Submit children’s art related to literacy, reading, writing, or learning for the cover of the next issue. Please include a release from the child’s parent or guardian. Send original art (no copies) on 8.5” by 11” paper to The Oklahoma Reader, ATTN: Sally Beach, Editor, University of Oklahoma, 820 Van Vleet Oval, Norman, OK 73019. Deadline for Spring, 2009 issue: January, 15, 2009.
The Oklahoma Reader

Volume 44 No 1 Fall 2008

The journal of the Oklahoma Reading Association, an affiliate of the International Reading Association

The Oklahoma Reading Association (an affiliate of the International Reading Association) publishes the Oklahoma Reader two times a year. Members of the Oklahoma Reading Association will receive The Oklahoma Reader as a part of membership. The OKLAHOMA READER is available to libraries and schools on the Oklahoma Reading Association website at http://www.oklahomareadingassociation.org/.

The Oklahoma Reader is published for members of the Oklahoma Reading Association and all others concerned with reading. Because The Oklahoma Reader serves as an open forum, its contents do not necessarily reflect or imply endorsement of the ORA, its officers, or its members.

Invitation to Authors

The Oklahoma Reader invites teachers, graduate students, college and university instructors, and other reading professionals to submit original articles related to all areas of reading and literacy education. The Oklahoma Reader has a readership of approximately 1000 teachers and teacher educators. The editorial board encourages articles about classroom practice and current issues related to literacy education. The Oklahoma Reader also publishes research syntheses and reviews, original research, and reviews of professional materials related to literacy.

Specific instructions for authors are described on page 41.
# The Oklahoma Reader

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Thoughts from the Editor

Summer ended much too quickly for me this year! Of course, I might be feeling that way because I tried to pack too much into too short of a time, including moving into a new house, getting a new puppy, and attending the World Congress on Reading. Moving into the new house meant I had to go through all of my books, both personal and professional and dip into each one (until my mother took over the job since I was taking so long to pack and unpack the boxes). Getting a new puppy meant reading up on what I should expect to do to give the puppy a good start in life (I’m a cat person, so I really needed to know how to bring up a puppy). Attending the World Congress provided me with a plethora of ideas for both my own teaching and for sharing with my preservice teachers. Now I’m back at my desk and back in school, teaching literacy, using literacy to learn, and learning about literacy.

This issue provides a wide variety of ideas for teachers that are tested in classroom practice. We are inaugurating a new feature called In the Classroom. Articles featured here are more than teaching tips. They are classroom activities grounded in research and theory and tested in actual classrooms. Our first two articles for In the Classroom focus on assessing writing and integrating technology. Paulette Belshe describes a writing assessment for first grade that she successfully used in her own first grade classroom. Barbara Griffin describes a summer school setting that used electronic white boards to involve the students. In addition, James McCan discusses the readability of social studies textbooks and methods to support students who have to read textbooks above their level. Molly Griffis muses about her friend Billie Letts and her contributions to good reading. In Teacher Research, Emily Todd describes how she tried out the ideas in Jeffery Wilhelm’s book with her middle school readers. Jeffrey Wilhelm will be the keynote speaker at the ORA Conference in March, so I was really pleased to see how well his ideas worked in an Oklahoma classroom. Reading Policy addresses issues of adolescent literacy, while research summary describes how to support English Language Learners. Susan Curtis shares a professional book on how to support oral reading. The technology column gives a great bunch of websites to support visual literacy. Finally, we say goodbye to Mikela Williams who is leaving teaching to become a full time mother.

I hope you find lots of great classroom ideas in this issue. Let me know what you liked and what you would like more of. The call for proposals for the March conference as well as descriptions of all of the main speakers is included. Renew your membership using the membership form at the end. Have a great Fall!
To my colleagues in the Oklahoma Reading Association:

Welcome to the 2008-2009 year in the Oklahoma Reading Association! This year we celebrate the importance of storytelling through the theme “Tales and Trails: Sharing our Stories.” I hope that you will plan to join us in Oklahoma City on Saturday, March 7, 2009, for our annual conference. In this issue you will find information about the conference, including a call for proposals. I invite you to participate in this professional development opportunity by sharing a successful strategy you use in your classroom with your colleagues. The conference committee, working with the conference chair, Elizabeth Willner, has an exciting lineup of speakers for the conference. The keynote speaker will be Jeff Wilhelm, author of books including *Reading IS Seeing* and *Action Strategies for Comprehension*; the luncheon speaker will be Jerry Pallotta, author of many alphabet books; and our featured speaker will be Maryann Manning, IRA Board Member and author of professional books and articles. We will also have morning and afternoon performances featuring Oklahoma City University’s Theatre for Young Audiences, under the direction of Judith Palladino. I know it will be a day of professional learning that you will enjoy!

One of the important aspects of the Oklahoma Reading Association is being a state council affiliated with the International Reading Association (IRA). I hope that you have or will consider membership in this organization, as well as our own. IRA is a leader in advocacy and research in literacy education. We are looking forward to highlighting this affiliation as we prepare to host the International Reading Association Southwest Regional Conference in February 2010. I invite you to watch our website for upcoming information about this conference and make plans to join us there!

The Oklahoma Reading Association is committed to serving its members statewide. The officers are listed in this edition of The Oklahoma Reader, as well as on our website, www.oklahomareadingassociation.org. We are working to update our communication with our membership by using the website to publish both our journal and newsletter. I invite you to visit our website regularly and watch for updates in content and service.

I wish you a wonderful school year with your students. I hope that you enjoy sharing stories with your students, both personal and through favorite pieces of literature. I also hope that you take advantage of opportunities for professional growth offered through local reading councils, the Oklahoma Reading Association and the International Reading Association.

Julie Collins
President, 2008-2009
Readability Level Compared to Grade Level for Elementary School Social Studies Textbooks
by James L. McCan, Ph.D.

There is not a standard criteria that all publishers apply to all textbooks to determine grade level suitability. Textbook publishers may designate the intended grade level of a K-12 textbook based on a variety of criteria. Publishers use a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures to classify their textbooks and it is often difficult to identify which measures were used to classify a textbook because many publishers do not share the specific criteria they apply in analyzing their textbooks. Furthermore, the curriculum specifications of schools vary and the subject area content may vary such that in one setting a topic covered in third grade may, in another setting, be covered in fourth grade. Thus, it is difficult for publishers to make a textbook apply to all of the grades and reading levels in which it may be used because the specific topics may be taught in different combinations in different schools.

Teachers and schools typically use content area textbooks in the grade levels designated by the publisher of the textbook. This practice is based on the significant assumption by the textbook adopters and users that the textbook readability level is accurately reflected in the grade level designation as identified by the publisher. It also assumes that the students in these classes are capable of reading grade-level materials. This study addressed the first assumption and examined the readability level of many textbooks as determined by using one of two readability formulas. It then compared those assessments of the textbook difficulty to the grade level in which the textbook was actually used.

