice students often encounter when writing or practicing grammar. In terms of timing, Table 2 outlines the schedule I used while teaching the strokes.

For each lesson, I followed general guidelines of instruction. As Table 2 notes, four sessions were dedicated to the teaching of each brush stroke (two days per week) for 30 minutes. I used a general, repeatable structure for each stroke, a pattern based on elements of strategy instruction.

Strategy instruction is widely renowned as an effective method of teaching that enhances students’ overall quality of writing (De la Paz & Graham, 2002; Englert, 2009; Graham, McKeown, Kiuahara, & Harris, 2012). Elements of this teaching include explicit instruction, modeling, collaboration, and independent practice (Harris, Graham, Mason, & Friedlander, 2008). Teachers choosing to use strategy instruction should find a great amount of flexibility in how particular elements are taught. As I taught, I thought of the brush strokes as anchors for each individual craft lesson. As such, they provide a necessary framework for the development of lesson plans.

Table 2. Brush stroke instructional sessions

Weeks	Craft Lesson	Structure
1–2	Painting With Participles	Four 30-minute instructional sessions, conducted twice per week; a total of two hours of instruction per craft lesson
3–4	Painting With Absolutes	
5–6	Painting With Appositives	
7–8	Painting With Adjectives-out-of-Order	
9–10	Painting With Action Verbs	

Zooming in on Adjectives-out-of-Order

The Adjectives-out-of-Order stroke is one that I believe can change the landscape of a simple sentence. Typically, many student writers will overload descriptive sentences with a string of adjectives that come before the noun they modify (e.g., the robust, intense, and bitter coffee aroma filled the room), and readers often expect this order. However, reading a list of adjectives can become dull and monotonous. Rather, Noden suggests creating interest by shifting adjectives before and after the noun they modify by painting with Adjectives-out-of-Order. Specifically, this stroke uses one adjective before the noun and two after (e.g., the robust coffee aroma, intense and bitter, filled the room). Katie Wood Ray (1999), literacy consultant and writing researcher, explains that shifting or rearranging adjectives creates an unexpected sequence of words.

As I taught this stroke, I encouraged students to use the Adjectives-out-of-Order exactly as Noden describes—

*As I taught, I thought of
the brush strokes as
anchors for each
individual craft lesson.
As such, they provide a
necessary framework for
the development of
lesson plans.*



with one adjective coming before the noun and two adjectives after it. I also encouraged students to be creative and to move or shift adjectives after the noun (e.g., the bull, mean and massive, bucked beneath the cowboy). Another option included moving adjectives after the noun to the end of the sentence (e.g., it was a small office, replete with dust, spider webs, and piles of paper).

As I began the first day of teaching the Adjectives-out-of-Order stroke, I wanted to ensure that elements of strategy instruction were present in my lesson. For example, as part of explicit instruction, each brush stroke was consistently defined, and I provided multiple examples of how the stroke can be applied in writing. I also modeled how this works by highlighting Adjectives-out-of-Order in multiple excerpts of text. Students often sifted through and conducted multiple activities using excerpts of mentor texts. Each day they

also participated in shared and independent writing activities in their Writer's Notebooks. Each student had a personal notebook that was used during lessons to practice the brush strokes, take notes, or experiment with specific in-class activities during shared or guided writing activities.

Table 3. Instructional sessions: painting with Adjectives-out-of-Order

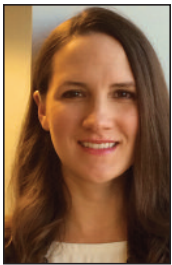
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together we define and discuss adjectives and nouns. • Students read and examine sentences with typical adjective placement (a string of adjectives before the modifying noun). • Class defines Adjectives-out-of-Order and provide example sentences. • Students read from young adult literature excerpts (text pass) that contain Adjectives-out-of-Order from books such as <i>Shift</i> and <i>The Hunger Games</i>. • Students “popcorn” adjectives, and together we write sentences using the brush stroke (shared writing). • Students write independently in their Writer's Notebooks.
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class reviews and discusses the definition of Adjectives-out-of-Order. • I provide students with more examples from texts (e.g., <i>Hatchet</i> and <i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i>). • Students work in groups and create writing with Adjectives-out-of-Order after seeing an object, touching an object, and hearing a clip of music. • Students independently write in their Writer's Notebooks.
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class reviews and discusses Adjectives-out-of-Order and modeling of the brush stroke using a PowerPoint presentation (with examples and non-examples). • Students listen to music, list adjectives, and create writing with a partner, using the brush stroke. • I instruct and review a writing rubric. • Students independently write in any genre.
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class reviews and reflects on the brush stroke and past learning activities associated with it. • We share and celebrate writing (through pair and group share, publishing work online, etc.).

Table 3 provides more detail and insight into how students learned about shifting Adjectives-out-of-Order.

Table 2 illustrates the structure and consistency of each instructional session. This basic structure was repeated as I taught each lesson, although specific shared or guided writing activities varied. While the brush strokes are specific in nature, teachers have wide flexibility in designing and asking students to apply each brush stroke to their personal writing.

Concluding Thoughts

Many teachers have had, or in the future may have, writers like Cara in the classroom. We may also have writers that truly struggle, dislike writing, or simply don't know where to begin. Regardless of the age or ability of a writer, Noden's brush strokes offer teachers a wide range of possibilities for teaching craft in writing, aside from just telling students to "write descriptively" or "add more detail." What do these phrases really mean for writers who are continually learning more about themselves as writers while simultaneously trying to reach specific writing goals? Rather than just assuming that students, especially at the high school level, are competent writers who have amassed a variety of tools, teachers can use the brush strokes as a means to specifically expand their students' descriptive writing repertoire and craft descriptive writing.



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Perfect Attendance: A Musical Salute to Challenging Students

Michael P. Ford

With fall advancing, most teachers are settling in with new groups of students who happen to be their responsibilities this school year. As they continue to get to know these children, they might reflect on the words of P. David Pearson (2009). He looked out at a large audience of teachers and said: “Kids are who they are. They bring what they bring. And we need to stop seeing this as an instructional inconvenience.” Wouldn’t it be great if all students just showed up perfect? But they don’t. As teach-

ers work to identify and address the variations between their students, challenges will surface. Sometimes those children we find most challenging actually are often perfect in one way; they never seem to miss a day of school! Which reminds me of another favorite bit of wisdom from Alfred Tatum (2009): “Folks, if they are showing up every day, you have to teach them!” I have affectionately tried to capture the challenges teachers face in teaching all their children in this song “Perfect Attendance.”

♪♪ Perfect Attendance ♪♪

(Sung to the tune of “Battle Hymn of the Republic”)

I march into my classroom and I see an empty space
I look around my classroom and I do not spot his face
He’s the one that drives me crazy in so many different
ways
Including never missing a day!
I am thinking Alleluia!
Maybe he finally caught the flu-yah!
He might be out for a week or two-yah
And a smile comes across my face

I march up to my blackboard and begin the morning
news
As I hear the door open at the back of my room
The smile on my face quickly disappears
As he shouts, “Hey Teach, mark me here!”
I’m now singing the blues-yah!
Maybe I’m the one who needs the flu-yah!
I could use a day or two-yah
When he’s not invading my space!

To sing along with Mike, go to

<http://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/c26frKefsJ> or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YSCYJarXl8&feature=youtu.be&hd=1>



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Writing From the Heart— And Other Writing Tips

Georgia Heard

Many authors make lists of their top writing habits and truths. I would like to share my own top five writing tips that I try to live and work by.

What are the secrets to writing? Many authors make lists of their top writing habits and truths. Each bit of advice is like a mini-lesson that contains both wisdom and practical guidance for writers of all genres. Often inspired by authors' advice, I like to share and discuss these suggestions with my writing students. For example, when Edwidge Danticat (Chaudhury, 2013) writes, "It might sound corny but listen to your heart. Let that inner voice guide you, the one closest to your truest self," I type it up, tape it on my computer, and live with those words as I write.

I would like to share my own top five writing tips that I try to live and work by.

Writers Write From the Heart

Eloise Greenfield (1986) writes in the last stanza of her poem "Things":

*Wrote me a poem.
Still got it. Still got it.*

In the first stanza, Greenfield describes how the candy that has been eaten disappears; in the second stanza, a sand house is washed away; and, in the last stanza, after the candy and sand house are gone (the "things"), the narrator is left with a poem. I don't think the poet means the piece of paper on which the poem is written. She is alluding to what inspires poetry—and all writing: feelings, thoughts, memories, people, questions, experiences, and observations. These are what matters and, ultimately, what stays with us, and what poetry, and all writing, are about.

*The truth about learning
how to write, which all
writers know, is that you
cannot write well without
having a passion for your
topic and a deep desire to
express and communicate
your ideas, thoughts,
questions, feelings, and
experiences.*



The French writer Albert Camus (Zaretsky, 2012) wrote, "A man's life is nothing but a slow trek to rediscover ... those one or two images in whose presence his heart first opened." How do we know when our hearts first opened except to think back, remember, and feel?

One idea I use to inspire students to open their hearts to writing is called heart mapping, which I first wrote about in my book, *Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School* (Heard, 1998) (and I explore in more detail in my forthcoming book about heart mapping). I begin by sharing my own heart map—what I have stored in my heart: sitting on my grandparents' screened porch in New Hampshire listening to the whip-poorwill's call at dusk; catching crayfish in glass jars from the creek next door and gazing at them; waving white tissues out the car window as we drive down the dirt driveway back to my home in Virginia, my grandparents fading into the distance.

Heart mapping is a powerful writing strategy and can be used for all genres to help students get in touch with those images that Camus writes about.

Here are some questions to help get your students started in creating their own heart maps as preparation and inspiration to write. These questions are only a guideline and are not meant to be "answered." Rather, they may help stimulate discussion and ideas before mapping. Begin by asking your students what has stayed in their hearts:

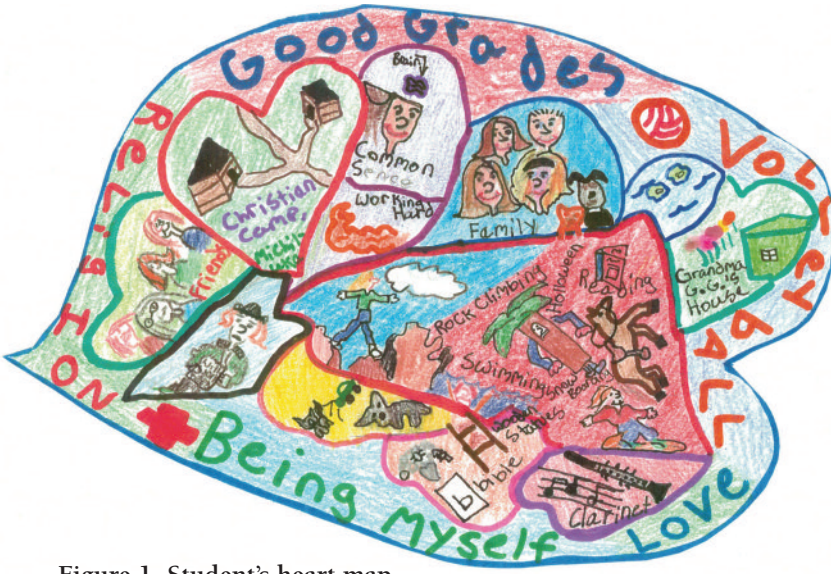


Figure 1. Student's heart map

- What has really affected your heart?
- What people have been important to you?
- What are some experiences or central events that you will never forget?
- What happy or sad memories do you have?
- What secrets have you kept in your heart?
- What small things or objects are important to you—a tree in your backyard, a trophy, a stuffed animal?
- What questions do you have?
- What are some of the observations you have made about the world around you?

In a student's colorful heart map (Figure 1), the important parts of her life surround her heart: *being myself*, *love*, *volleyball*, *good grades*, and *religion*. In the center, her life is divided into picture and word sections that represent what is meaningful to her.

In my son's heart map (Figure 2), which he created when he was in first grade, his heart is bursting with what is important to him. I was so happy to see the two diamonds in the center with the words *my mom*, *my dad*, and *me* because "our love is as strong as diamonds."

I don't have a crystal ball, but the Common Core State Standards may come and go, just like Eloise Greenfield's *things*. However, what will stay with our students is the writing they did that inspired them, which will open their hearts and linger long after *things* have disappeared.

The truth about learning how to write, which all writers know, is that you cannot write well without having a passion for your topic and a deep desire to express and communicate your ideas, thoughts, questions, feelings, and experiences. Young writers may learn the parts of speech, or how to write a competent five-paragraph essay, but, as Robert Frost (1930) said, “No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader.” Whether it is tears, laughter, indignation, or passion, writing from our hearts is the most essential lesson that all writers must learn.

Whatever I choose to write about, it must always come from my inner voice that guides me. I wrote a poem about where I find ideas for poetry:

Where I Find Poetry

I open my eyes and what do I see?
Poetry spinning all around me!

In small ants trailing over the ground,
Bulldozing dry earth into cave and mound.
In a hundred grains of ocean sand,
that I cradle in the palm of my hand.

In a lullaby of April rain,
tapping softly on my window pane.

In trees dancing on a windy day,
when sky is wrinkled and elephant gray.

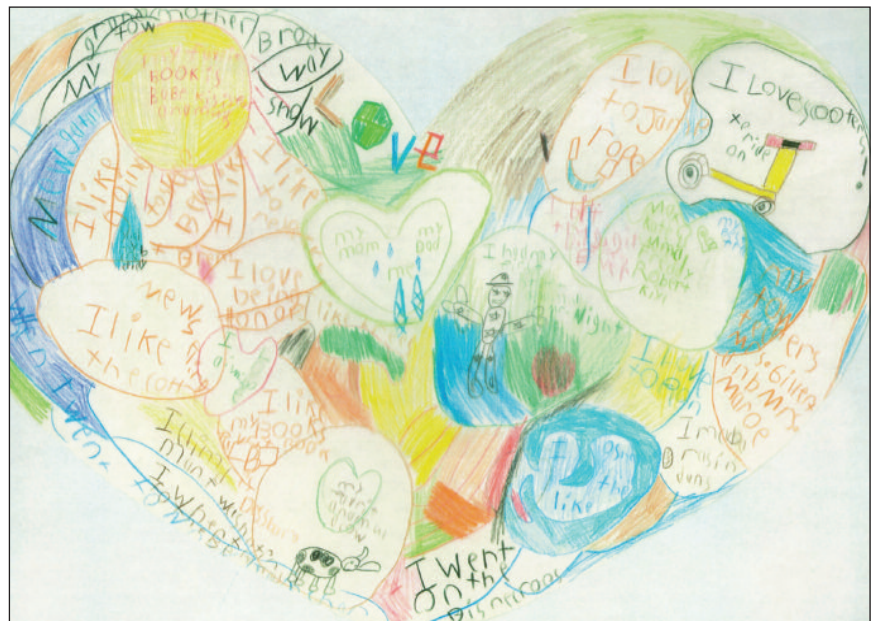


Figure 2. My son's heart map

Poetry, *poetry*! Can be found
in, out and all around.