Background

There is an extensive base of research on readability formulas as a means of assessing the reading difficulty of text. While there are typically several significant factors that affect a reader’s comprehension of text that are not measured by a readability formula, there remains a strong appeal and usefulness for the basic application of readability formulas. The use of readability formulas offers an objective and consistent measure of text difficulty that can be applied across a variety of sources. These readability formulas are data-driven measures. As such, the variability associated with various raters is reduced compared to subjective observations or opinions. We can expect that the results of applying a readability formula to a specific passage will be the same regardless of who performs the analysis. The results offer a basis for comparison that allows valid generalizations about the materials measured. The credibility of readability formulas has been well-established (Fry, 2002; Allington, 2002). The use of readability formulas is a common component, if not the major component, used by publishers to determine the appropriateness of their materials. Fry (2002) points out that scores determined by readability formula are grounded in research that has supported their validity through strong correlations of those scores with assessment of a variety of reading factors.

There is general agreement that the difficulty level of the material is an important factor to consider in instructional applications. More importantly, different texts may range from easy to hard for any specific individual. This awareness has been around a long time, for example Pikulski, Abrams, & Stauffer (1978) reiterated the construct of independent, instructional, and frustration levels for individuals. What is easy and manageable for one reader may prove to be impossibly difficult for another reader. Clay (1979) stressed the importance of providing text which students can read with relative ease. She generally defined adequate text as that which the individual could read with 90% accuracy or greater. Recent research continues to confirm those same ideas (Walpole, Hayes, & Robnolt, 2006).
If we can ascertain that a textbook is written at a level appropriate for the students who are using it, then we can have confidence in the educational materials we employ. However, there is sufficient evidence to be concerned that it is not always the case. Anecdotal evidence often suggests that students have difficulty reading the textbooks they are assigned. While this may sometimes be attributed to lack of effort or poor strategies on the part of the students, it may also be attributed to a mismatch between the students’ abilities and the textbook difficulty. Allington (2002) points out that are often written two or more years above the average grade level of the students who have to use them.

Procedure

As part of a course assignment, preservice teachers in their final semester of preparation conduct readability analyses of the textbooks used in their elementary school clinical experience classrooms. These classrooms represent a sample of Florida and Nevada schools across a wide range of school systems, from urban to rural. The students were trained in the use of the Fry Readability Graph (Fry, 1977) or Gunning’s ‘FOG’ Readability Test (Gunning, 1952). Both readability measures estimate average sentence length; they differ on how they define a “difficult word”. The Fry formula premises that the greater the number of syllables per word, the more difficult the word is. The FOG test defines hard words as words of three syllables or more. The Fry graph is interpolated at both extremes and becomes less valid at the lower grade levels; thus, I suggest to my students that materials of approximately second grade and below may be more accurately assessed with the FOG test. Also, the FOG test may be more valid with highly technical passages that include a large amount of discipline specific vocabulary. The unusual number of multisyllabic words that are often part of a content area’s vocabulary may more pronouncedly distort the Fry graph results because of the frequent repetition of the multisyllabic words.

The students selected the most appropriate formula based on these guidelines. They then conducted a readability analysis on the textbooks used in the class where they are observing. The grade level in which the textbook was used was then compared to the readability level results. The report submitted by each student was reviewed by the instructor to verify accuracy of procedure and analysis of the readability measure. Reports from students who did not clearly apply the readability assessment accurately were discounted from the data analysis.

The results were collected over a five-year period and represent elementary school textbooks used for social studies instruction. The majority of the textbooks were published by popular publishers such as Harcourt Brace, McGraw-Hill, and Silver Burdett Ginn. A small number of textbooks came from other publishers. I did not break out an analysis based on publisher because the interest was in patterns of textbook use in the schools, not in critiquing textbooks by publisher. Because of the great variety of grade levels and textbooks used, the results are indicative of overall trends and are not sufficient to draw specific conclusions about individual textbooks. Also, any readability measure only samples a limited scope of the factors that make a textbook useable in a classroom. A textbook that does not match its intended grade level on these measures may still be appropriate for classroom use based on additional factors which are not assessed by the readability measures used.
Results

For the purposes of our discussion here, the grade level in which the textbook is used or the grade level for which the publisher suggests the use of the textbook will be referred to as the target grade level. The results of the data collection and analysis indicate that a substantial proportion of the textbooks were written at readability levels that are above the grade level for which the book is intended or in which the book is used, the target level, presenting a clear concern about the adequacy of the textbook for classroom instruction.

For grades two through five, the range of textbook readability levels were from a minimum of 3 grade levels in second grade to a maximum of 8 grade levels in grade four. Third grade had a range of 7 grade levels and fifth grade had a range of 6 grade levels. There was clearly a great variation of the difficulty of textbooks used with one grade level in different settings. For example, a fourth-grade student in one setting might use a textbook with a readability level of second grade, and in another setting that same fourth-grade student might use a textbook with a readability level of ninth grade! In only six instances were the textbook readability measures below target level. Only thirty three percent of the readability score were at the target grade level. The remaining 64% were above the target grade level.

Discussion

In a typical classroom setting, there are assumptions made in three general areas that affect the materials used in the classroom. First, students in a grade are generally assumed to function academically at that grade level. Second, the materials supplied by a publisher and identified for a particular grade are assumed to be appropriate for students at that grade level. Third, students’ standardized reading test levels are assumed to identify the grade level of materials appropriate for that student consequently.

A fourth-grade student whose standardized reading test scores indicate a fourth-grade reading level, would be a good match for a textbook intended for fourth grade. However, there are actually several potential discrepancies in these assumptions. As Miller (2004, p. 35) explained, “The grade equivalent score typically represents a child’s frustration reading level rather than the instructional reading level.” Thus, because standardized tests generally return the student’s maximal, or frustration, reading level, this level is higher than a desired instructional difficulty level for materials used on a regular basis (Smith III, 2004). Thus, the student whose standardized test score indicates fourth grade is most likely to need third-grade level materials for instructional purposes. Thus many students are taught with textbooks written at least two grade levels higher than their instructional reading level, partially explaining the frequency of student difficulties with assigned classroom textbooks.

Even if the student is functioning academically successfully at the fourth-grade level, the fact that most fourth-grade classroom textbooks are written at 6th or 7th grade readability levels, demonstrates that teachers will be frequently challenged to help their students manage the textbooks used in their classrooms.

Recommendations

Classroom teachers need to support their students’ reading of content area texts. The following ideas represent strategies supported by research to address the mismatch between student reading ability and text difficulty. First, help the students notice and focus on key elements of text features and organization. Model the use of chapter previews, headings, and end chapter questions. Show how the graphs, picture captions, and boldface type help to
highlight and organize the key content information.

Teach study and learning strategy such as SQ3R that will guide students through pre-reading steps and the reading process, and help them organize the concepts presented. After reading through use strategies such as 2 column notes, outlines, diagrams, and webs. Use supplemental expository materials related to the students' prior knowledge and personal backgrounds. Supplement the content instruction with audio-video options to provide pre-reading schema and background knowledge before reading and to provide post-reading reinforcement of key concepts.

And finally, we should remember that textbooks represent only part of the content and materials resources used in the typical classroom. A less-than-desirable textbook does not necessarily undermine student learning. Many teachers routinely and successfully supplement textbook usage in the classroom with a variety of instructional alternatives.

About the author: James McCan is an Associate Professor at Nova Southeastern University. A former public school classroom teacher, he has taught students at all grade levels and has extensive experience in clinical setting.

References


IN THE CLASSROOM

Writing Assessment: Variations on a Theme

“Teacher, is it time to write, yet?”—Stopwatch Writing

By Paulette Belshe

As a former first-grade teacher, approximately 10 years ago I began using Clay’s 10-Minute Writing assessment in my classroom as a tool for measuring the children’s knowledge of words in memory. Initially, my intent was simply to field-test the assessment, that is, to become familiar with its administration and scoring. However, I was amazed at how the students
actively engaged in this writing activity. I could see the wheels of cognition in motion as they laboriously whisper-wrote their way through the ten minutes of concentrated effort. Another thought that emerged was to add a shared literacy experience component to enhance the writing activity as one of shared social practice within the classroom community (Kucer, 2001). Therefore, at the conclusion of the timed writing, I asked the children to read three-to-five words on their lists from the author’s chair (Graves, 1983). I noticed emerging patterns of categories, or themes, similar to since-reported findings (Bromley, Vandenberg, & White, 2007). Some lists contained color words, names of family members, classroom friends, and pets.

Teachers often yearn for a literacy activity in which children are eager to participate, remain engaged in the learning, and one in which “you can hear a pin drop.” This article provides a theory-base for and a modification of a writing assessment activity to use in K-2 classrooms that will have the children begging, “Teacher, is it time to write, yet?”

One writing assessment receiving much attention in the field of emergent literacy is Clay’s 10-Minute Writing Test (Clay, 1993). This test assesses young children’s knowledge of letter-sound relationships as they work to create a list of words in visual memory. At the outset of the 10—Minute Writing Test, children are prompted to write all the words they know within a ten-minute time frame. A raw score is determined by counting all words spelled correctly. (Please see Clay, 1993, for a more detailed explanation of the scoring.)

An adaptation of Clay’s word writing task, The Word Writing CAFÉ (Leal, 2005), contains a description of a similar procedure for assessing children’s lists of words in isolation. Given in a whole-group setting, the CAFÉ is designed for teachers to objectively evaluate children’s written word knowledge for fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Recently, the same application was further validated as a tool for increasing understanding (Bromley, Vandenberg, & White, 2007). In the more recent study, the children made cognitive links to new understandings as they listed, for example, categories of words semantically similar (e.g., horse, cow, pig; blue, green red), or phonemically similar (e.g. glad, sad, mad) etc.

Procedure

Prior to introducing the 10-Minute Writing Test, the children were prompted to think about what good writers do, and engaged in discussions about their favorite authors. Several books with writing as the topic were read aloud, such as Arthur’s Really Helpful Word Book, Arthur Learns to Write, and Arthur Writes a Story. The children were then asked to think of themselves as writers, because “good writers know lots of words.”

The children were incrementally introduced to the time limitations of the 10-Minute Writing Test. Early in the first grade year, the children were asked to “write all the words you know” in one minute. The writing time was then increased to two, three, four, five, and six minutes until the children were writing words from memory...
for the full 10 minutes. From the start, the children were told about the time limits. A stopwatch was used to time the writing sessions, and was demonstrated as a tool used to time athletic events. The children seemed motivated by the use of the stopwatch.

Depending upon where the children were in their literacy development, some copied words from the classroom environment—word walls, bulletin boards, charts, or calendar area. To ameliorate such copying behavior, it is now recommended that the assessment be administered in a neutral environment, such as a cafeteria or other area not containing a lot of print (Bromley, Vandenberg, & White, 2007). However, my main purpose in administering the 10-Minute Writing Test was to provide a writing experience where children were a) motivated to engage in a writing activity, b) cognitively attending to letter-sound relationships, and c) felt pride and ownership of all the words they knew and could produce in writing.

As the minutes ticked away, everyone seemed engaged in the writing. I also wrote out a list of words as the children composed theirs—the children were writing; I was writing. To further the feeling of community, not only did the children read some of their words aloud from the author’s chair, but so did I. I then gathered the word lists, circled all words that fit the criteria, totaling the number of words written from memory. This assessment was not used to assign a grade, but, rather, to celebrate the fact that the children “knew lots of words.” A teacher could use the technique as a vocabulary score, but I used it as a qualitative assessment to show growth over the year—that the children were writing more words at the end of the year, because they KNEW more words, thus increasing in reading and writing ability.

I noted the children who copied words from the classroom environment, not as a deficiency, but as part of an ongoing, informal assessment of their literacy development. The children placed their lists in writing folders so they could access them in composing journal entries or original compositions throughout the year. The children often asked if it was time to do the stopwatch writing. Try it; you and your students may enjoy and benefit from it!

About the author: A Reading Specialist and former teacher, Dr. Belshe spent many years in the elementary classroom. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, where she teaches elementary education and early childhood education literacy classes.

References


Children’s Literature Cited


The Digital Whiteboard Goes To Summer School
By Barbara Griffin

Summer reading -- to those who enjoy reading it brings memories of long afternoons sitting and reading a new best seller or re-reading an old favorite. But to those who struggle with reading, a good book is the farthest thing from their minds. Such was the case with the third graders who attended the Summer Academy Reading Program at Cache Public Schools in the summer of 2008. The question then became how do struggling readers become voluntary readers?

The first option was to allow students to choose their own reading material. This would be easy as the school library was open for a summer reading program. However, it became apparent that students would have to be convinced to select books other than the popular “I Spy” books that required little reading. So managed choice was the next step. Books were chosen to first spark their interest about subjects they would be reading independently. This seemed to “hook” them into the story, but voluntary reading was still not happening. According to Allington (2001) this avoidance was due to repeated failure with reading. So the next step was to reduce the risk of failure. Employing the safety in numbers concept along with personal experiences and research, it was decided to entice students to want to read with lessons that they could see, touch, do, and hear (Cunningham & Allington, 2003). The final step was the use of the Internet and the digital white board, an electronic version of a dry-erase board.

The Internet would provide another ready supply of reading material. The digital white board would allow all 11 students to see, do and hear at the same time. It would also be used for individual students to touch and to write on. This kinesthetic action allowed students to respond to the text by using markers or their hands to highlight text, write an answer, or to move text. Needed skills, vocabulary and strategies were then practiced as a group without the fear of failure.

Each day began with review of a reading skill (i.e., compare/contrast, main idea, or sequence) via an interactive electronic practice page. Students’ knowledge or lack of it was easily assessed and practice provided within the safe confines of the group. Students would either answer individually or piggy-back on each other’s answers. Use of the digital whiteboard being a new concept helped create enthusiasm for showing what they knew and what they had learned. Having the opportunity to manipulate text on the board added to their eagerness to participate in reading.

Next, successful reading practices were modeled using the teacher think-aloud method. Thinking aloud is making the internal process of reading comprehension observable (Walker, 2005). Initial assessment using and Informal Reading Inventory determined that these students could recognize and pronounce words but could not recall the main idea or pertinent details of what they had read. These struggling readers were content to remain passive and chose not to engage in interacting with the text. Use of electronic, interactive books from the internet shown on the digital whiteboard allowed the teacher to stop and discuss strategies that successful readers use to understand what was read. The self-questions suggested by Walker (2005) were used and adapted to help students get into the text so they could remember what they had read. Some of the questions modeled were: What can I predict about what I just read? What does the text tell me? Does this make sense with what I predicted? If it doesn’t, I can change my prediction.