But take a look inside your heart,
that's where a poem truly likes to start.

I try to apply the advice in this poem to every piece of writing I do, not just poetry.

Writers Read From the Heart

As I drove home one day from running errands, F. Scott Fitzgerald's (2013) words drift around the car from my newest audiobook, *The Great Gatsby*:

In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning again with the summer.

Summertime. I know exactly what Fitzgerald means: "Life was beginning again with the summer." Listening to these poetic words meandering around my car, the language of obligation disappears. My to-do list fades. The house will never be perfectly clean; the grass will keep growing, as will the weeds; and I will keep needing to go to the grocery store. Fitzgerald switches on my own music, my own voice—images ignited from his words.

Listening to, or reading, writing that inspires us is the second writing tip that I would like to share. It doesn't matter what genre they are writing in, our students need to hear exquisite examples of the genre so it can inspire their own writing.

If they are writing biography, they might read the visually vivid beginning of the biography of John Adams by David McCullough (2008, p. 17): "In the cold, nearly colorless light of a New England winter, two men on horseback traveled the coast road below Boston, heading north."

Or, if they are writing informational text, they might be inspired by reading *Sea Horse: The Shyest Fish in the Sea* by Chris Butterworth (2006, p. 6): "In the warm ocean, among the waving sea-grass, an eye like a small black bead is watching the fish dart by."

Oftentimes it's another author's words that help us hear our own melodies, our own song.

*Oftentimes it's another
author's words that help
us hear our own
melodies, our own song.*



Writers Fall in Love With Words

I love these words: "A frozen pond's surface is 'inscribed with a cursive of scars'; the shadow of a hawk ignites 'an explosion of pigeons' from a granary silo" (Straus, 2014). These words help me see and experience the world in a new way.

Ask your students to be collectors of words and sentences. The third writer's tip is to help students fall in love with words by creating "word awareness" in our young writers. *Word awareness* means a growing understanding of the power, uniqueness, and playfulness of words. It means helping students to become curious and passionate about language and about unknown words, helping them learn to savor words that give them a mental picture, to discover precise and unusual words, and to know, from the inside out, how parts of speech work.

It's the quirky, sometimes surprising words that turn a sentence from ordinary to extraordinary like the words *glory clouds*, written by a fourth grader, instead of the more predictable *glorious clouds*. The word *glory* is unique and gives the reader a sense of surprise that is both subtle and powerful.

One way to foster word awareness is to create a Word Wall, not for the purpose of spelling but to highlight word possibilities such as the following:

- words that students wonder about and want to know the meaning or origin of,
- words they love the sounds of,
- words that are surprising and show unusual and extraordinary ways of expressing meaning,
- unique ways an author or poet expresses or describes something,
- sensory words,
- feeling words, and
- color words.

Ask students to stop, savor, and put a frame around words, phrases, or sentences that are extraordinary or memorable. Invite students to collect favorite words in their journals for use in future writing. Creating word awareness will have long-term results for students whose awareness and curiosity of the nuances for language will grow.

Writers Write Small and Personal

Here is a secret: The smaller and more personal you write, the more universal your writing will be. William Blake said it poetically, “To see a world in a grain of sand.”

Anyone can write the sentence: *I love my cat*. But when a young writer, Jason, writes *I love my cat. Sometimes I pretend that he is my son*, it opens the reader’s heart, and we feel Jason’s love for his cat. What Jason wrote is not generic; only *he* could have written that second sentence, and we are drawn in because his words strike us as emotionally true.

Good writing is the opposite of “common” (as in *Common Core*). Although writers share certain qualities, good writing is by its nature individual and authentic. What makes writing interesting, no matter what genre, is its uncommon, nongeneric qualities.

I remember my teacher walking around the room reading my writing over my shoulder and whispering, “I think you should add more details.” Details? I had no idea what details I was missing. To me, what I wrote contained everything that was necessary, but the words I put down on paper didn’t necessarily include those particulars that were still locked in my mind and heart. I wasn’t experienced enough as a writer to know what details I should add.

My teacher was right. Good writing is in the details, but not just any details. It is the small, just right, heart-driven specifics that make the story, poem, or article authentic, personal, and nongeneric.

Writers Revise, Revise, Revise

Let’s face it: Revision has a bad reputation. Students equate it with failure and not being a good enough writer. Many students see it as punitive. Some young writers see revision as something they have to do when the teacher thinks their writing is not finished. Real revision is inner work: clarifying what we really think and believe about an idea; getting at the heart of the story; distilling our sentences and words to best express how we feel and what we think. Revision is how writers write. Revision is writing.

One of my favorite quotes about rewriting is by Naomi Shihab Nye (Nye, 2002): “Now I see *revision* as a beautiful word of hope. It’s a new vision of something. It means you don’t have to be perfect the first time. What a relief!”

Get students revising their writing from the very beginning. Show them how to get into the habit of rereading what they write—paragraph by paragraph or line by line. Suggest that they speak their writing out loud or listen

to someone read it to them and try and identify places that do not sound right or that are vague and need more detail. Ask them to keep comparing what is in their hearts with the words they have written down. As you confer with them, let them know that the issue is not that their writing is not good but that all writers do not have to be perfect the first time.



Georgia Heard received her M.F.A. in writing from Columbia University and is a founding member of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project in New York City. Georgia is the author of numerous books on teaching writing, including *Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School*, *which was cited by Instructor magazine as “One of the 10 Books Every Teacher Should Read”*; *Poetry Lessons to Meet the Common Core State Standards*; and, *her newest books, Finding the Heart of Nonfiction: Teaching 7 Essential Craft Tools with Mentor Texts and The Revision Toolbox: Teaching Techniques That Work (second edition)*. *She is also the author and editor of several children’s books, including The Arrow Finds Its Mark: A Book of Found Poems and Falling Down the Page: A Book of List Poems. She just completed a new anthology of poetry entitled The Woman in This Poem: Women’s Voices in Poetry, which is forthcoming in spring 2015.*

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What Effective Reading Lessons for Struggling Readers Should Look Like

Richard L. Allington

Struggling readers need high-quality reading instruction all day long, not just during an intervention program.

Too often instructional interventions for struggling readers are largely seen as sending them somewhere to have someone else deliver a focused intervention lesson. But struggling readers need high-quality reading instruction *all day long* combined with an intervention program providing more expert and more intensive additional coordinated reading instruction. If struggling readers only participate in effective reading lessons during the 30–50 minute intervention period, they cannot be expected to make adequate progress. When struggling readers participate in a full school day of effective instruction and receive the coordinated intervention instruction in addition, then accelerated academic growth is more likely.

As a beginning step we must ensure that readers who need extra help have in their hands all day long texts that they can read accurately, fluently, and with good comprehension. This high-success reading is an essential component of effective lesson design (Allington, 2012). Every lesson planning model begins with the teacher selecting texts appropriate for the students. This means selecting across the whole day (science, social studies, health, etc.) texts that struggling readers can read with success and that also convey essential curricular concepts in each of the content areas.

Kids can't learn to read or learn science or social studies from texts they can't read. Too difficult texts limit reading growth, vocabulary development, and acquisition of content knowledge. The current push from the Com-

mon Core State Standards is to use more complex texts with our students. But the research evidence available indicates that difficult texts make learning to read and comprehending content less likely than when teachers use texts that present few unknown words in their lessons (Allington, McCuiston, & Billen, in press).

Too often struggling readers have desks full of books that are two or more grade levels above their reading levels. One powerful study demonstrated that even well-qualified tutors could not foster reading growth when they used too difficult texts typically found in struggling readers' desks. But when these same tutors used texts that matched these students' reading levels, reading development was accelerated (O'Connor, et al., 2002). If we want struggling readers to close the reading gap, we must work to ensure that they have texts that they can comprehend all day long.

Finally, intervention efforts must be informed by classroom reading lessons. The last thing most struggling readers need is a second and different

reading program with vocabulary, skills, and content that are wholly different from the focus of the core curriculum. In too many cases of different teaching methods, struggling readers experience substantial curriculum fragmentation. Such fragmentation is more likely to create cognitive confusion than accelerated reading development.

This fragmentation seems to stem from mistaken beliefs that struggling readers need a different approach or benefit more from a different program in their remedial

One powerful study demonstrated that even well-qualified tutors could not foster reading growth when they used too difficult texts typically found in struggling readers' desks.



and special education lessons. However, not a single study indicates anything of the sort. Instead, we appear to have reading and special education teachers who elect to fragment the reading lessons rather than to provide more expert and intensive coordinated lessons using the classroom reading framework.

A national study of intervention programs (Borman, Wong, Hedges, & D'Agostino, 2003) reported significantly greater gains when interventions were well coordinated with the classroom reading program. Providing additional intensive and expert reading instruction informed by the classroom curriculum provides the clearest path to closing the achievement gap. Unfortunately, only about one in five reading or special education teachers structure their intervention lessons in such a coordinated manner.

Although intervention programs are essential, they are no more important than providing students access to proficient reading instruction all day long. What we currently offer in reading interventions misses the mark of effective instructional design. Perhaps if both our classroom and intervention reading lessons were improved, more struggling readers would become achieving readers.



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Response to Intervention in Colorado: Are We Leaving RtI Behind?

Vicki S. Collet

This article makes the case for giving continued attention to RtI, even as other educational initiatives push for their place on center stage.

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized, enabling Response to Intervention (RtI) as a means for the identification of learning disabilities and expanding avenues of funding for intervention (108th Congress, 2004; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Changes in the law offered the opportunity for an intervention and identification process that was more grounded in instruction than were methods of the past. This opportunity began gaining attention across the nation, and in 2007, RtI first appeared on the International Reading Association's survey of literacy "hot" topics (see Table 1). RtI's rating on the "What's Hot" list hit its highest marks in 2008 and then began dropping. A similar trend is evident in *The Reading Teacher*, with the first RtI article published November 2007. The peak for RtI articles occurred in 2009–2010, with attention to RtI decreasing since that time (see Figure 1). Dwindling attention to RtI in these venues begs the question, "Are we leaving Response to Intervention behind?"

This article makes the case for giving continued attention to RtI, even as other educational initiatives push for their place on center stage. After describing the purposes of RtI and how it works, I'll share insights from Colorado's four-year track record of using this process. First, we will look at results of a statewide survey that provide a general view of Response to Intervention.

Then we'll get up close and personal, taking a careful look at RtI in a school that has experienced success as a result of its implementation. Finally, we'll consider the supporting role that RtI might play in other educational initiatives receiving attention throughout the state.

What Is Response to Intervention?

RtI is both an instructional model and a means for identification of students with specific learning disabilities. It was cultivated when the 2004 IDEA stated that "in determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local education agency may use a *process* to determine if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures" (108th Congress, 2004, p. 60, emphasis added). The process described in this legislation, wherein a student receives intensive intervention and his response to this intervention is measured, has become known as "Response to Intervention" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; McEneaney, Lose, & Schwartz, 2006). In Colorado, legislation has required use of RtI as a means of identifying a specific learning disability (SLD) since August 2009 (Colorado Department of Education, 2008). The intent of RtI is to provide a framework for ensuring that students receive instruction that is responsive to their needs.

Response to Intervention can be defined as a system for recog-

Table 1. Is RtI Hot?

Year	Percentage saying RtI is hot topic	Percentage saying RtI should be hot topic
2007	50–74	75–100
2008	75–100	75–100
2009	75–100	50<75
2010	75–100	50<75
2011	75–100	50<75
2012	75–100	50<75
2013	50<75	50<75

Source: What's Hot, What's Not in Literacy Survey, 2007–2013, International Reading Association.

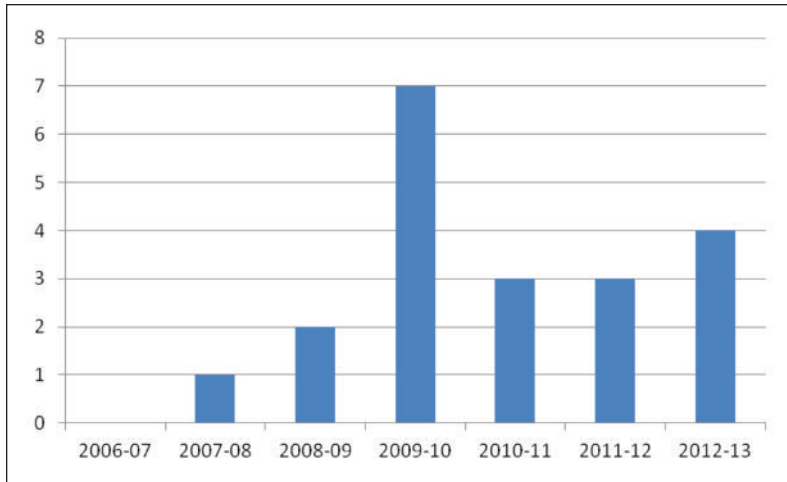


Figure 1. RtI-related articles in *The Reading Teacher*

nizing and addressing children's learning difficulties; both an identification process and an instructional framework (Gersten & Dimino, 2006; Kavale, Holdnack, & Mostert, 2005; Johnson, Mellard, & Byrd, 2005). Let's consider how each of these roles is envisaged in RtI.

RtI and SLD Identification

Previous to IDEA reauthorization in 2004, legislation required use of a discrepancy model to identify students with learning disabilities (Kavale, Holdnack, & Mostert, 2005). To qualify for support through special education services, a student's tests had to show significant differences between intellectual ability and achievement. Typically, a student had to be in school for a few years, with the gap between ability and achievement widening, before he or she could qualify. Because of this, the previous identification method was sometimes called a "wait to fail" model (Brown-Chidsey, 2007). An additional issue with this identification process was the possibility that the deficit was in the instruction rather than the child, causing misidentification.