After skills and strategies, vocabulary words from the book chosen for the day’s lesson were practiced using the digital whiteboard’s virtual markers. Students could not wait to write with their fingers. This could be accomplished by
lifting the marker from the pen tray. The pen could then be used or they could write with their fingers as long as they were holding the pen. Colors could be changed and answers could be revised. Students were eager to read if it meant they would get to write on the digital whiteboard.

In addition to kinesthetic, whole group practices, students were exposed to Internet sites that provided background information on the subjects of the hard copy books that were used for daily reading. There were audio clips as well as video clips that provided sensory data. Students’ understanding and prior knowledge could be assessed while viewing and discussing the subjects displayed on the digital whiteboard.

The only obstacle that was encountered using the digital whiteboard was time. The daily sessions were only three hours long and students did have to move on to independent reading and traditional printed material. Still keeping in mind the reluctance to read by themselves, students were eased back to reading through choral reading, echo reading, and Readers Theater. It was noted when they returned to reading on their own they did so less reluctantly than they had previously.

While the digital whiteboard is not a cure-all for struggling readers, the students that were exposed to it during the Summer Academy Reading Program of 2008 were helped to connect with texts and improve their involvement in reading. These actions can only be positive and hopefully will help them to want to read more. In our high-tech society where children know more about computers and electronic paraphernalia than most adults do, we as educators need to utilize what has already captured their attention. The only caveat is that we “keep the focus on literacy and language learning, and not on the tool” (Solvie, 2004).

About the author: Dr. Barbara Griffin, a reading specialist, is currently teaching 2nd grade. She has taught the Summer Reading Academy for the last three years.

References

Molly’s Musings
By
Molly Levite Griffis

I’ve written in the past about my special friendship with Oklahoma author Billie Letts, but so much has happened in both of our lives this past year, I thought an update might be in order. For those of you who didn’t read my earlier “musing” about her, Billie walked into my little shop-around-the-corner bookstore Levite of Apache in 1995, a year or so before Oprah selected *Where the Heart Is* for her book club and shot it to the New York Time’s Number One best seller. Billie had been to an autograph party in Tulsa and visited with friends of mine who told her about my book nook that specialized in titles by Oklahoma authors, and she wanted me to carry her delightful tale of love and losses in my store…and I did…and the rest, as they say, is history. I had the fun of hosting an autograph party for her next book *The Honk and Holler, Opening Soon* and delighted in the fact that one of the lead characters was named Molly
O. (My next book, which will be issued this fall, has Billie in it both in name and in spirit!) For the launching of Honk, I turned my store into a drive in complete with juke box, restaurant booths for customers to share with Billie as she signed, and car hops (my sister, whose name is "Sister", was one of them!) would deliver your book to you in your car on a tray if you looked like you would be a good tipper! By the time her third book, Shoot the Moon, was issued, I had closed the store but I rounded up "the usual suspects" to come to her other signings in the area.

Over the years Billie and I have done wild and crazy things like teach together at a writer's conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming (we had to take Sister or she would pout), and along with another long time friend Ann DeFrange read The Vagina Monologues in its entirety into a tape recorder in a room at the Holiday Inn in Norman. If you don't believe me, I have pictures! On my 65th birthday, Billie hosted a surprise birthday party for me in Tulsa (I have pictures of that, too!) but most of all, as good friends do, we have shared our happiness as well as our sorrows. If a gypsy fortune had told us long ago that both of our husbands would die of cancer (hers of almost 50 years, mine of 47) within a 13 month period of time we might have taken some trips together as couples, let our two guys get to know each other, but we didn't...and they did...

But...that being said and because I knew you would want to know...the good news is that Billie and Dennis's son Tracy Letts won the Pulitzer Prize for his play August, Osage County this spring. Dennis, who played the part of the narrator, got to OPEN ON BROADWAY and realized a life-time dream. Billie was there to watch and cheer him on. Billie's newest book...number FOUR!...will be/was issued in June. The title is Made in the USA...very appropriate since she was, indeed, born in the USA...better still...born in Oklahoma! Check the web for dates and times of signings in your area.

Teacher Research
Karin Perry
Column Editor
Motivating Reluctant Readers: Does Wilhelm Work?
By Emily Todd, M.Ed.

The dilemma of "reluctant readers" has long existed; Adrian Chambers, in his book The Reluctant Reader (1969) states reluctance "occurs in those who have the ability to read without any mechanical problems but have little or no inclination to read except what is required by way of work or normal everyday life" (p. 4). Of course, they can be found in any classroom. Guthrie and Davis (2003) reported that many middle school students shift from intrinsic motivation to read in elementary to extrinsic motivation such as grades and recognition, in middle school. Their study shows that only 27% of third graders agreed with the statement “I think reading is boring” while 65% of eighth grade students agreed with it. To me, a reluctant reader is someone who chooses not to read for whatever reason. They are the students who I have to drag along or students who quit reading all together.

In a transactional classroom suggested by Louise Rosenblatt (1978, 1995), the reluctant reader fails to make meaning with the text, with him/herself, or with the world. Rosenblatt (1978, 1995) explains “there is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work; there are only the potential millions of individual readers of the potential millions of individual literary works. A novel or a poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into meaningful symbols” (p. 24). The reader must transform the literature using “past experience with life and language” (p. 25). The disengaged reader is missing out on learning experiences on multiple levels. He or she is unable to connect the past with the present and even future experiences.
Jeffrey Wilhelm, a current theorist and teacher, has published several articles and books designed to help teachers engage reluctant readers. Building on Rosenblatt’s theories, he is very popular in the English education world. In his book, You Gotta BE the Book (1997), Wilhelm takes the current pedagogical theories and translates them into specific practices.

The basis of Wilhelm’s theory to practice is the ten dimensions of response that expert readers use. He outlines these ten dimensions providing questions for each section as well as corresponding activities to help engage readers in the story world. The ten dimensions are: entering the story world, showing interest in the story action, relating to characters, seeing the story world, elaborating on the story world, connecting literature to life, considering significance, recognizing literary conventions, recognizing reading as transactions, evaluating an author, and the self as reader.

He categorized the dimensions into three different categories of response—evocative, connective, and reflective. The evocative category encompasses the first four dimensions; it has students activating prior knowledge, comprehending the literal meaning of the story, making predictions, relating to characters, and envisioning the story world. The connective category holds the fifth and sixth dimensions—elaborating on the story world and connecting literature to life—where students think beyond the story of the book. And finally, the reflective category serves dimensions seven through ten. Students consider how the text makes meaning, how the author uses literary devices to create effect, how the author plays a role in the story as well as how they, as readers, play a role in the text (p. 46-47).

One of Wilhelm’s (1997) strongest strategies is visual imaging for comprehension, prediction, and memory. Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003) noticed “that many of [their] reluctant and low-ability readers with comprehension difficulties were not able to describe the pictures in their minds as they read” (p. 758). Drawing or painting a figure or scene from the book can help students who have difficulty understanding the words and creating a picture of those words or dual coding. “The concept of dual coding, or the coding of knowledge in both verbal and nonverbal representations, suggests that the elements of both systems are intricately connected. This connection between the verbal and nonverbal coding systems allows us to create images when we hear words and to generate names or descriptions of things we see in pictures” (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003, p. 759).