The revised act offered an alternative. As soon as students began falling behind, they could receive intervention. Failure to respond to intensifying intervention would lead to eventual identification of a learning disability. Because RtI is instructionally grounded, validity of the identification process is enhanced (McEneaney, Lose, & Schwartz, 2006). Additionally, RtI may play a preventive function, encouraging schools to recognize and support struggling students before their difficulties become more serious (International Reading Association Commission on RtI, 2009).

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RtI as an Instructional Framework

Response to Intervention provides high-quality classroom instruction, monitors progress frequently so as to make decisions about intervention, and applies student response data to important educational decisions (Allington, 2011; National Association of State Directors of Special Education & Council of Administrators of Special Education, 2008). Although no one model for RtI exists (International Reading Association Commission on RtI, 2009), a tiered framework that represents intensifying instruction and intervention is prominent in research and practice (Colorado Department of Education, 2008; McEneaney,

Lose, & Schwartz, 2006; Wright, 2007). The first level is provided in the general education classroom, with an emphasis on quality instruction and ongoing monitoring of student growth. In the next tier, students who are struggling are provided with intervention. An additional tier (or tiers, depending on the model) provides more frequent progress monitoring and different or more intensive intervention to students who continue to fall below expected benchmarks (Kavale, Holdnack, & Mostert, 2005; Klingner & Edwards, 2006; Moore & Whitfield, 2009).

Decision-Making Models

Another aspect of RtI that warrants attention is the model used for making instructional decisions. With a *problem-solving approach*, teachers exercise "professional expertise and responsibility to plan instruction and adapt programs and materials as needed" (International Reading Association Commission on RtI, 2009, p. 5). Another approach for decision making in RtI is the *standard-protocol approach*, which prescribes specific programs or interventions based on assessment data. Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) contend that the standard-protocol approach is favored by researchers because the problem-solving approach is idiopathic, relying as it does

on expertise among practitioners. Leaders within state education agencies, districts, and schools determine how decisions will be made within the RtI framework. Because RtI has been required in Colorado since August 2009, Colorado educators have a four-year track record with this initiative, which has yielded many insights.

Table 2. Survey questions and responses									
Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	2009 n=409	2012 n=234	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	
Implementing a model for RtI has had a positive impact on instruction in your classroom.	9	10	27	25	52	56	13	8	
Implementing a model for RtI has had a positive effect on learning in your classroom.	8	9	28	27	54	58	10	6	
Your school (or district) is more responsive to all students' needs as a result of the implementation of your district's RtI model.	9	11	28	31	54	48	9	10	
An RtI model was/is being initiated in your district by ...	Special education		General education		Both, in partnership		I don't know		
	22	16	10	15	49	53	20	16	
What level of partnership/ collaboration around RtI exists between teachers from the following disciplines in your school: special education, literacy, ESL, and general education?	Low 1		2		3		4		High 5
	9	10	19	15	35	30	25	28	13 17
To what degree is RtI fully implemented in your school or district?	Not begun 1		2		3		4		Fully implemented 5
	6	1	24	14	31	35	26	31	14 20
Implementation of an RtI model has changed the culture of your school for the better.	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree
	5	8	19	24	43	38	29	26	5 4

Source: Response to Intervention Survey, January 2009, March 2012, Colorado Council International Reading Association Issues & Research in Education Committee.

Note: Total percentages may equal more than 100% due to rounding.

Colorado Surveys

Results of two surveys by the Colorado Council International Reading Association (CCIRA) give a general view of Response to Intervention in the state. In January 2009 and again in March 2012, CCIRA members were asked to respond to questions about their experiences with RtI. Tables 2 and 3 show results of both surveys. Notably, teachers' ratings of the degree to which RtI improved instruction changed little, even though more

than three years passed between surveys. Other indicators, however, showed changes—some that might be interpreted as negative and others with more positive implications.

On the 2012 survey, fewer teachers felt their school was more responsive to students' needs as a result of RtI. This finding is problematic, because the RtI process requires responsive teachers (Lose, 2007). Another concerning result was that fewer teachers felt implementing RtI had changed their school's culture for the better.

Table 3. Survey question: How has your district responded to meet RtI guidelines? (check all that apply)

Response	2009	2012
Buy scripted instructional programs.	29	34
Buy additional learning materials/programs that are not scripted.	23	33
Build and communicate a conceptual model for using assessment to drive instruction.	61	62
Design a flowchart of meetings during which academic progress of students is addressed.	51	62
Change/add assessments.	49	53
Hire more teachers.	6	8

Source: Response to Intervention Survey, January 2009, March 2012, Colorado Council International Reading Association Issues & Research in Education Committee.

Note: Totals exceed 100% due to number of responses allowed.

Some results in the recent survey had more positive connotations. For example, more educators said RtI was being initiated in their district by general rather than special education or by special education and general education together. Since RtI emphasizes quality-first teaching, a general education or partnered approach is considered more effective (Allington, 2011). Another encouraging finding was that more educators felt a high level of collaboration existed around RtI in their schools. Collaboration deprivatizes the practice by providing opportunities for educators to problem-solve with colleagues (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004; Fullan, 2010), an important component of some RtI models.

When asked to indicate from a list of choices the ways in which their districts had responded to meet RtI guidelines, responses in all categories increased on the 2012 survey, suggesting districts had allocated additional resources for RtI. Responses were highest for school districts communicating a conceptual model, designing meetings for addressing student progress, and changing or adding assessments. These factors are descriptive of effective models for Response to Intervention (Lipson,

Chomsky-Higgins & Kanfer, 2011). Although respondents also indicated their districts bought programs (both scripted and nonscripted) as a response to RtI guidelines, this response was much less frequent. Purchasing programs has been described as less effective than other methods of intervention (Lipson & Wixson, 2012).

Surprisingly, although the second survey took place one and a half years after Colorado's educators were legislatively required to use RtI for SLD identification, only 20% of those surveyed indicated their schools had fully implemented RtI. This suggests that progress has stalled, even though survey respondents acknowledged the potential of RtI as an intervention and identification system.

Portrait of Effective RtI Implementation

Recently, I observed RtI meetings at a Colorado elementary school that has seen continuous improvement in student achievement since it began implementing RtI (see Table 4). I also interviewed this school's principal, an intervention teacher, and a classroom teacher (see Table 5).

Table 4. Student literacy achievement data for "Williams Elementary"

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
CSAP/TCAP* reading proficient or above	70.16%	74.13%	79.62%	79.41%	81.08%	81.3%
CSAP/TCAP reading growth percentile	NA [†]	NA	60	52	66	66
CSAP/TCAP writing proficient or above	56.72%	61.69%	72.9%	72.67%	73.51%	67.67%
CSAP/TCAP writing growth percentile	NA	NA	50	57	61	63

Source: Colorado Department of Education (2008).

*CSAP = Colorado State Assessment Program; TCAP = Transitional Colorado Assessment Program.

†NA = not applicable.

Table 5. Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Position	Years at school	Years as an educator
Linda	Principal	5	19
Martha	Intervention teacher	22	37
Pam	Classroom teacher	4	17

Interestingly, these three educators brought up nearly identical themes about RtI at their school, mirroring characteristics I had noticed during their RtI meetings (see Table 6).

The school, which I will call “Williams Elementary,” has high achievement and growth despite its high-needs population. About half its students live in poverty, and, because Williams is a magnet school for students with autism, 12.68% of its students have disabilities. School leadership is open and active, and a culture of trust exists among the school leader and teachers. When asked about conditions at the school, Pam, the classroom teacher I interviewed, said, “It’s kind of funny. A lot of people in our district call us Disneyland, because you walk in and it feels like a happy place.” On recent assessments, the school met goals for academic achievement and growth gaps, and exceeded expectations for growth. In addition, the school has developed an efficient system for special-education referral: Every student who has been referred for SLD testing in the last three years has qualified, having risen in concern because of failure to thrive in spite of a robust RtI process. Next are some possible reasons for the school’s success.

Deprivatization of Practice

Williams Elementary has experienced what its principal, Linda, calls “complete deprivatization of practice.” As she explains, “Teachers can no longer just teach behind their doors and then at the end of the year send their kids on to the next grade level.” She describes the dialogue teachers are having about student needs:

When we first started RtI, [teachers] didn’t want people to know their students were struggling. It’s really helped the culture. Teachers are much more open to going to each other for ideas. Now they’re comfortable and confident that if they bring a student to the RtI team it’s really just an open conversation.

Table 6. Portrait of an effective RtI system

Deprivatization of practice

- Scheduled intervention blocks
- Cross-grade-level RtI meetings
- Open doors

Routines for problem solving

- Interventionist meetings
- Cross-grade-level RtI meetings

Informed interventions

- Focused instruction
- Knowing what to look for
- Kid watching

Making students partners in the process

- Sharing success criteria
- Higher expectations
- Self-selected goals

Reconstructing philosophies of intervention

- Seeing RtI as a philosophy of how we teach
- Creating shared values through deprivatized practice, ongoing conversations, staff book studies, and so forth

The conversations Linda describes are hallmarks of effective educational change (Diamond, 2007).

Scheduled Intervention Blocks

Deprivatization of practice at Williams Elementary is due, in part, to daily enrichment blocks added as part of the RtI process. During this time, students are grouped across the entire grade level according to their needs. Linda describes one impact of this practice:

The enrichment block throws all the kids up into the air and sorts them by intervention. And it could be any one of the second-grade teachers, for example, working with any second-grade student. It’s created a more common bond in grade-level teams, and common conversations.

Because special-education teachers work with students during enrichment blocks, “It’s helped us blur the line between special education and regular education, tapping into resources we have in our building,” Linda says. This “blurring” is possible because legislation now allows some IDEA funds to be used for pre-identification intervention.

Cross-Grade-Level RtI Meetings

Martha, an intervention teacher, and Pam also describe strong collaboration, talking about “a shared approach,” “a culture of teamwork and community,” and a high level of trust. Martha attributes this attitude, in part, to their biweekly cross-grade-level RtI meetings:

Because of the two grade-level teams, more people are talking about kids in common. Prior to the meeting, the classroom teacher presenting a student has entered assessment data and descriptions of attempted interventions on the form. And we use each other’s expertise. “So I know you had a student last year that had this problem. What did you do and how did you work it out?” So I could try that, too.

Open Doors

Perhaps it’s because these formal structures for collaboration are in place that teachers informally collaborate. As Pam says, “We go in and out of each other’s rooms all the time. We share ideas. There’s no hidden sense of ‘this is mine, please don’t take it.’ We’re very open.” Pam illustrates how she problem-solved with a teammate when stumped by a student’s reading behavior:

Adam was stretching out all the words and sounds but wasn’t able to find the first sound in the word. I went to my partner teacher before RtI even. I haven’t RtI-ed him because he’s a kindergartner, and he’s actually grade level. But I went to her, which is almost like a mini-RtI type process, and said, “Here’s what he’s doing; I need some help. What do you think?” And she was like, “Oh, try this.” And it worked!

Linda, Martha, and Pam recognize RtI as a collaborative effort, and time and resources have been provided at Williams Elementary for this joint work to occur. Studies highlight the importance of offering opportunities for collaboration, reflection, and inquiry so teachers can work together to improve learning (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012). Williams Elementary’s efforts to provide these opportunities appear important to its success.

Routines for Problem Solving

In addition to informal discussions and biweekly RtI meetings, other opportunities exist for collaboration at Williams. For example, the principal meets each Thursday morning with interventionists. They talk about which students they are working with, what level each is at, and how each student is progressing. They discuss which practices and groups need changing.

Cross-Grade-Level RtI Meetings

Cross-grade-level RtI meetings at Williams Elementary are held two Wednesdays each month right after school. The principal gained time for these meetings by converting district-provided collaboration days. Meeting as a team are kindergarten and first-grade teachers; second- and third-grade teachers; and fourth- and fifth-grade teachers. Special-education teachers, interventionists, and other faculty are distributed across groups.

The meetings follow problem-solving procedures for decision-making. Group members take turns facilitating using a form (projected on screen) to guide discussion. Prior to the meeting, the classroom teacher presenting a student has entered on the form assessment data and descriptions of interventions she has tried. During the meeting, important ideas are captured, including new interventions, and a date is set for discussing the child again. Everyone in the room participates in the problem-solving process.

The appendix (available on CCIRA website) provides a partial transcript of a second- and third-grade RtI meeting at Williams. In this meeting, teachers discuss a second-grade student we’ll call Levi. Levi has been participating in several interventions, but he’s not making enough catch-up growth to be on grade level by year’s end. As noted on the RtI form, Levi has good comprehension but continues to score low on literacy assessments because of fluency issues.

This scenario illustrates flexible problem-solving processes used by the group. Although the RtI meeting is guided by the form, it isn’t constrained by it. Teachers at times poke fun at the need to complete the form, but they are sticklers about making sure it gets filled out correctly, having experienced its usefulness. Even though this was the first time Levi’s situation had been brought to the RtI group, interventions were already in place. And as teachers problem-solved together, their expectations for the student’s eventual success were evident.

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Teachers' depth of understanding of literacy processes is also notable. Their expertise adds to the discussion's richness and provides clarity about possible interventions. The classroom teacher readily accepts suggestions from peers, and their brainstorming yields additional interventions to try and refinements for those already in place.

Another notable detail is the continuity of data suggested in the conversation. Connections are made to the student's previous intervention history, and teachers express concern about making sure relevant data will be available for the following school year.

An additional feature prominent in this scenario is that the conversation is punctuated by laughter. Although these teachers are serious about students' academic progress, they enjoy the meeting's collegial spirit.

Gradual Success

According to Pam, RtI meetings haven't always worked as smoothly as the one described here. Initially, teachers came to meetings unprepared. But now expectations, and the benefits, are clear. Pam says these meetings changed the way teachers interact. "When you get into a room, and you're laying yourself bare and saying, 'This is a student I have and it's not working and I need help,'" you have to "come up with a little bit of humility." But she has seen it pay off:

Now it's like, you know what, I'm not embarrassed. It changes me, in that I'm much more on my toes in my classroom. Because if you know you're going to bring someone to RtI, you have to be consistent with the things you're trying.

Pam suggests that openness built through the RtI process creates accountability, "but not in a negative way. It's like, hey, I'm going to be bringing this to my group. I really want to show I did a great job." And it benefits students:

Before, I think you always are doing as much as you can for a kid, but sometimes you're doing as much as you can and saying, 'oh well.' Now there's no 'oh well.' You're doing as much as you can for a kid and you're going, hmmm, I need help. Let's go get it.

The "go get it" attitude is the way of doing business at Williams. Formalized problem-solving routines, such as intervention meetings and RtI meetings, and informal processes resulting from deprivatization of practice create opportunities for teachers to critically examine their own teaching. This collaborative examination ensures that interventions designed and implemented for students are effective (Johnston, 2010).

Informed Interventions

As implied by its name, intervention is a central tenet of RtI, and a systemic approach to intervention improves literacy outcomes (Lipson & Wixson, 2012). At Williams, appropriate interpretation of assessment data informs the next steps for instruction and intervention, and ongoing data collection helps determine whether an intervention is effective (Wixson & Valencia, 2010). Using effective interventions ensures that time devoted to enrichment blocks and pull-out programs is time well spent.

Focused Instruction

Interventions are enhancements of general education curricula, which target particular skills to improve student outcomes (Lipson & Wixson, 2012). Martha, who has been an interventionist for 22 years, reports the RtI process has improved interventions she provides, making her teaching more intense, concerted, and determined. Rather than meeting with RtI groups on Fridays, she uses the time for monitoring progress, ensuring interventions are having the desired effects. "I'm more informed and focused and probably more urgent in what I'm doing," she says. Martha also assesses students she's no longer working with, making sure they're not slipping. Pam reiterates this. Since beginning the RtI process, interventions have become more informed by assessment and more intense:

People are learning what an intervention is versus a tier-one strategy. Because there's a lot you do to help a kid who's slightly struggling in your class, but it's just tier one. It's something you would do for any child in your classroom who needed a little boost. You might conference with them a little more. You might meet with their small group more often. We're

Formalized problem-solving routines, such as intervention meetings and RtI meetings, and informal processes resulting from deprivatization of practice create opportunities for teachers to critically examine their own teaching.



starting to learn that something different is what tier two is. It's not something the rest of the class needs. So that's changing.

This change reflects teachers' ability to provide intervention guided by appropriate evaluations of student learning.

Knowing What to Look For

Pam credits the RtI process with making her teaching more specific and making her more aware. She knows what to look for when a student isn't doing well because she has learned many different ways of collecting data. "You start noticing it when you're instructing, when you're observing what they're doing," Pam explains. "And it changes the way you actually teach a lesson."

Kid Watching

Martha calls this informal data-collection process "kid watching," and she, too, notices there is more of it now than there used to be. "That's what I'm happy to see," she says. "It isn't just a lot of assessing. There's a lot of focusing on what are you noticing, and what does that mean? How does that inform what I need to do? I would say all that has changed." Rather than assessing students in restrictive ways, skilled teachers collect rich data through a variety of assessment measures (van Kraayenoord, 2010). Understanding ways to figure out what students know and can do has enhanced instruction at Williams Elementary, and using informed interventions has been key to students' progress. Gathering informative data is at the heart of matching interventions with students' needs, and it is essential if RtI is to make a difference in students' abilities (Lipson, Chomsky-Higgins & Kanfer, 2011).

Student Partners

Another change at Williams is making students partners in the intervention process. Teachers are now clear with students about success criteria. Linda describes such a conversation with a student:

This is where you are supposed to be. And this is what we're going to do to get you there. If you're a level 16 and you're supposed to be a 28, this is what we all need to do to get you to a 28. This is what you need to do, and this is what we're going to do to support you here at school.

She says students are much more informed about where they fall on the continuum. "It's not such a mystery anymore for the kids. They're taking much more ownership of their learning."

Higher Expectations and Self-Selected Goals

According to Martha, student involvement includes higher expectations. Teachers talk with students about how their growth is going to be measured and tell them, "You're going to be part of this measuring," Martha says, "Kids enjoy being more in the know," and they especially enjoy achieving their goals, as her story illustrates:

Joey's been in Title and literacy for four years. And this spring he was proficient on MAPS, proficient on TCAP, and proficient on the DRA.... We told him he doesn't need to come anymore. That he's done what he needed to do. Another child, back in February, left because he achieved grade level and was maintaining it. Joey kept saying, "So what did he do to do that?" That has been his motivation, to get out of here. And he's so excited. He did it! And it was totally his effort!*

Students know their test scores and are helped to set realistic goals and achieve those goals. Martha says this keeps students focused, "trying to meet that number." Pam agrees that, because teachers are "laying it right out for them," students "are completely motivated." Teachers are being more specific about what they are looking for, and, as Pam suggests, showing students their data, and "letting them in on the secret" is paying dividends.

Philosophies of Intervention

Linda firmly believes RtI is not just a system she has put in place at Williams. It is not just another set of meetings, nor can it be fully described as the creation of professional learning communities. "I think RtI is a philosophy of how we teach," she says. "Until people look at it as a philosophy for children, I'm not sure changes really take place." Schools can set up RtI systems, like meeting every Thursday as a Professional Learning Community team to talk about students. But, Linda contends,

*Title = Federal Title One Program; MAPS = Measures of Academic Progress; TCAP = Transitional Colorado Assessment Program; DRA = Diagnostic Reading Assessment.

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Williams Elementary.*



“That’s definitely just scratching the surface. That’s physically putting it in the building.” She believes:

Until you have the philosophical shift that some children need different things for longer amounts of time at increased intensity, frequency and duration, *and* they are all of our kids *and* it starts in general education *and*, you know what I mean, until you have all of those—they are philosophical shifts. You could put in a system and call it whatever you want in a building, but I don’t think it’s going to really impact practice.

Creating a culture of deprivatized practice is one of the approaches that has fostered philosophical shifts at Williams Elementary. Routines the staff has put in place for problem-solving provide opportunities for ongoing conversations that build common attitudes about instruction. Staff book studies also generate conversations to create shared values and beliefs. Because of these shared values, interventions are more consistent and effective, and instruction is a collaborative process that includes students as active partners in their learning.

RtI in Colorado: Past, Present, and Future

As illustrated by the description of Response to Intervention at Williams School, RtI is alive and well, at least in some Colorado schools. As Linda says, “RtI is a big part of our system. It’s not a program; it’s the teacher standing in front of my kids. That’s what makes the biggest difference.” However, during our conversations, Linda, Martha, and Pam raised concerns about whether successful systems for RtI, like the one at Williams Elementary, are widespread. Linda reports, “RtI isn’t a hot topic principals talk about over lunch.” Pam worries that widespread change in education won’t happen unless RtI is being done well. Martha is concerned about schools where “there’s a ton of assessing going on but they never talk about it,” and “it doesn’t inform what they’re doing. They just keep measuring, and they’re measuring a *ton!* A ton!” Martha’s fears seem justified by results of the CCIRA survey, in which educators frequently reported that changing or adding assessments was one of their district’s methods of implementing RtI.

At the time of the 2012 CCIRA survey, only 20% of respondents indicated their schools had fully implemented RtI. This means that much work likely needs to be done to make the hopes of Response to Intervention a

reality. Insights gleaned from Williams can help to make that happen.

If you’re a teacher, review the list in Table 6 and look at specific examples in this article. Find something you can do right now! You could, for example, start by increasing students’ involvement in their own assessments and intervention processes. Or acknowledge that you have a student who is struggling and ask the teacher next door for suggestions. Doing little things can add up to a big change! You can also ask for the types of structural changes described in this article (cross-grade-level RtI teams and enrichment blocks, for example). You might want to share a highlighted copy of this article with your principal.

If you are a school or district administrator or literacy leader, consider how you could support effective RtI practices like those that are happening at Williams. Could you provide regular time for RtI problem-solving meetings? Create a meeting protocol to guide those meetings? Establish intervention blocks? Restructure the way intervention is being provided to make it more targeted? Could you allocate funding to support some of these practices? And, importantly, as Williams’ principal suggested, could you create a philosophical shift that puts increased emphasis on noticing and responding to students’ individual needs?

As the CCIRA survey and portrait of Williams Elementary demonstrate, RtI is an educational initiative with the potential to produce widespread change that can support other important initiatives. RtI shifts the way intervention is provided from an incidental approach to a system that reduces the likelihood that students will fall through the cracks. Through the RtI process, the components of a student’s Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) plan are addressed: information is gathered about reading deficiencies; appropriate benchmarks and goals are established, along with a plan for measuring them; and an instruction plan is determined. At a time when the effectiveness of teachers and teaching is being scrutinized, RtI holds promise for enhancing learning outcomes.

Implementing a new system for instruction, such as RtI, requires significant change. Although change is a constant in educational contexts, it is nevertheless difficult (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Guskey, 2004). Implementing RtI requires not just surface-order changes but changes in the core processes of schooling. It takes teaching practice from behind closed doors, making data and decisions about instruction part of a collaborative process.

Reflecting on features of RtI at Williams may be helpful in refining the program as a method not only for identifying students with reading deficiencies but also for

increasing teacher effectiveness and helping students master the standards. Williams Elementary is a “pocket of excellence” that can provide a model for RtI as comprehensive school improvement and systemic reform (Ehren, 2013, p. 449). Examining its practice may assist other schools in providing instruction that is more responsive to students’ needs and help RtI regain a rightful place as a hot topic in education.



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Why RtI Got Left Behind: A Response From Practitioners

James Ereksen

For many teachers, curriculum critique and redesign has not been the concrete outcome of RtI. For the teachers who contributed to this response, RtI looks and feels like a new and unwieldy triage for identifying students with disabilities.

If Response to Intervention (RtI) is not meeting its promise as a policy, what is getting in the way? The previous article, “Response to Intervention in Colorado: Are We Leaving RtI Behind?” by Vicki S. Collet, presents a case for what RtI can and should be, with empowered teachers whose work is backed up by student data: Teachers who are doing the right thing—and meeting the demands of the law—actively engage in knowing each student and then teach and serve based on that knowledge. But if, as a field, we are leaving behind this vital perspective on RtI, then *why*?

As with many policies, the ideas and principles behind Response to Intervention are worthy ideals. RtI began as a powerful attempt to build on the long-term successes of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, first as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, then revised to IDEA in 1990). In David Berliner’s (1992) centennial review of research on public education, he presented teachers’ response to IDEA as a remarkable success story. He argued that even though overall national achievement statistics stayed mostly flat over decades, at the same time *teachers accepted the mandate to integrate disabled learners and English language learners* into mainstream classrooms. In a nutshell, our profession faced changes that made the job far more complex and difficult, and educators have met and continue to accept that mission. One would have expected that meeting this challenge should have brought the achievement numbers down—a dip in the statistics.

In its ideal, RtI should have marked a wholesale shift toward differentiation for all students, a turning away from packaged curriculum.



But on the whole, and in consistent year-to-year ways, public educators have kept outcomes steady.

In its ideal, RtI should have marked a wholesale shift toward differentiation for all students, a turning away from packaged curriculum. Core curriculum materials, because they are marketed on a large scale, cannot deliver on the promise of serving all students. For example, if a core reading curriculum is designed to meet needs of 80% of students, what does the school provide for the 20% the curriculum is not designed for? And even when a commercial curriculum is designed to meet the needs of 80% of students, does it meet them all? Consider a 400-student school in a wealthy neighborhood, where the core curriculum works well with 95% of students (380 people), and then a 400-student school with a less wealthy demographic where the same core curriculum works well for only 65% of students (260 people). This is a gap of 120 individual learners!

RtI was meant to address this reality by insisting that educators review the validity of the curriculum. The implication is that each learner might present *specific individual reasons* for why the core package does not work well—reasons that still would be addressed poorly with a separately packaged “intervention curriculum.” RtI would tell us that each student deserves educators who know how to reach them through sensitive assessment and teaching.

RtI was meant to help schools critique curriculum, to revise and remap it based on knowledge about and goals

of individual learners (see for example, Fisher & Frey, 2010). Unfortunately curriculum critique and redesign has not been the concrete outcome of RtI for many teachers. For the teachers who contributed to this response, RtI looks and feels like a new and unwieldy triage for identifying students with disabilities.

In her article, Collet presents a teacher dream team, professionals with confidence, who discover and follow the spirit of the law while also addressing the letter of the law. After hearing these thoughtful teachers' voices, and learning about their beliefs and structures for implementing RtI, the main question remaining is: If it's this simple and engaging, why don't we see RtI this way nationwide? Why is RtI being left behind?

The nine teachers who contributed to this response can help us consider answers to RtI implementation as a matter of professional development. (Those teachers are Vanessa Beymer, Kelsey Gill, Leah Goecke, Chelsea Higgins, Margaret Horak, Cassidy Kimball, Jordan Norton, Katy Spiller, and Joanna Tripi.) They described the professional climate surrounding RtI in their schools with the following three questions in mind. We encourage other teachers to assess the quality of their own RtI experience with these same questions.

1. At your school is RtI an open, team-level conversation about individual students. Why or why not?
2. In what ways did RtI reach you and your colleagues as teachers? Did you hear about it and seek it out, or was it presented as a top-down mandate?
3. What kind of RtI professional development did you participate in?
 - Was it site based?
 - Was it based on teacher choice?
 - Was it long term (more than one session? more than one year?)?

For the first question, teachers reported that rather than a collegial conversation with regular grade-level teams, they have instead experienced designated individuals or teams (such as a reading specialist or intervention teacher) who are more or less in charge of RtI. One teacher wrote:

At my school, we have a vertical team of teachers made up of one general education teacher

from each grade level, a specials teacher, and special-education providers who serve as members on our RtI intervention team. If a student is not showing progress over a period of time (whether it be academic or behavioral), this team can be consulted after multiple interventions are tried for a time period of approximately 6 weeks each. The intervention team is to be consulted after interventions are brain-

stormed with other colleagues and implemented and documented for this particular student. I do agree with the author that RtI should be an open, team-level conversation; however, I don't always feel like this is the case. After referring multiple students to the intervention team (who had also been referred in previous years), more interventions were suggested, more documentation was needed, and a longer time span was needed before this student could qualify for testing and receive special education support.

At times, I feel like RtI is an endless cycle of paperwork, when what we really need to be thinking about is the well-being of our students. Students need our support and they need it as soon as possible.

As teachers elaborated on the reality of RtI, they responded clearly that RtI reached them from higher authorities. Consider the following perspectives from two teachers:

RtI was definitely a top-down mandate ... or at least it felt that way to me. When we first implemented the process we had a district team that supported principals in order to implement it.... There were rubrics to fill out and rate where we were in the process. Only leadership teams worked with the district personnel, but we didn't do the reflections/rubrics as a whole building. We followed this process (district-principals-leadership team) for two years. This also included reading articles and having discussions. If a teacher wasn't part of the leadership teams, they would have to seek out this learning.