Thus, my research question became: How will Jeffrey Wilhelm’s reading strategies affect reluctant readers in my seventh grade English classroom while reading Lowis Lowry’s The Giver? To identify my reluctant readers, I had all of my students respond to the log questions: What were your feelings when you first saw this book? How might your feelings influence your reading?

Using code names, I chose to focus on two girls—Tracy and Suzie—and two boys—Carson and Miles. I chose Tracy because she is a typical quiet, pleasing student, one of the girls who could be easily overlooked because she does what she needs to do to stay under the radar and make good grades. I was very surprised when she was honest about her negative attitudes toward reading the book. Suzie was selected because she did not have an opinion on reading—liking or not liking it. She did, however, have lower test scores in reading and was in a special skills class to bring up her reading level. She usually could not answer my questions about an assignment and did not volunteer answers either. Her big brown eyes would have a blank stare when I asked her any question about reading. Carson was rebellious throughout the year. His floppy hair covering both of his eyes symbolized his dislike of school. He tested in post-high school reading and vocabulary tests, yet hated to read. I chose him because he was a constant behavior problem, always off task during class time. I wanted to find out if
Wilhelm’s strategies could bring him into the class as a productive participant. Miles, on the other hand, was not rebellious on purpose. He was a very immature seventh grader. He wanted to be the class clown most of the time, always blurtling out random thoughts or questions to get a laugh from his classmates. I chose him because I felt he could adapt well to the artistic and kinesthetic activities. He also was a popular student. Maybe if Miles were behind the activities then other students who looked up to him would participate as well.

I chose to focus on three areas of data: reader response logs, a survey, and an interview. My reader response logs came directly from Wilhelm’s (1997) Appendix A. For each of the ten dimensions, he gives several questions teachers could ask to help students enter that dimension. My second data set, the survey, was administered at the end of the entire process. The survey was a Likert scale consisting of 17 statements where students could circle disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, or agree. Finally, the interview process occurred after the unit was complete.

After selecting my four focal students, I read through the ten logs, reviewed their tangible assignments such as art and character letters Wilhelm suggested, and read over their survey answers as well as their interview answers. I made notes for each student to find out: how they were involved with the text throughout the process, if their opinions changed, what they liked and disliked, as well as their overall opinion of reading. I then compared my notes among the four students to see if any patterns emerged.

Of my four cases, each responded differently to the Wilhelm strategies. Tracy seemed to travel in an upward motion, gaining interest as the story, logs, and activities progressed. This increased interest could partially be explained by the design of the novel. Lowry starts the story slowly with exposition and explanation for several chapters before Jonas and the reader realize what has been taken away from the community in order for utopia to exist and then the story comes alive. She was able to see past the book as just a means to a grade. She could actually enjoy writing to characters, predicting, and using art as a means of expression and comprehension. She was seeing the book in pictures, she could relate the characters to people in her world, and she felt a connection between herself and Lily.

Suzie, disappointingly, did not seem to grow much as a reader with this curriculum—on this novel. Beach and Marshall (1990) suggest this is a typical challenge of science fiction because “it requires students to transcend the literal to imagine alternative versions of reality” (p. 423). I just don’t think Suzie was ready. Maybe Wilhelm’s strategies would be more effective on a book of her choice or realistic fiction. I am thankful for the activities Wilhelm provided because that was how I kept Suzie reading along with the class.

Carson, although up and down in his logs, and definitely negative in the interview, proved his involvement through his logs as well as class behavior. Although his final survey said he did not find the logs helpful in thinking about the book, I knew by his answers that he was doing more work than normal. I knew that the log questions pushed him to think about issues he would normally avoid. He excelled in the drama activity because it allowed him to show off in front of the class.

Miles, although resistant and bored in the beginning, caught on to Wilhelm’s curriculum like fire to a parched forest. He was interested and engaged for the majority of the time. Miles was the most successful case out of my four students. He produced work and answers that I would not have expected from him. I think his childlike
attitude really helped him get into the activities, especially painting and acting. It allowed him to express himself in ways that are not typically used in the secondary classroom. He also showed me how mature he could be. His log answers and his letters to characters were far more complex than I expected. He was a cheerleader for my class and for the book.

Overall, I would say that Wilhelm’s strategies have been successful in my seventh grade classroom. I did learn that the painting activity was the most popular activity. The old adages, seeing is believing, or a picture is worth a thousand words can be true for every reader. Although the students did not view the log questions as necessary or helpful all of the time, they were a lifeline for me as teacher. I never would have known their inner thoughts, concerns, and predictions without the quality questions Wilhelm provided. For example, I would not have guessed Carson read ahead or that Tracy connected her mother to Jonas’s.

Nancy Atwell (1998) says middle school students have a message about learning. They say, “We like to find out about things we didn’t know before. But make it accessible. Make it make sense. Let us learn together. And be involved and excited so we can be involved and excited” (p. 66). Wilhelm’s curriculum addresses this message. My students did like learning about the utopian society, especially learning that they love their constitutional rights. Through the art and drama activities, the book was accessible; students who could not enter the story world had a kinesthetic way in to the book. The log questions helped the book and the world make sense. And finally, they were a community of learners with me involved and excited about the new program I was teaching. Three of the four were able to go through the process, creating an interpretation, and creating a “poem.”

All together, Jeffrey Wilhelm advanced my understanding of young adult literacy with visualization techniques, reader response questioning, and drama activities. The curriculum was able to hook three types of students for me—the straight A student who only reads for a grade, the class clown, and the non-worker/class distractant. These types of students occur over and over every year in public education. Therefore, I hope these strategies, with a little improvement, will continue to work in the future. Hopefully, my research reflects the value of his program.

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**References**


Oklahoma Reading Association Annual Conference
Clarion Meridian Conference Center (Phone: 405-942-8511)
737 South Meridian (I-40 and S. Meridian), Oklahoma City, OK 73108
Saturday, March 7, 2009

Information on Speakers

Keynote Speaker: Jeffrey Wilhelm
Jeff Wilhelm is known for his work in adolescent literacy and is currently a professor at Boise State University in Idaho. His published books include *Reading IS Seeing* and *Reflective Reading and Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension*. He has published widely in professional journals and presents across the country on such topics as “Asking Better Questions,” “You Gotta BE the Book,” and “Think-alouds.” Visit Dr. Wilhelm’s website at [http://www.boisestate.edu/english/jwilhelm/index.htm](http://www.boisestate.edu/english/jwilhelm/index.htm).

Luncheon Author: Jerry Pallotta
Jerry Pallotta is best known for the wonderful variety of alphabet books he has authored, including *The Icky Bug Alphabet Book*, *The Bird Alphabet Book*, and *The Yummy Alphabet Book*. Besides crafting alphabet books, Pallotta also has a story in the *Guys Read* collection edited by Jon Scieszka and *Dory Story*, an imaginative water adventure with beautiful illustrations. Visit Jerry Pallotta’s website at [http://www.jerrypallotta.com](http://www.jerrypallotta.com).

Featured Speaker: Maryann Manning
Maryann Manning is a member of the International Reading Association’s Board of Directors and is a professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Manning is author and co-author of journal articles appearing in *The Reading Teacher* and other journals. She is the reading and writing editor for *Teaching K-8*. Manning received IRA’s 2005 Special Service Award. Visit Dr. Manning’s website at [http://www.ed.uab.edu/mmanning/](http://www.ed.uab.edu/mmanning/).