I don't believe that RTI reached all teachers as effectively as it needed to be or was intended

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of paperwork, when
what we really need
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our students.”*



to be. RTI was implemented through building principals and the PBIS [Positive Behavioral and Intervention Supports] team. Those not on the PBIS team received information as it was needed. Schools were then evaluated on RTI implementation by a district employee.

The perception that RtI was a mandate rather than a teacher-friendly solution for individualization or differentiation was a clear theme across the nine teachers. What kind of education did they get to support the mandate? The answer: Not much. The following comments are representative:

We did not receive much in terms of professional development. We did talk about RTI but the conversations never moved much beyond a basic understanding. These discussions occurred at schools and were very brief, no more than a couple of sessions.

I don't remember having specific professional development. I remember our counselor telling us what paperwork needed to be filled out, where to find the paperwork and who to turn it into. She updates the staff on a yearly basis about the paperwork process and when meetings will take place.

As a building we were trained on the process and procedures of RtI ... evaluate students, gather some data, fill out the paperwork, turn it in to the psychologist. She would schedule a meeting, invite the parents to the meeting, attend the meeting. This was one session for a few minutes (maybe 30 and we revisited this the following year). We were asked what additional support we needed, but at the time it was so new that I didn't know what I needed. We didn't do any deep level learning about RtI. It has been a "learn as you go." ... You learn the process by going to the problem-solving team meetings.

It may not be that teachers are leaving RtI behind as much as it's teachers are never getting a good chance to pick it up. A major shift in national policy should be followed by a wide-sweeping professional development

Contributing teachers wrote that rather than casting a spotlight on rapid problem solving for individual children, RtI has created a bulky, unwieldy bureaucratic process.



agenda. This small sample of teachers suggests that RtI reached them in either haphazard ways or as a simple top-down mandate. How can the spirit of RtI that Collet outlines reach more teachers? Why have many teachers not had opportunities to discover RtI in the healthy, collaborative way her participants did?

Two reasons may lie in the way social policy works. Unlike the aggressive family-based legal work behind IDEA, where groups of parents not only sued governments but also wrote legislation to secure rights such as "least restrictive environment," we do not see similar groups of families behind RtI pushing legally or in the press on this approach to differentiation and individualization. RtI was mostly an expert-based revision to IDEA implementation when it was reauthorized in 2004 (and not without controversy; see Hale, Kaufman, Naglieri, & Kavale, 2006). A powerful climate of grassroots advocacy, coupled with the pressure and press of family-based litigation, has *not* been a driving factor in school districts implementing RtI. Legal cases behind IDEA were big news in the 1960s and 1970s, consuming television air and columns of newsprint, but RtI did not emerge in the same policy and press climate as did the original federal act.

Another sad fact of social policy that may explain the lukewarm reception of RtI is that actual outcomes of policy are often exactly opposite its intent. This was true of Prohibition in the 1930s. Not only did alcohol become far more popular than before the policy, but crime increased as a result. In education policy, charter schools designed with the intent of attracting high-achieving minority students ironically have become white-flight schools (Renzulli & Evans, 2005). Also the implementation of No Child Left Behind focused an entire generation of educators and students on words per minute at the expense of other aspects of matching texts to readers (Goodman, 2006).

As for actual outcomes of RtI policy, contributing teachers wrote that rather than casting a spotlight on rapid problem solving for individual children, RtI has created a bulky, unwieldy bureaucratic process—one that sometimes *slows down* access to differentiation for children. Rather than taking hold and becoming a new standard for all educators, RtI has become one more mandatory item in an already crowded agenda.

I think in my district RtI is still very much used as we are expected to use it. However, like

I said, it feels ineffective and not time-efficient at all. Also, I feel like sometimes I have to beg for a student to get an intervention meeting referral and bother people or it will never happen. Like I said before, I think the biggest issue in our building is too many kids are being referred and there is not enough time to meet on all of them. I think others feel it is ineffective too and are looking for a better way to help our struggling students and to make sure they are not falling through the cracks. Also, perhaps our building is not implementing it correctly, so maybe RtI is much more effective than we are making it.

As a fifth grade teacher, the discussion around RtI has all but disappeared. The focus in schools change so frequently that schools are not really given a chance to implement new ideas and perfect them before something new and “groundbreaking” comes along that we have to try right away. The list of new acronyms our district is implementing is long; consequently discussions and professional development around RtI have become less and less.

The teachers who wrote for this response agreed with Collet’s argument about the ideal of RtI. They would like to see the program in this positive light—as an open, team-level conversation. However, Collet’s argument that RtI is not being implemented well also rings true to them. Why the contradiction?

Beyond the policy arguments cited previously, synthesis of the research on professional development is clear: If we hope for teacher growth, the professional development program should be *long term* and *site based*, and involve *teacher choice* (Bean & Dagen, 2011). These are essential ingredients in successful teacher growth. The nine teachers here reported none of these occurred in RtI implementation. Instead the program reached them as mandates from outside the building—and without the professional development time needed to organize the kind of team-level thinking and planning teachers described in the previous article.

We are left with a professional puzzle to solve. To what extent are everyday classroom teachers (not just specialists or intervention teams) ready to embrace accountability for school-wide differentiation? In districts and buildings do we have professional development structures that support this kind of broad change in the way educators approach students? The teachers Collet worked with offered viable team-level structures for a successful approach. Each of us as teachers has something we could learn from them. For the larger body of teachers—there are now more than 4 million of us—the path to this ideal either travels through professional development or stops there. And while nine teachers cannot tell the full story for 4 million, their insider voices present us with a compelling story of why and how education policy ideas often fail to deliver on their promise.



Working with striving readers since 1999, **James (Jim) Erikson** also works with K–12 teachers on how to use meaningful classroom assessments and on how their students grow a reader’s identity. Jim is associate professor of reading at University of Northern Colorado.

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Maintaining the Art of Teaching Through the Read-Aloud of *Chanticleer*: A Cautionary Tale

Catherine Olmsted

This is a story of how a trio of educators expressed the art of teaching and, in so doing, discovered the depth of understanding they and a multi-age class of first- and second-grade students could achieve when confronted with a Middle English text.

No thinker can ply his occupation save as he is lured and rewarded by total integral experiences that are intrinsically worth while [sic].

—Dewey (1934, p. 37)

Teaching as Science or Art

A tension has existed between teaching as a science and teaching as an art (Garrison, 1997; Hoole, 1660/1912; Marzano, 2007; Simpson, Jackson, & Aycok, 2005; Smith, 1934/2002). One way educational researchers attempt to measure effective teaching is by having students meet or exceed benchmarks (Pollock, 2007), but what of the other dimension of the teaching and learning experience? “[A] good part of effective teaching is an art” (Marzano, 2007, p. 4). Marzano invites us to consider the idea of research as a guide—informing our direction but ultimately leaving it open to our decision and our interpretation. “[T]here is not (nor will there ever be) a formula for effective teaching” (p. 4). Not everything we do should be converted to quantitative outcomes.

John Dewey believed that this “conflict or discomfort” serves a purpose: “The tension contributes to the impetus toward seeking some solution” (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 267). One solution, noted three quarters of a century ago, is that we employ our professional judgment and creativity (Yoakam, 1937). In the following quote, the scope of the national standards is broad enough to infer that a qualitative approach to teaching has value:

[T]he Standards leave room for teachers ... to determine how those goals should be reached.... Teachers are thus free to provide

students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 4)

It is imperative that we maintain the professional freedom we have known to craft the circumstances that surround learning. As we develop lessons that not only meet benchmarks or standards but provide our students with other valuable experiences, we become enriched as teachers. Over time, we become attuned to opportunities for effective instruction through reading, trial and error, practice, and collaborative experiences. By melding the science and art of teaching, we ultimately transform our own understanding, influenced by our insights as well as those of our students.

This is a story of how a trio of educators expressed the art of teaching and, in so doing, discovered the depth of understanding they and a multi-age class of first- and second-grade students could achieve when confronted with a Middle English text. We addressed the changing nature of language by reading aloud two variations of the story of *Chanticleer*, a vain rooster who is tricked into crowing by a fox’s flattering words, thereby letting down its defenses. The rooster is captured but strategically escapes and refuses to fall for the fox’s flattery a second time. The story provided a platform from which we could recognize the best way to support students’ comprehension of the texts, explore in-depth the printed word—its sounds, spelling, and meaning—and gain insight into our

students' understanding and the steps needed to further their grasp of a 14th century text.

The Changing Nature of Language

Having a fascination for, yet minimal practice with, Middle English, I consulted two knowledgeable colleagues. I was interested in showing my students that the words we read and write today have a history of their own. Betsy Chisolm, a storyteller with a B.A. in English who has read weekly to my students for a number of years, and Waldo (Wally) Jones, a veteran high school language arts teacher, shared Johnston's (2000/2001) perception of how language changes over time:

A language as old and as widespread as English has undergone many changes over hundreds of years and long distances. Sometimes spelling was altered in response to shifts in pronunciation, but once printed material became widely distributed there was great reluctance to alter the orthography. (p. 376)

This change is germane to the difficulties children have when reading and spelling and may stem from the fact that so few letters—five to seven—represent ostensibly 18 vowel phonemes (Erekson and Olmsted, 2012; Johnston, 2000/2001). What more might my students learn if we went far enough back to a time when now-familiar words we read or write were barely recognizable in sound as well as in spelling?

We considered reading aloud two variations of the story of Chanticleer, from Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th century text *The Canterbury Tales* (Hopper, 1970) as a pathway for our students to grasp something of our linguistic heritage. What I did not anticipate was what the read-aloud would do for me.

Comprehensible Input

Together Betsy, Wally, and I employed some of the many instructional practices (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) that have withstood the rotation of the compass (Gurley, 2011)—the educational trends that can be popular at times and fall out of favor at others. Not only has the read-aloud survived this test of time, but presenting it in an accessible form has lasted as well: "There should be much oral reading and story-telling by the teacher. The material read, of course, should present new

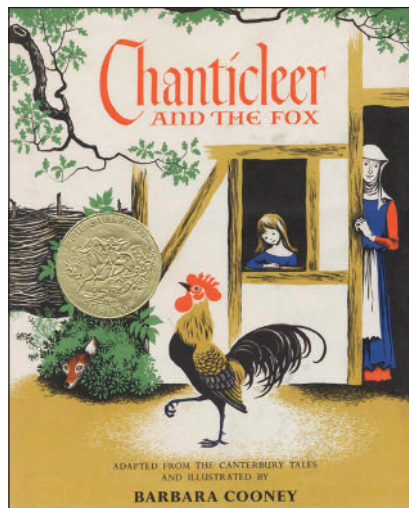
concepts and meanings in sufficiently familiar settings to insure [*sic*] clear understanding" (McKee, 1937, p. 280). Chaucer's stories were written in rhyming verse in an earlier form of English that could be difficult for the novice to read, much less comprehend. Wanting to preserve the beauty in the reading of the original text, we scaffolded the experience thoughtfully.

Our prior experiences with Betsy's stories involved having several of my young students preview the text with her. She had used a variety of techniques that supported comprehension of the read-aloud as well as second-language learning (Herrell & Jordan, 2008; Opitz, 2009; Shanahan & Beck, 2006). These included discussing each page of the story, relating the story elements, asking ques-

tions and encouraging theirs, using pictures to support unfamiliar vocabulary, and bringing out any relevant prior knowledge the students already possessed. Ensuring comprehensible input in this way (Krashen, 1982; Opitz, 2009) was key to understanding these stories, as they were often more challenging to all my young listeners, not just those considered English-language learners. The stories' rich vocabulary, quality writing, complex story elements, and detailed illustrations were made tangible by Betsy's prosodic reading and her knowledge that "through the dynamic interplay

between text and illustration ... the story emerges" (Serafini & Giorgis, 2003, p. 20).

My students had shown significant progress in their listening and oral expression through the year. I decided not to tell them of the two versions, in order to delay what I believed they were capable of understanding; I wanted them to "uncover" (D. Wurst, personal communication, Fall 2002) this fact for themselves. We chose to read the modern version first without previewing it beforehand. I had not yet determined how best to build the background knowledge my students would need to interpret Chaucer's medieval text without explicit instruction, but I knew I wanted to use the modern version to support the medieval. It was some time later that I discovered the work of Youngs and Serafini (2011), Youngs (2012), and Barone (2014). The benefit I derived from a literature review of these authors (and others) confirmed the value in trusting one's professional training and creativity to enrich our teaching and our students' learning experience (see sidebar, "Strategies to Help Students").



The Read-Aloud: Modern Text

As we listened to the story *Chanticleer and the Fox* (Chaucer, 1958) unfold over the next 20 minutes, the interactive nature of Betsy's modern English read-aloud gave my young students the opportunity to share observations, questions, and personal connections. We were captivated by Betsy's eloquence, clarity, and passion as her oral interpretation acknowledged the value and richness of the language. She was fully committed to this story, honoring both her educational training and her belief in reading as an "esthetic" (Dewey, 1934, p. 47) experience.

The basic premise of this read-aloud had been achieved: to introduce our students to the story of Chanticleer. Over the next few days, my students and I reviewed the story extensively once I realized this was the approach I wanted to take. Scheduling and curricular plans were a constant concern, yet I was able to make the time because of the professional freedom I enjoyed at our school. In this way, I was able to go more in-depth than with a preview—each of the four sessions lasting an average of 30 minutes. As we worked, I monitored my students' engagement and used sequential sections of text in recognition of their limited attention span.

Not only did we reread and describe the narrative story elements, we examined each page by inquiring, "What can we learn about time? How did people live? What words sound strange?" We depended heavily on the historical accuracy of Cooney's (1959) illustrations. We brought to light several key features, such as the clothing, fireplace, cooking pot, and the absence of glass in the windows. We exchanged ideas regarding how the people might have lived. We unearthed terms and phrases such as *alas*, *nay*, and *woe-is-me* that characterized their manner of speaking. These helped the children place the story "a long time ago," ultimately fixing it during the Middle Ages. These extensive discussions not only helped to probe, build, and deepen my students' prior knowledge, they prepared us for the next phase of our experience.