Featured Performers: Oklahoma City University’s Theatre for Young Audiences
The Theatre for Young Audience performances are courtesy of Oklahoma City University. Professor Judith Palladino has performed and directed plays and musicals in theatres and schools across the state and country. She has researched, designed, and written 70 Theatre Study Guides and is the author of nine plays. The performances will be tailored to our conference and are sure to delight!

Breakout Session Speakers: Teachers, professors, graduate students and other education professionals.
A dedicated selection of education professionals will be presenting over 25 great sessions. Select among those focused on a particular grade level or a particular topic of interest to you. We thank each of the session presenters for their support of ORA and their willingness to share their experiences and knowledge with Oklahoma educators.
Reading Policy
Edited by
Julie Collins

Editor’s Note: A colleague of mine, Dr. Kristine Akey, has written The Reading Policy Column for this issue. Dr. Akey has reviewed three important policy papers in the field of adolescent literacy.

Answering the Challenge
By Kristine Akey

Secondary teachers are being challenged to rethink literacy in their classrooms. Within the past decade, our understanding of adolescents’ reading, writing, and speaking experienced a surge of change, coupled with interest and accountability across multiple areas. A first step came in redefining the very term that embodied the reading and writing experience for adolescents from content reading, a one dimensional approach limited to reading and writing within the academic contexts, to adolescent literacy, a more sensitive approach to literacy related to the adolescents’ lives (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000; Vacca, 1998). More attention followed from research groups, professional organizations, and special interest groups actively participating in this change with numerous studies on adolescent literacy, position statements, and forums. Perhaps the most dominant force came in the form of mandated testing, such as end-of-instruction assessments, looking at the progress of our students by holding schools accountable for meeting standards of excellence.

A review of several papers on adolescent literacy offers a common ground to give teachers a foundation on which to answer this challenge. These papers include: Adolescent literacy: A position statement for the Commission on Adolescent Literacy of the International Reading Association (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw & Rycik, 1999); the NCTE Principles of Adolescent Literacy Reform: A policy research brief produced by the National Council of Teachers of English (2006); and Academic literacy instruction for adolescents: A guidance document from the Center on Instruction (Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, Decker, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Francis, Rivera, & Lesaux, 2007). The papers’ commonality focuses on the following areas: motivation, comprehension and vocabulary development, critical thinking, and assessments. My main goal is to highlight suggestions in these areas from the three papers that content area and adolescent literacy teachers might use to promote and increase adolescent literacy in their classrooms. Initially, I will highlight each paper’s format, uniqueness, and differences. Then, I will discuss five areas of focus that secondary teachers include as a part of their content literacy curriculum.

Brief Summary of Papers

The first paper, a position statement by the International Reading Association (IRA) is an appeal for action based on existing beliefs that the reading, writing, and language development of adolescents warranted serious consideration. It contains seven principles describing “what adolescents deserve” to support their literacy growth. One could draw the conclusion that this document spearheaded the movement and focus of adolescent literacy. This paper is unique in its stance that adolescents should have access to reading specialists who can assist students individually with reading challenges. Also, the IRA position statement puts strong emphasis on diversity, in terms of teacher understanding, respecting, and responding to it. Equally so, the paper goes beyond just education. The final statement makes a call for adequate homes, communities, and a nation that would support the adolescents’ efforts to attain advanced levels of literacy and give them the help necessary to be successful.

The second paper, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) policy research brief, contains three sections: an overview of adolescent
literacy, professional development as a means of reform, and professional development to improve adolescent literacy. In the overview, specific research-based strategies are given that promote and increase adolescent literacy. In section two, the focus is on professional development: teacher quality, stakeholders, and professional communities. In the last section, staff development is discussed as a means to advance adolescent literacy by developing professional communities in secondary schools, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, and implementing literacy coaching. In the conclusion, literacy coaches are viewed as the most effective form of professional development to improve student achievement by enhancing the abilities of under-literate adolescents.

From the Center on Instruction, the last document puts forward a greater expanse of information on academic literacy instruction for adolescents. Its goal is to assist literacy specialists from the National Regional Comprehensive Center network as they guide states to improve educational policy and practice in the area of adolescent literacy. It is described as a guidance document and encompasses three parts: improving academic literacy instruction for students in grades 4 -12, advice from experts about improving adolescents’ academic literacy, and examples of state activities in support of improved adolescent literacy instruction. Part one contains five recommendations for improving literacy-related instruction in the content areas as well as within three goals that clearly state improving overall levels of reading proficiency, maintaining grade level reading skills from the end of third grade through high school, and accelerating the reading development of students reading below grade level. Part two frames improvement of academic literacy instruction for adolescents as advice. This advice is in the form of an annotated bibliography by experts as recommended reading. While this document is considerably longer and more complex, it still focuses on basically the same common areas as the previous two papers.

Areas of Focus

Although the audiences for each of the papers differ slightly, there is a common goal underpinning the purpose of these documents: specifically, what research shows that adolescents need and deserve to be academically successful as literate individuals. This research is cited or listed as related resources in accordance with the focused areas across all three policy/position papers. At first glance, one might respond that there is nothing new as to these areas of literacy focus being a part of content curriculum. However, further reflection suggests urgency for a conscientious plan of action by secondary teachers.

Motivation

Motivating students to actively participate in schooling is a challenge unto itself. The typical student mantra of “why is this important to me” encourages teachers to find a wide variety of reading materials that adolescents want to read, which can be problematic if the only text in the classroom is the course textbook. Class readings need to span a variety of genres that offer multiple perspectives on life experiences, including electronic text and visual media. Giving adolescents the opportunity to choose what they read and the time to read it also cues their engagement. When students choose their own texts, they often already have a connection or familiarity with the content. This connection enhances reading fluency, or the ability to read quickly and accurately. Once students engage in reading, they must monitor their own literacy practices. Teachers need to implement
strategy instruction that encourages students to look for information, interpret what they read in their own words, and to draw on their own prior knowledge.

Comprehension and Vocabulary Development

Secondary level students need to continue the development of their reading skills as they move from learning to read to reading to learn. Teachers are challenged to not only instruct in their disciplines, but also to teach students in a way that fosters both the skill and desire to read complex material. An approach that facilitates students’ ability to make meaning from texts is discussion. Discussion about academic texts can help students learn to read better and understand a specific field. By modeling and providing practice, strategies like reciprocal teaching, question generating, and summarizing can encourage discussions. Another part of improving reading is increasing one’s breadth and depth of knowledge about the meaning of words. Each discipline has a unique vocabulary that becomes increasingly more specialized through the progression of course work. Students experience new vocabulary words in their reading, writing, speaking, and listening, but they need direct and indirect instruction to actively make these words a part of working literacy. For example, word mapping, word journals, and word part study can nurture vocabulary development as well as enrich the understanding of the content being studied and the text being read.

Critical thinking

Secondary studies demand the use of higher-level reasoning and thinking skills. Students’ thought processes should move beyond literal understandings to the more complex processes of self-monitoring, interpretation and analysis of what they read, write, and talk about. Higher-level thinking requires students to think deeply about their literacy experiences and interactions, how texts are organized and relationships between texts, as well as how to comprehend complexities. Students’ abilities to think deeply about texts and use them to generate ideas and knowledge must be stimulated and supported by their classroom experiences. Teachers should focus on instruction that encourages students to consider their own understandings of a text and learn how to continue when their understandings falter. Because critical thinking adopts a slightly different procedure in each discipline, content teachers should provide instruction and opportunities for students to dissect, deconstruct, and re-construct texts as they engage in meaning making and critical thinking appropriate to that specific content. Lastly, many adolescents use technology in and out of school as a principal means of analysis in their everyday lives. By incorporating technology into instruction, teachers can motivate students and foster engagement as they question texts and see how they provide different versions of the world.

Assessment

First, students should experience affirmation of what they already know, and this aspect of their schooling identity should be acknowledged by teachers. From this point, students’ needs can be addressed and guide teachers in developing instruction. This process should be an ongoing as a part of the learning experience. Formative assessments, both informal and formal, are essential parts of instruction. Teachers need to provide feedback based on clear, attainable, and meaningful standards. Also by establishing a partnership between teachers and students in the evaluation and goal setting process, students can have the opportunity to have ownership and power in the assessment.

Conclusion

How secondary teachers move forward to answer the challenge of rethinking literacy in their classrooms is influenced by the professional development provided by their districts. Because literacy is not traditionally the middle and high school teachers’ area of expertise, many content areas teachers are not aware of the literacy instruction they are using or not
using and often describe themselves as not prepared to teach literacy within their discipline (Phillips, 2002). The policy/position papers discussed in this column emphasize the implementation of high quality staff development as a key factor in establishing and maintaining teacher quality. Beyond professional development, secondary teachers need to pursue professional resources on their own. Personal reflection and evaluation by teachers can be a first step to addressing the literacy needs of their students to be successful. Personal journals and conventions, workshops, discussion groups generated within and outside content areas are ways to inform one’s literacy instructional practices independent of staff development organized by school districts. For example, a close reading of one these papers offers a starting point for a personal reflection, discipline area analysis, or a school-wide literacy study review. By answering the challenge, secondary teachers recognize and value their ability to not only teach content, but also to teach their students to read to learn in their discipline to achieve academic success. 

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**References:**


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**Teacher to Teacher**

By **Mikela Williams**

I have mixed emotions as I write this column tonight because this will probably be my last entry. I am going from sharing my love of reading with my students to sharing my love of reading with my son. I have officially retired from teaching and will be staying at home to raise my child. While it brings me immense joy to get to spend so much time with my little one it brings me a great sense of sadness to not be in the classroom to make a difference in the lives of other children. I have thoroughly enjoyed over the past several years getting to share with you the ideas I have seen while being a classroom teacher. I have also loved getting to steal the great ideas that I have heard...
from so many of you about what is going on in classrooms across the state.

As I struggled to figure out what to write about in this last column I decided that I wanted to talk about something that is becoming a new trend, at least it was new to me, in reading. I am talking about the use of nonfiction books in the classroom to help struggling readers learn to read. While a Reading Specialist at Southgate-Rippetoe this past year I began using non-fiction guided reading books with the 2nd and 3rd grade students that I worked with in my groups. I have to admit that when the idea of using non-fiction books with struggling readers was first introduced to me I was very hesitant. I have always found non-fiction books a little boring (come on, I know some of you are agreeing with me on this point) so I didn’t feel comfortable using them with children who already disliked reading. I have always been one though who is willing to try something new and decided to give it a go. I mean, what was the worst that could happen? They wouldn’t like them and we would stop using them.

I have to admit that I was surprised by the wonderful reception that I received from the students when I started using the non-fiction books with them. I was amazed by the wonderful non-fiction books that are currently in publication. I found that using these books presented me with a great opportunity to challenge myself in the way I presented them. One advantage of using non-fiction books with struggling readers was that it gave me a great chance to use such strategies as KWL Charts, Graphic Organizers, and Cloze Passages. Non-fiction books also provide a great chance to help children get in the habit of applying their prior knowledge of a subject to their readings.

One bonus that I had not expected to discover from using non-fiction books was how much joy I would get out of it. I remember one time in particular when we were reading a book about the world’s oceans. In the book, it talked about a fish that lives at the bottom of the ocean and actually lights up. My students and I were intrigued by how a fish could light up so I did some research on the Internet on this particular fish and found a diagram of the fish’s body showing how it was able to light up. I then took this information back to the students where we all looked at it in absolute amazement.

In another instance, a non-fiction book we were reading helped us to make a connection with another student in the group. This year I worked with a little girl who was blind. It was always a challenge for me to try to find ways to include her in the lessons despite her handicap. I was excited to find a non-fiction book on my students’ level about Helen Keller. Amazingly enough this little girl had never heard of Helen Keller so reading about another girl who was blind and who used Braille to communicate with others was exciting for her. I was also able to use the internet to find the Braille alphabet. As part of one of our lessons, I had the students write sentences in Braille and then try to have their fellow classmates read them. The student that I worked with who was blind even volunteered to type actual Braille sentences and the students had to try to read those as well. These activities really helped the other students to relate to this little girl.

By the end of the year I was able to see not only a greater appreciation for non-fiction books by my students, but also an increase in their reading ability. Throughout my years of teaching I have learned that sometimes the ideas that I am most hesitant to use in the classroom end up being the ones I use the most often. I think that the greatest gift we can give our children is to show them not to be afraid to challenge themselves by trying new things. I definitely found this year that the use of non-fiction books in the classroom is something that everyone can benefit from no matter what grade level you might be teaching.

I am writing this last part as tears blur the words on the page. It is hard to know how to sign off from a column that I have put so much into these last several years. Although I will no longer be in the classroom I will still continue to pursue my
love of reading and my desire to find the best practices in the classroom. I encourage anyone reading this to tell us what you are doing in your own classroom and I look forward to reading about all the wonderful things going on in the classrooms across the state. I now say goodbye to you my loyal readers, knowing that it has been such a blessing for me to be part of such a great publication.

Research Summary
Linda McElroy, Ph.D.
Column Editor

Editor’s note: This review discusses the increasingly important topic of English Language Learners and describes some ideas for ways that teachers can effectively support these students.


Reviewed by Dr. Lois Lawler-Brown
Oklahoma City University

Educators in Oklahoma schools can readily identify a number of demographic changes that have occurred over the course of the past decade. One demographic shift that has significantly altered the face of instruction is the increasing number of English Language Learners in the classroom, many of whom speak Spanish as their first language. In 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey reported that 238,748 of Oklahoma residents were of Hispanic origin (9% of the total state population). Currently, Hispanic students comprise a large portion of the student population in several of the state’s largest districts: 37% of the total student population of Oklahoma City Public Schools, 19% in Tulsa Public Schools, and 11% in Lawton. These students often arrive in the classroom lacking both social and academic language skills that must be addressed primarily by the classroom teacher since their family members often share the same lack of language proficiency. Data from the state Office of Accountability indicate that of the 213,404 state Hispanic residents age 5 years or older, 38.4% claim to speak English less than “very well.”