Building Partnerships

One of our goals for this project was to develop a sense of community among our students. To accomplish this, we emphasized an important feature of our K–12 school: intergenerational opportunities. We did this first by having Wally's high school students listen to the modern version of the story with us and then review its key story elements. The following week, Wally's students worked with pairs of my students in selecting question strips and presenting them to their group. I had prepared general narrative element questions and specific *Chanticleer* story questions, many of which were at the knowl-

Table 1. *Chanticleer and the Fox* questions for partner and small-group activity

- What was the moral of the story? (What lesson did you learn?)
- What surprised you in the story?
- What events led up to the problem?
- If you could change the story, what would you write differently?
- If you could speak to the author, what would you ask?
- How is this story different from a nonfiction book?
- When you didn't understand something, what did you do?
- What food was available for the family to eat? Where did you find this information?
- Describe the cottage: location, building materials, and so forth.
- The author tells us the widow is poor. How else do you know?
- When did this story take place? What evidence from the story supports your idea? (Great Depression, Renaissance, medieval times, ancient Egypt, pioneer days, westward expansion)
- What was Chanticleer's first reaction when he saw the fox?
- Describe Chanticleer: crowing, voice, comb, bill, legs and toes, nails, feathers.
- Describe Chanticleer's dream. What did the hen Partlet say to him?
- Why did Chanticleer believe the fox instead of listening to his instinct?
- What technology, inventions, textiles did the family have and use?
- What did the story say about time (hour, day, season, timepiece)?
- How did Chanticleer trick the fox?

edge/comprehension level (see Table 1). The text had been so filled with descriptions and details that helping the students recall them was valuable in placing the time period and how people lived. Opportunities were provided for higher-level thinking that included requests to recount the moral of the story, determine the lesson we should learn from it, and find evidence to support their positions.

Wally was struck by how some of his high school students behaved with my first and second graders; several older students were more interactive and animated than

in his class. We watched and listened as his students placed the story in time by comparing it to such periods as the Great Depression or the Renaissance; most of my young students were unaware of the existence of these historical periods. In their temporal understanding, long ago was as nebulous as last year for the younger students. This did not prevent the high school students from trying to help them understand, in their role as the “more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1930–1934/1978, p. 86). After approximately 30 minutes together, my students and I departed; in hindsight, Wally and I would have provided more time for shared reflection.

Transactions

Over the next two weeks, I began to prepare the script Wally would read to my students. While I searched for specific passages in the Middle English text, the value of my work to date, as well as repeated reading of the texts, became starkly apparent. What I had thought of as incomprehensible text was suddenly understandable. I read entire passages in Middle English, knowing specifically where I was in the story. If my own understanding had grown significantly through crafting the circumstances that framed this transactional experience, I wondered how much my students’ had changed (Rosenblatt, 1986; 1978). The spelling no longer impeded my ability to make sense of what I read. Cooney’s delightful personal anecdote sheds further light:

A fond aunt, looking over his [eight year old] shoulder, was surprised to find that he was reading not a translation but the Tales as Chaucer had written them, in Middle English. “Why, Stephen,” she exclaimed, “how can you possibly understand that!” Stephen looked up at her and smiled. “Oh, I don’t mind, Aunt Eleanor,” he said, shrugging his shoulders. “I’m not such a good speller myself.” (1959, p. 313)

This brief narrative reinforced my decision to compare today’s orthography to that of 600 years ago, later, in extensions. We would leave the reading of Chaucer to Wally.

The Read-Aloud: Medieval Text

Betsy and Wally have been involved in the dramatic arts, and their perspective on the read-aloud was intriguing. They felt that Chaucer’s original text should be presented orally, with neither visual text nor pictures, using intonation and body language to support the students’ first impressions; this was reminiscent of the days when stories were performed using the oral tradition (B. Chisolm and

W. Jones, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

Prior to coming to our class, Wally cautioned his students to allow the younger students to take the lead in responding to the medieval text. He had purposefully shared the passages with his students in advance: “The exercise furthered the appreciation of the evolutionary course of language and helped to smooth the reading of the Elizabethan English of Shakespeare” (W. Jones, personal communication, July 19, 2014), the course his students were enrolled in at the time of the read-aloud.

I announced, “Today is Mr. Jones’ turn to read. There will be no pictures to help you. Listen carefully for clues. It is called *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale*” (Hopper, 1970).*

This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterten they anoon,
~~And syen the fox toward the grove goon,~~
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden, “Out! harrow! and weylaway!”
Ha, ha, ~~the fox!~~ and after him ~~they ran~~ ...
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges,
So were they fered for berking of the dogges ...
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke....
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle;
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*

During the reading of the first passage (pp. 336–337), my students began glancing around and chuckling as they expressed their surprise, through laughter, at the odd language. Wally had carefully omitted certain terms and phrases (the above stricken text) and pronounced nearly every vowel as he had been taught, thereby obscuring more identifiable words. In an accent reminiscent of Gaelic and Nordic languages, Wally’s expressive cadence drew us in as both classes of students listened to his words.

It was during the reading of the second passage that one of my students quietly responded, “I think this is *Chanticleer* ... because during the story it said ‘Can you sing as great as your father,’” translating the text Wally had read.



Scan the QR code to see Wally reading and discussing Chaucer.

*From *Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales (Selected): An Interlinear Translation* (pp. 336–337), by V.F. Hopper, 1970, New York. © 1970 by Barron’s Educational Series. Reprinted with permission.

SPELLED THE SAME		SPELLED DIFFERENTLY	
Middle English	Modern English	Middle English	Modern English
a	a	povre	poor
was	was	widwe	widow
I	I	doun	down
up	up	withinne	within
and	and	color ← Colours	
our	our	romed	roaming
hound	hound		
body	body		
my	my		
His	His		
that	that		

Figure 1. Two second graders' spelling comparisons between Middle and modern English

I reminded my young scholars that the story was called *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, to see if anyone else could resolve this apparent dichotomy—was this the same story under different names—and to encourage them to think aloud, as this student had done. While Wally continued reading, more expressions of recognition began to show on their faces as my students shared their discoveries. The level of excitement rose, carrying over to the intrigued and amused high school students.

Over several passages, the children spoke aloud the words they could distinguish. A second student concurred that this must be another version of *Chanticleer*. Although they admitted to not being able to decipher all the words, my students recognized it as a language similar to French, Spanish, or Scottish.

"It's a [sic] old language ... because people didn't usually speak that kind of language" a third student remarked.

A fourth student raised his hand. "The other *Chanticleer* we read ... they were way, way back then, so they might've speaked [sic] like that."

My three English-language learners also had little difficulty articulating the same details and insights as their other classmates; two of them were more outspoken than many of their peers.

Wally then read several passages from the Middle English text while Betsy translated by reading Cooney's

version. Betsy did this so our students could hear the similarities and differences in the spoken words. Wally later verified the language as a form of English from the 14th century and that scholars have determined how the language might have sounded. He also shared a brief history of Chaucer's pilgrimage to Canterbury. We wrapped up our 30-minute session, and Wally's students departed.

Reflections

Often our time for reflection occurred while passing each other in the hall. Some of these discussions included the progression of the instructional process; we had intentionally allowed the evolution of the lesson to influence its direction. Wally recalled:

[One of our goals] was the initiation and observation of a generative approach to learning and whether or not this exercise would generate interest and curiosity in our students. In my own post-exercise discussion, students were indeed impressed with the younger students' ability to make connections between the two ages of the English language as well as



Scan the QR code to watch Betsy and Wally reading selections from *Chanticleer and the Fox* and *The Nun's Priest's Tale*.

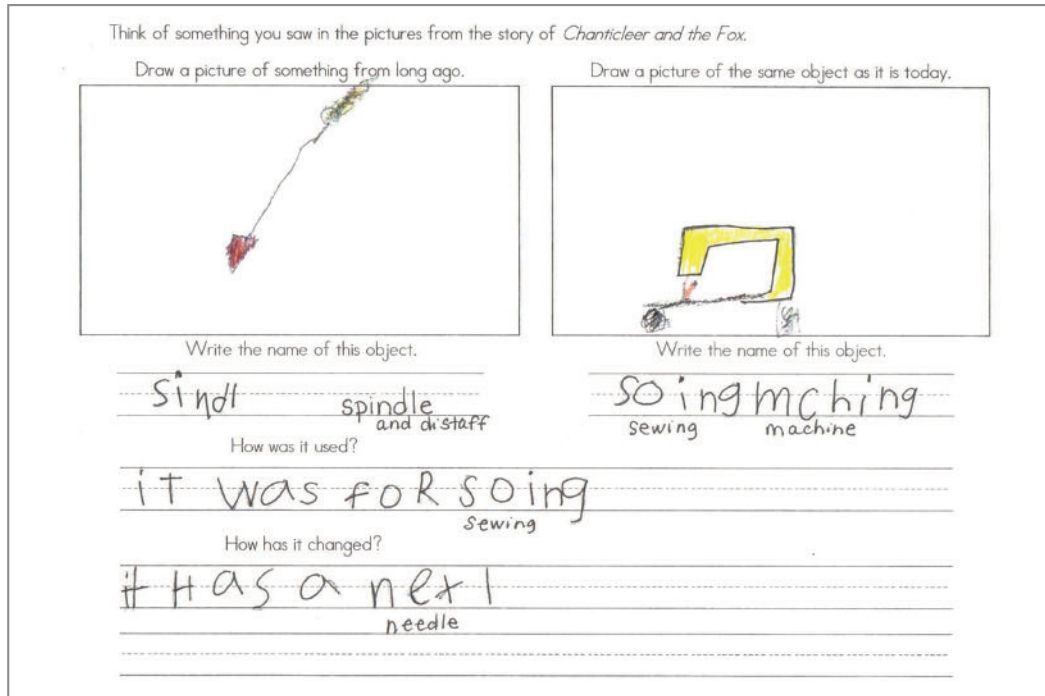


Figure 2. A first grader's illustration of a 14th century spindle and distaff and a modern sewing tool, the sewing machine

the ability to recognize phonemic similarity to Gaelic. (W. Jones, personal communication, July 19, 2014)

Perhaps the preparatory work of reviewing the text and illustrations in several ways had facilitated the younger students' ability to make the connection between the two versions. Wally's students had shown great restraint by giving the younger students the opportunity to interject their insights. We decided to continue our exploration of the printed word at a later date.

Extensions

We extended the read-aloud by creating additional lessons, lasting on average 30 to 45 minutes, involving the printed word. We continued the comparative structure by comparing and contrasting the spelling of modern and Middle English words; together our students surveyed a passage as a partner activity. Interestingly, although my students could read many words, they were not always able to determine the modern from the older spellings; their own transitional spelling when writing could be mistaken for Middle English (M. Opitz, personal communication, Spring 2012). They were excited to know that familiar words, such as *was*, *of*, and *the*, were used by Chaucer in the late 1300s (see Figure 1), even when one student later responded that the story was written "700

days ago." My students drew pictures, based on Cooney's illustrations, of objects they recognized and still use today (see Figure 2). We explored a brief history of the Anglo-Saxon spelling of the weekdays, inspired by the word *Friday*, from the story. When asked to reflect on the spelling and the sounds from long ago compared to today, this line of inquiry generated such written responses as "There is [sic] a lot more vowels [sic] yoused [sic] in the words" and "Long ago the sounds were older than now." These activities further demonstrated the changes that have taken place over time. Not only does language evolve, but one additional tale revealed that stories found in one part of the world can spread and change over time, across a continent, and across cultures as well.

By chance we had come upon a fable, *The Fox and the Crow*. It is attributed to Aesop whose tales were shared over 2,000 years ago. After reading it aloud to my students, I asked what was familiar about this story, for "[t]he teachable moment occurs when teachers and students engage in meaningful inquiry regarding some problematic situation" (Garrison, 1997, p. xv). One student made the connection between the two stories: "It's kind of like *Chanticleer* 'cause the Fox was flattering the rooster," inferring that the rooster's situation mirrored that of the crow. Recognizing the resemblance between the stories had taken several prompts, but, once they realized it, my students became

Strategies to Help Students

These are some strategies I used to answer my question, “How can I help my students become aware of the changing nature of language?”

Inquiry

- Reflect on what fascinates or confounds you and your students.
- Research what has already been written about your idea/question.
- Use pedagogically sound practices.
- Seek support from teachers, professors, community members, and students.
- Learn from their responses and ask yourself “What is the next step?”

Comprehensible Input

- Preview content (in this case, picturebooks).
- Draw out relevant prior knowledge from your students.
- Use and discuss pictures and realia to support unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Ask and encourage questions.
- Provide feedback.

The Read-Aloud

- Establish a purpose for listening.
- Select a text that challenges students (concepts, language).
- Encourage student response during reading.
- Prompt by giving hints and clues.
- Think aloud.
- Provide feedback.

Building Partnerships

- Have older students work with younger students in partners and small groups.
- Meet often to build and sustain friendships (30 minutes; weekly, monthly).
- Provide explicit directions to older students to assist younger partners in completing a task.
- Monitor interactions.
- Provide guidance and feedback.

Extension

- Determine students’ needs from their responses and questions.
- Develop activities that can include
 - comparative structure;
 - questions: knowledge/comprehension, specific content, open-ended; and
 - building a model, creating a drawing, completing an organizer.

quite animated, and the nature of our discussion became rather sophisticated.

We discussed several other similarities, and then together we computed the approximate age difference between the texts. When asked to resolve how Chaucer and Aesop, with nearly two millennia between them, had written nearly the same story, another student wondered if Chaucer had taken some ideas from Aesop’s fable. The first student was concerned that paper didn’t exist back then; we shared a few thoughts regarding papyrus, parchment, and vellum. Cooney (1959) knew that her story “antedates Chaucer” (p. 312) but gave no further clues. According to Wheatley (2000), this particular story of Chaucer’s was indeed influenced by Aesop. Finally, we gathered on our world map carpet, using it to trace the Roman expansion as a possible vector and to discuss how they had spread their cultural knowledge with them (J.A. Erikson, personal communication, September 7, 2012). My students and I continued, for the duration of that school year and into the next, to come across many opportunities to reflect on the lessons learned from our exploration of the story of Chanticleer.

A Cautionary Tale

When we had a chance to revisit the read-aloud, Wally said our time together reminded him of teaching at the University of Northern Colorado’s former laboratory school. It was such an honor to share a kind of teaching that has become less visible among veteran teachers, less familiar to novice educators. Those who value this kind of teaching know “[t]he work will teach you how ...” (Estonian proverb, n.d.); we need to seek out and provide these opportunities for our students and ourselves.

The enemies of the esthetic are neither the practical nor the intellectual. They are the humdrum; slackness of loose ends; submission to convention in practice and intellectual procedure. Rigid abstinence, coerced submission, tightness on one side and dissipation, incoherence and aimless indulgence on the other, are deviations in opposite directions from the unity of an experience. (Dewey, 1934, p. 40)

Over half a century ago, the concern lay in the disregard toward teaching (Barzun, 1945). Today we must each ask ourselves if we are now losing the art of teaching and find a way to restore it. The thoughtful read-aloud is one way to address this issue. By allowing the circumstances to evolve, neither in a scripted form nor haphazardly but through a blending of multiple processes—visualizing,

researching, discussing, planning, creating, modifying, and reflecting—we can broaden and strengthen our learning community. Teachers need the professional freedom to interpret our craft, ultimately inspiring and transforming us, as well as our students, making teaching and learning worthwhile.



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Bringing Them in and Bringing Them Back: Strategies for Improving Family Participation

Kathryn L. Roberts and Shana E. Rochester

*Setting a welcoming, supportive, and respectful
tone for family events is crucial to their success.*

For the last few years, we have spent a great deal of time planning, piloting, and researching a series of family literacy workshops (Roberts, Jordan, & Duke, 2014). The series, which consists of five sessions for preschoolers and their families focused on comprehension, concepts of print, oral language, phonological awareness, and writing, turned out to be a success. The feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive and the children showed significant gains, compared to a control group, on measures of print and word awareness, and comprehension.

We are, of course, excited about these results and the workshops' potential to improve literacy outcomes for young children. As literacy educators and researchers, when we engaged in this project we spent a lot of time carefully considering the research on emergent literacy and effective practices. This research was, without a doubt, key to the success of the workshops. However, we also spent a great deal of time reading, thinking, talking, and learning about the factors that influence families' decisions to participate in school-sponsored events. After

all, the most effective literacy practices are rendered completely ineffective if families do not show up to learn about them, greatly decreasing the chances that they will engage in them at home. In this article, we share five key considerations that should be taken into account when planning family literacy events, with the goal of greater family participation.

Enticing Invitations

Obviously, inviting families to attend an event is essential to families actually attending. No one shows up to an event that they are unaware of. That said, not all invitations are created equal. Research suggests that invitations on three different levels can affect families' decisions as to whether they attend an event. Solicitations from schools (for example, an administrator or building literacy coach) are important because they show that the school welcomes, values, and expects family participation (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Invitations from children's teachers are important for the same reasons but also because they feel much more personal and connected to an individual child's learning (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). Finally, requests from the children themselves, formal or informal, are extremely effective because parents are naturally inclined to respond to what their children present as needs (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). All of this is to say that sending home a one-size-fits-all flyer that is from "The School" is less likely to compel parents to attend than a multi-pronged approach in which both the administrators and teachers personally invite families *and* in which children are involved in engaging families as well—either through actually creating invitations or through orally requesting and reminding parents about the events that the children are excited about.

It is also important to be mindful of families' preferred modes of communication and schedules. Depending on your population, you may find that invitations are more likely to be well received (or received at all!) if they are communicated via social media (for example, Facebook or Twitter), e-mail, postal mail, phone calls, face-to-face communication, reminders from bus drivers, or, when necessary, through a translator.

Finally, details matter—the time, date, and location of your event can also be an important factor in families' decisions. It is obviously important to plan events for times when staff and volunteers are able to run them. However, it is equally important to plan them for times when families can attend. For some families, during the school day works best because it avoids extracurricular activities and obligations to care for other school-aged children or to prepare family meals. Other families may

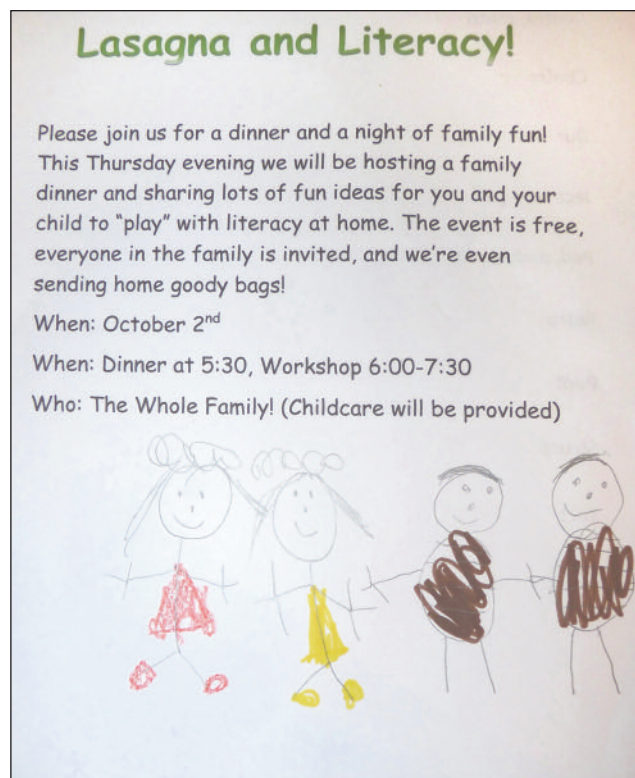


Figure 1. Example of invitation

work during the day and only be able to attend in the evening. Communicating with families about their schedules during the planning stages increases the chances that the event will fit into their schedules and thus helps you reach as many families as possible. Figure 1 shows an example of an invitation.

A Great First Experience

If you go to a restaurant for the first time and the food and service are terrible, you probably won't go back, and you certainly won't recommend it to a friend. Family events work in the same way—if the experience is positive, most families will happily return; if not, it is far less likely. So what do you do to make your first impression great?

First, consider your physical space. Make sure there is ample signage directing families to different areas (child care, the workshop, restrooms, etc.) and that ideally you have people on hand to welcome families, guide them in the right direction, and answer any questions. It is imperative that everyone involved with the event be "on the same page" and knows how important it is to greet all comers, tell them how glad you are that they could make it, and offer to take coats, hold open doors, and so forth. These gestures help to lower anxiety and create a feeling of welcome right from the minute families step through the door. You will also want to be sure that you have ample

space for the number of people you are expecting, and, particularly if you are in a school designed for young children, seating that will be comfortable for adults. Details like this might seem minor in comparison to the larger goals of your event but can be important factors in families' overall affective memories of the experience (and thus their willingness to return).

If space, staffing, and funding allow, you might consider inviting the whole family, as opposed to just the adults and children for whom the program is designed. In addition to avoiding some logistical issues of childcare and meal preparation, which are often cited as barriers to attending school events (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995), inviting the whole family (or anyone not in school if the event is held during the school day) sends a clear message that your school or organization is a place in which everyone is welcome. If you do invite whole families, think about whether the event is something that the whole family would benefit from attending together or whether it would make more sense to arrange for childcare for all or part of the session.

Starting the event with an informal family meal or snack gives stragglers time to come in and get settled without feeling like they are drawing attention to themselves. It also gives everyone a chance to get to know each other in a relaxed setting before interacting in a bit more structured way during the event.

Remember, many parents who have wonderful intentions and goals for their children may have had less than wonderful experiences during their own educational journey. Parents may be nervous, skeptical, or feel generally out of place in a school building or educational setting. It is your job to put them at ease so that their energies can be spent on engaging during the event—and so they will want to come back!

Giving Families Choices

The next part of the process is creating an environment in which children and families feel that they have a choice in the activities, which is linked to increased interest and engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Parents may be more likely to see the value of activities when they can choose those that fit their needs and those of their children. Similarly, children tend to be more enthusiastic about activities when they are empowered to make choices about either the activity or parts of it (e.g., the particular materials used).

Providing these types of choices allows opportunities for both groups to take ownership of the activities in which they participate and feel valued as participants and co-collaborators in their experiences—which can be particularly important for areas in which they may feel their expertise is limited.

Choice is important for all families but is essential when working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds. For some parents, some activities and components of your event may not be the best fit for their families. In cases like these, empowering families to choose activities and materials that they find interesting or culturally relevant can help them be a part of literacy learning that works for them and that can be integrated into their everyday lives.

Finally, all families also need to know that it is acceptable to select materials and activities that they are interested in rather than something not pertinent to their lives. There are many different ways to learn about literacy, and there is no harm in walking away from one that might not be a good fit. This last consideration is particularly important because the success of a workshop is measured not by what you can convince families to do during the event itself but rather what pieces of the workshop they integrate into their daily lives after they leave. Choice is one way in which we can equip families with a toolkit of activities that are culturally relevant and interesting to them—activities they will want to

continue to engage in long after leaving the four walls of the workshop.

Activities at our school supported

- phonological awareness through playing literacy-based games to pass the time in the car;
- letter and sound knowledge through play with sidewalk chalk;
- concepts of print through cooking meals or snacks using simple recipes;
- oral language through discussions at the dinner table and imaginative play;
- writing through authentic tasks, such as creating a grocery list together; and
- comprehension through dialogic engagement during read-alouds and storytelling.

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Providing Materials to Extend the Activities at Home

Another factor that determines family participation in activities outside of the workshops is access to materials (see Table 1). It is often necessary to provide some families with both activities *and* the materials necessary to engage in the workshops. In the United States, more than 16 million children live in families that earn incomes below the federal poverty level (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013). These families struggle to meet the basic needs of food and shelter, and they likely have little expendable income that can be spent providing their children with the rich and varied types of literacy materials we would like to see in homes. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the availability of print in homes—at least those types of print that are similar to the ones used in schools—varies widely based on the household's socioeconomic status (SES), with children from low-SES households having considerably less access to school-like print and print materials in their homes as compared to children from higher-SES households (Korat, Klein, & Segal-Drori, 2007).

Your school or organization may choose to provide materials specific to the activities you are promoting (e.g., a kit of items to create finger puppets) or you may widen your



focus to include a variety of print materials for reading (e.g., different types of books and print, including picturebooks, chapter books, dictionaries, magazines, and newspapers) and writing (pencils, paper, crayons, stamps, scissors, glue, markers, etc.). If you are lucky enough to have adequate funding to do so, providing these types of materials to families is one of the best ways to ensure that they can extend their experiences from your event into their homes.

If funding is tight (as it so often is), fear not! First, several sources are available for free or very low-cost books, such as First Book (www.firstbook.org) and the Reading Is Fundamental Family of Readers Program

Table 1. List of materials

At their first session, all children received

- writing implements: crayons, pencils, pens, erasers;
- other writing materials: construction paper, white paper, lined notebooks, small notepads;
- craft supplies: glue, scissors; and
- one book (with an additional book at each additional session).

Families also received materials to support specific activities or extensions of specific activities from the sessions, for example:

- trade books with bookmarks prompting parents with ways to help children interact with the text (concepts of print),
- list of sentence starters to use when talking about books with children (comprehension),
- file folder games created in the session and game pieces to play them with (letter and sound knowledge),
- handout of free or low-cost materials that can be used in children's dramatic play (oral language),
- lyrics to rhyming songs (phonemic awareness), and
- family photo albums created from blank books, the first page of which were created in the session (writing).

(www.rif.org/us/about/programs/family-of-readers.htm). Scholastic Book Clubs (www.scholastic.com) is also a source of low-cost books and provides the opportunity to earn free books for your organization. If gently used books are an option for your program, you might consider soliciting book donations—for example, asking middle school children and families to donate books they have outgrown but that might be useful in an elementary school program. For writing materials such as paper, sticky notes, pencils, and pens, contact area businesses for donations. Some businesses will donate supplies with their logos or, as community supporters, simply purchase supplies to donate. Office supply stores tend to be a particularly good resource as they often throw away or recycle products that come in damaged packages or that are returned but would happily give them away! Whatever your financial needs, consider applying for a small grant. Literally thousands are available through businesses (Target, Verizon, and Walmart, to name a few) and local community organizations such as Rotary clubs, independent credit unions, and charitable foundations.

Finally, the community itself is a resource. Families and children are surrounded by print in the form of billboards, grocery store circulars, bus route signs, and more. Incorporating these types of print into your activities is completely free and demonstrates for parents the potential power of the literacy environments that they live in every day (Purcell-Gates, 1995). In the end, the bottom line is that families need to have access to the materials necessary to follow through with their learning after they exit your doors. Otherwise, the chances of learning carrying over into the home (and thus making a lasting impact) are slim to none.

Parents as Partners

A key underlying assumption of family workshops is that parents can contribute something to their children's learning that we, as educators, cannot. Teachers may have a stronger understanding of teaching and learning, but parents are typically working with much smaller adult-child ratios than teachers, have access and influence over a much longer span of time, and, most importantly, know *a lot* about their children. Parents' and teachers' advantages and disadvantages complement each other almost perfectly, which is why it is so important that we view parents as partners, *not* as subordinates. This is not a

one-way street: In order for kids to reach their full potential we have to both give *and* accept help from parents. So how do we do that?

First, we demonstrate respect for parents as experts on their families and children. We do this by talking with them and finding out what kind of literate practices exist in their daily lives upon which we can build. For example, if a family enjoys singing in church, we can build on that by creating activities that incorporate music. If a family uses the city bus as their primary form of transportation, we can work with them on the opportunities for literacy learning that come from route maps, billboards, and reading

license plates. Linking home and school literacies in these ways can positively impact literacy development (Moll & Gonzalez, 1994; Neuman & Roskos, 1992).

We also do this by asking parents to bring forward their concerns, really listening to them, and then making clear the connection between our understandings of their concerns and the actions we take. For example, many parents are skeptical of engaging in the types of messy activities that many educators feel provide good opportunities for learning. If a parent brings up this concern, a responsive educator would acknowledge the legitimacy of the concern and provide less messy alternatives

to the activity. Regardless of how great an activity is, if a family deems it inappropriate for their home, it won't happen and thus cannot be effective.

Finally, we need to honor the fact that parents know their children much better than we do. They are experts on their children's preferences, motivations, and ways of understanding and, as such, should be our go-to resource when planning activities to meet and engage children where they are. In short, it is extremely important that families and educators are on the same page, but it is not particularly effective to demand that it always be our page.

Conclusion

Family literacy workshops can be an effective way to jumpstart or support parents' continued involvement in their children's educations and have the potential to improve literacy outcomes for children. The quality of the content of these types of events matters but the affective aspects are equally important. Setting a welcoming, supportive, and respectful tone for family events is crucial to their success and requires careful planning, as well.

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**What's
New?**

Read, Sketch, Review, and Rate:

Talking About Books We Love With Room 205

Suzette Youngs

Recently, I was fortunate to spend some time with the students at Mountain View Elementary School in Windsor, Colorado, in Kyle Webster's fourth-grade classroom. Kyle is a graduate from the University of Northern Colorado and in his second year of teaching. I worked alongside Room 205 for a few days as they worked on their book trailers mentioned in his article earlier in this issue, "Who Wouldn't Want to Read That? Designing

Book Trailers in the Classroom." I also attended the Room 205 Film Festival. What a fantastic celebration of literacy! After the book trailers were complete, his class began to work on written book reviews and sketch-to-stretch strategies. I met with four students who wanted to talk about their favorite books and share their sketch-to-stretch with me. A big shout out goes to Room 205! You Rock!



Charlotte's Web

Written by E.B. White
Artwork by Carlee Garber

Suzette: Tell me about your sketch-to-stretch.

Carlee: These little things I drew because there is luck. Wilbur is hoping to not get killed at the end. I also included friendship.

Suzette: What do you like about the book?

Carlee: I like it because it is interesting. It tells you what is going to happen. I kind of like it all. It has characters and trustworthiness. My favorite characters are Wilbur and Charlotte because they help each other out. Wilbur

is smart, funny, and playful. Charlotte is courageous because she created a web for Wilbur so he wouldn't die, and then she died instead of Wilbur.

Suzette: Should other people read it?

Carlee: People should read it because it has friendship, luck, and hope. If people don't know what *courageous* and *hope* means, the book can tell you what they mean. The four-leaf clover is my symbol because there is luck, and there is no four-leaf clover in the book.



Carlee gave this book 5 four-leaf clovers out of 5.



The One and Only Ivan

Written by Katherine Applegate

Artwork by Kaylee Rhea

Suzette: Tell me why you like this book.

Kaylee: I think it is a really good book for teachers to read to children. It shows how someone can be lonely, but that can change in a split second. Ivan is really confused because his best friend is gone, but what he doesn't know is that someone really special is about to come into his life.

Suzette: Tell me about your sketch-to-stretch.

Kaylee: The bird right here resembles someone being caged up and that it's not fun because he just wants to be free, and Ivan is just sitting in his cage looking confused because of the Coming Soon sign. He had a painted jungle on the back of his dome from the owner, for the business. He has to try to make him look happy, but Ivan still doesn't feel happy. He draws art for Mac to sell because that's how he makes money. The crack is where he hit it with a baseball bat, and he made it where he can fly in with the crowns and the paper.

The reason I did the floor blue and black is because those are his most sad colors, because the mall isn't getting very much business and he gets lonely and the bird wants to fly. Mac keeps getting angry and he keeps taking it all out on Ivan because the mall isn't getting

enough business for him to make money. The reason I did the wall brown is because I searched what it meant on the Internet and it said brown means to want to be free and that's what the bird wants to be. The bird is chained up on his legs.

So Ivan is coloring with happy colors because he wants to make it seem like everything is happy, but he's really not. The sun is part of the jungle that seems happy but he's not, and nothing can make him happy because he never gets to see anything. All these people come by and knock on the window and it makes him mad 'cause he's trying to do his own stuff. All he wants to do is roam free.

Suzette: So do you recommend this book for other fourth graders?

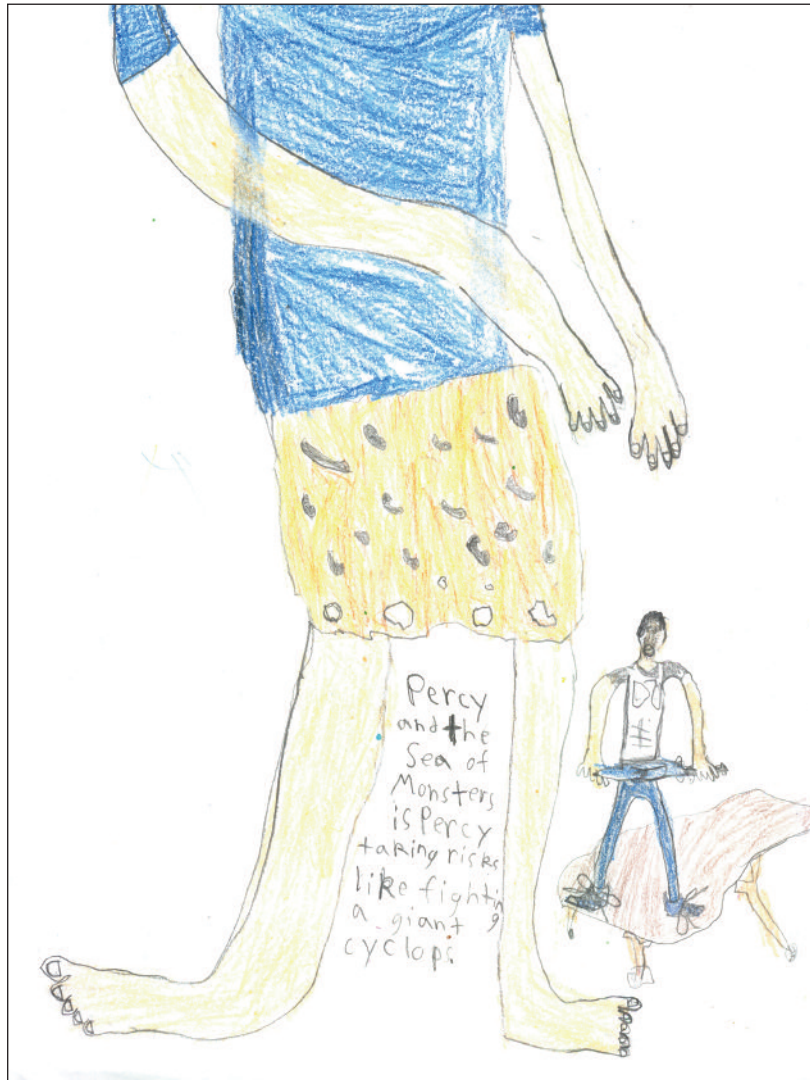
Kaylee: Yes, it is a really good book and it's at a fourth-grade level. It has some challenging words but not too many, and you can understand it well and it really helps you learn a lot.

Suzette: What would be the symbol for this book and what rate do you give it?

Kaylee: Bananas, and I give it 4 out of 5 bananas.



Kaylee gave this book 4 bananas out of 5.



***Percy Jackson and the Olympians:
The Sea of Monsters***

Written by Rick Riordan

Artwork by Cade Quesada

Suzette: Tell me what you like about the book.

Cade: I like that it is about going on adventures fighting monsters, going on missions, and just taking risks and giving it your all to fight the big things. Like, Percy is small. Percy is smaller to all the monsters, so it is like if you are small and brave you can fight the big things, like he fights the bad Cyclops.

Suzette: So in this sketch-to-stretch you are telling me about the characters and pulling out the theme as well.

Cade: Yes. So not showing the head and showing that it covers the whole page represents how tall he is to Percy, and the hand represents that he could just hold Percy in his hand. He doesn't really use armor, but I put armor on him to show safety. I showed a table; he

is sitting on a smaller table and he is reaching down to get him and he is holding a sword. He always has a sword with him, and this is his new sword with a trident on it and it represents his father, Poseidon. Poseidon shows Percy his new brother and friend Tyson the Cyclops. Percy and the Cyclops are good friends. This is a text-to-self connection because it reminds me of my best friends and how we are really close friends.

Suzette: Do you think other students will like this book?

Cade: I think students will like the action, the bravery, and the courage. I wanted to keep reading because it is a good book.

Suzette: What symbol would you use and what is your rating?

Cade: I give it 5 swords.





Bad Kitty School Daze

Written by Nick Bruel
Artwork by Crysta Ehrlich

Suzette: Tell me about your book and what you like about it.

Crysta: I like *Bad Kitty School Daze* because it is funny and has a lot of humor. Kitty always gets jealous of Puppy. Kitty always spits at the teachers. They didn't want to go to school but they had to because they are always fighting and Puppy couldn't stop drooling.

Suzette: Tell me about the characters.

Crysta: The teacher is a human and the other students are animals. Peanut is a big bulldog, and there is this weird little bunny that thought he was a super villain.

Suzette: What happens in school?

Crysta: In school they have to do arts and crafts, story time, show and tell, circle time, and graduation.

Suzette: What does Bad Kitty do?

Crysta: Bad Kitty doesn't graduate, and Kitty falls asleep during story time. Then she has a dream. She dreams she is *Love, Love Angel Kitten* but she calls it *Love Love Angel Kitty* and puts herself in the book. The word *school* is written really nicely and *school* has a little heart

for the O—it is all sweet. But then she wakes up to a loud “Meow!”

Suzette: What else happened?

Crysta: Bad Kitty was blamed because Baby fell on a ball and blamed Kitty. At school she gets really *surprised* and gives the teacher a bad look, so that was kind of rude. Then in the classroom Kitty was the last one to share what she was thinking about.

Suzette: So what do you like about Bad Kitty?

Crysta: Bad Kitty is just crazy! Her attitude is just off the wall.

Suzette: Would you recommend this book?

Crysta: Yes. A 7-year-old could read it and there are really great illustrations.

Suzette: What do you think readers will like most about it?

Crysta: How crazy she is, and it makes me laugh.

Suzette: So what is your symbol and what is your rating?

Crysta: I think Kitty prints, and I give it 5 Kitty prints.



Crysta gave this book 5 kitty prints out of 5.

The *Colorado Reading Journal* editors extend the invitation to other Colorado classrooms to submit their own Read, Sketch, Review, and Rate commentaries. Please feel free to enhance/extend the response and/or focus on other themes that highlight the latest and greatest in children's and young adult literature.



What's New?

Letter From the Conference Chairs

Barbara Kruse and Kim Sutherland

Dear *Colorado Reading Journal* readers,

We are looking forward to the “Collaboration Celebration: Scaffolding Literacy for One and All!” which is rapidly approaching. Registration has already begun for the Colorado Council International Reading Association (CCIRA) conference, to be held February 4–7, 2015, at the Marriott Denver Tech Center. We have some old favorites and some new speakers to support you with your professional learning as an educator. The majority of the speakers will be addressing Common Core State Standards’ (CCSS’) best practices, critical thinking, and motivation, as well as supporting you with your classroom instruction in writing and reading.

Wednesday evening will be a special limited attendance evening with Jeffrey Wilhelm, widely regarded as an expert on assisting students in reading and writing who are considered “at risk.” Registration will be separate for this event.

The conference officially kicks off Thursday morning with Georgia Heard, followed by many great sessions and luncheon speakers: Monica Brown, Jan Richardson, Jeffrey Wilhelm, Laura Robb, Lori Oczkus, and Tanny McGregor. Thursday evening will be a treat with small groups featuring Kyleene Beers and Bob Probst, and another with Kathryn Erskine. This event also requires a separate registration.

Friday will begin with Kelly Gallagher giving the General Session, followed by presenters Frank Serafini, Smokey Daniels, Monette McIver, and Janiel Wagstaff. Luncheons feature Chris Soentpiet and Richard Allington. Roundtable lunches will also be available. Friday evening’s treat will be Smokey Daniels.

If you’re unable to attend the conference either Thursday or Friday, Saturday features many sessions too,

including Nell Duke, Megan Sloan, Sharon Zinke, and Michael Opitz. Roland Smith will be the Saturday luncheon speaker.

Whether it’s national leaders in literacy education or authors who you and your students love, you’ll be able to attend many sessions by both. There will also be opportunities to have these authors’ books autographed.

Don’t forget to check out the many presenters from Colorado who will give of their time and talents to present sessions during all three days of the conference.

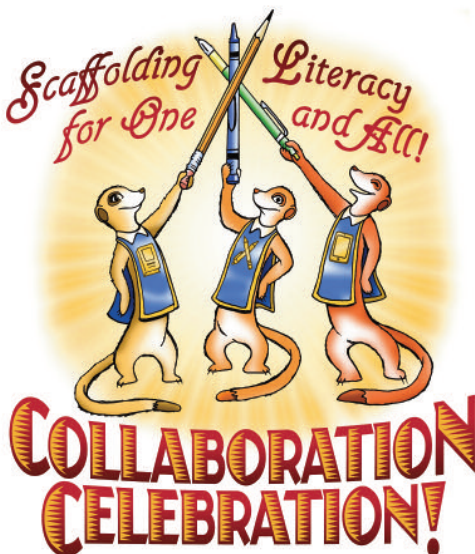
The Public Education Business Coalition has designed a special strand at this year’s conference, which will offer sessions at all levels, with topics including writing, content area learning, and leadership.

As in the past, the Exhibit Hall, located in the Rocky Mountain Event Center of the Marriott, will showcase materials that are of interest to educators. Please put it on your list of activities during the conference!

For many of us, and for many years, teaching has been considered collaborative, but, in reality, it is a solitary activity carried out in our classrooms. We invite you to enjoy

a weekend of working together with colleagues from throughout Colorado and, in many cases, from around the world. Imagine a chance to share with others as you increase your knowledge of CCSS and how our profession responds to Senate Bill 10-191, the Colorado Teacher Evaluation instrument. Now is a great opportunity to further your professional development by attending the CCIRA conference. This will be the 48th year that literacy educators in Colorado have the chance to be together for a collaborative experience.

We look forward to seeing you there!



CCIRA 2015

2015 Conference on Literacy

FEBRUARY 4-7, 2015 · DENVER MARRIOTT TECH CENTER

Richard Allington
Kathi Appelt
Diane Barone
Kylene Beers
Kelly Bergman
Carole Bloch*
Monica Brown
Smokey Daniels
Nell Duke
Alane Ferguson
Kelly Gallagher
Xolisa Guzula*
Georgia Heard
Will Hobbs
Ellin Oliver Keene
Laurie Keller
Jarrett Krosoczka
Tanny McGregor
Monette McIver
Amy Nicholl
Lori Oczkus
Linda Osmundson
Mark Overmeyer
Bob Probst
Jan Richardson
Laura Robb

Meerkats are wonderful animals, tenacious in their efforts to bond together to protect the group and raise their young. They do not back down from any adversity or danger.

Like the meerkats, educators are tenacious in their pursuit of solid instructional practices and the highest quality literacy instruction for their young students.

Join us at the 2015 CCIRA conference to be bolstered by new learning, insights, and the collegiality of the community of your peers.

Frank Serafini
Alan Sitomer
Megan Sloan
Roland Smith
Chris Soentpiet
Isabel Springett
Martin Springett
Cris Tovani
Janiel Wagstaff
Jeffrey Wilhelm
Rozanne Williams
Suzette Youngs
Sharon Zinke

*South African educators

COLLABORATION CELEBRATION!



The logo for the Colorado Reading Journal. The word "COLORADO" is written in a large, stylized font with a purple outline. Inside the letters, there is a graphic of a yellow sun rising over a range of snow-capped mountains. Below "COLORADO", the words "READING JOURNAL" are written in a bold, purple, sans-serif font.

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