Although the composition of the contemporary classroom has changed, in many respects the preparation and on-going professional development of the teachers working need continuing research and refinement to adapt to these changes. Teacher preparation programs provide coursework and practical experiences to address the needs of students with exceptionalities. Most programs are also continuing to strive to provide their future teachers with the specific knowledge and instructional tools necessary to deal effectively with English Language Learners (ELLs). Experienced classroom teachers also continue to seek ways to understand and implement effective instruction for these children. Fortunately, the corpus of research focusing on classroom learning and ELLs, particularly Spanish-speakers, is increasingly targeting scientifically based best practices in working with this population. One of the most recent projects to target explicit methods to assist teachers is that of Mathes et. al. (2007) in their research on effective intervention strategies to raise literacy skills in Spanish-speaking children in grades one and two.

Prior to initiating their research study, Mathes and her colleagues conducted a review of the literature dealing with young ELLs struggling with reading. While multiple studies had focused on the language of instruction and on the timing of transition from the native language (L1) to
the second language (L2), they found relatively few studies that addressed specific instructional ESL needs and strategies. The few research studies that did target instructional methods primarily addressed interventions that were highly focused, such as a specific strategy in a specific literacy skill, and were short in the duration of their implementation. Only one explored the transferability of instruction from one language to another in young learners. As a result of the lack of empirical data, attempts to remediate reading instruction were often based on interventions that were successful with native English speakers.

Realizing that good reading skills are critical for school success, and that four to seven years are often necessary for ELLs to reach grade-level benchmarks, the researchers decided to target literacy intervention with emergent readers and to work from already proven strategies that were successful with native English-speaking children. Specifically, the goal of this research project was to establish “the conditions under which English-language reading and writing skills are most efficiently and productively developed in children whose first language is Spanish” (p. 261). In order to do so, the researchers conducted four studies (two in English and two in Spanish) with first graders who were both native speakers of Spanish and struggling readers. For the purpose of the research, struggling readers were defined as “students who enter the first grade with very poor phonemic awareness, little letter knowledge, and little or no alphabetic decoding ability in any language” (p. 261).

In the construction of their study, Mathes and her colleagues first utilized the scientific findings of how reading failure can be avoided among native English-speaking students. These research-based strategies include the integration of phonemic awareness, graphophonemic ability, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension into content instruction. In addition, learning activities provided the opportunity for the student to make a personal connection to the topic being studied. In order to provide adequate support for all students, differentiation of instruction should occurred on an ongoing basis, in this case utilizing a three-tiered model. For the purposes of the study, in Tier 1, comprehensive, core instruction occurred; in Tier 2, targeted, supplemental instruction was provided to small, homogeneous groups in addition to the core instruction; in Tier 3, the students receive highly specialized and ongoing support and intervention. The researchers also included scaffolding techniques that have been recognized as best practice in ESL instruction: the use of visuals, gestures, routines, and interactive instruction that forms personal connections from prior to new knowledge. Teachers in the study used Proactive Reading, an instructional approach that had previously been found effective in working with native-English speakers and that incorporated all of the elements found most effective in working with struggling readers, as a Tier 2 intervention in all four of the parallel studies.

The study found that by utilizing this particular type of intervention in an English immersion classroom, significant gains were made by the initial ELL study group at the end of first grade in the areas of phonological awareness, listening comprehension, word attack, word identification, and passage comprehension. Interestingly, the skills also transferred from English reading to Spanish reading for this group. A replication group with lower pretest ratings also made significant progress in reading skills, but the transfer from L2 to L1 did not occur. Significantly, students who participated in the Tier 2 intervention maintained superior performance in English reading at the end of second grade. In the Spanish-speaking classes, students who received the intervention also showed significant gains in post-tests that carried on to the second grade. However, the transfer of reading skills from Spanish to English was not evident. In essence, the study confirmed that the same Tier 2 intervention techniques that have been shown to be...
effective in promoting literacy with struggling readers in English are also effective in working with Hispanic ELLs, regardless of the language of instruction.

This study is important because it provides a number of concrete and explicit instructional steps that the classroom teacher can use in implementing effective literacy interventions with young ELLs. A summary of the studies’ recommendations for use in an English-speaking classroom include the following:

**Phonemic awareness activities.** Activities focus on phoneme discrimination and phoneme segmentation and blending, beginning with initial sounds and transitioning to final phonemes. Graphophonemic correspondences to be introduced are first practiced orally in phonemic awareness activities. The same method is used to introduce new word types that will later be sounded out.

**Orthophonemic knowledge.** Students match phonemes to graphemes from the first day of instruction, with new matches presented every 2 to 3 days. Only one graphophonemic correspondence or one high-frequency word is introduced in each lesson. Previously learned words are reviewed daily. Most common graphophonemic correspondences are presented first. Correspondences and sight words that are similar in sound or spelling are presented separately and only gradually presented together in order to avoid confusion.

**Word recognition.** Graphophonemic correspondences are first demonstrated in isolated words to be sounded out, and then practiced in text the next day. Learners are first instructed to sound out phonetically regular words. Over the course of instruction, the time allowed to sound out words decreases, promoting increased automatic word recognition. Children are required to spell words that are similar to the words with which they are working. The complexity of the words increases over time so that the students are eventually able to read and spell two and three-syllable words consisting of many syllable types.

**Fluency.** After the seventh day of instruction, students read texts of connected sentences daily. All phonetic components and irregular words are pre-taught prior to the reading. Repeated readings of stories occur on a daily basis—reading the same passage three times. The children read the story together the first time; individual students read one or two pages the next time; and the teacher and student complete a paired reading the third time, with the teacher assessing the student’s reading rate. A reading rate is established for each story and shared with the students. Over time the complexity of the text increases as do the criteria for fluency.

**Comprehension.** The proactive reading method utilizes specific strategies to increase comprehension. First, the teacher and students “browse the story” and make predictions about what the story will be about. The teacher then explicitly identifies a purpose for the reading, such as determining whether or not the students’ predictions are true. With an expository reading, the emphasis is placed on connecting the topic of the reading to students’ prior knowledge. After reading the story or text, the students participate in a variety of activities such as a retell or sequencing. Eventually grammar elements found in the story are identified. With expository readings, students identify new information. The keys in increasing comprehension with the proactive method are to use only a few comprehension strategies and to explicitly teach them to the students.

**Oral language development.** As research in second language acquisition indicates, the development of oral language is essential to the building of academic language and literacy skills. In order to develop listening comprehension and oral skills, the students participate in an oral reading of expository books at the second or third-grade level. The teacher reads a variety of texts (usually three or four) on an identified theme so that vocabulary is practiced and the students’ familiarity with the topic is increased. One book is read and
discussed for between three and five days. Each text is broken into passages of 200-250 words that are read on individual days by the teacher. After the book is completed, the book is read again completely from start to finish. Vocabulary is pre-taught prior to each reading and students are encouraged to listen for the “target” words while the story is being read. Words are discussed within their contexts in the readings, and after each reading the students participate in a retell using the new vocabulary words in complete sentences.

This study brings good news for the early childhood and elementary classroom teacher. First, it identifies proven, successful literacy intervention strategies that are already utilized in many classrooms. Second, these same strategies also provide additional support to struggling readers who are native English-speakers. The key, as with many interventions, is early and consistent application. While these interventions are already routinely utilized with English speaking students, Mathes and her colleagues do advise that teachers working with Hispanic children take into consideration the linguistic differences between English and Spanish. For example, teachers designing phonemic awareness activities should take into account the variations in consonant/vowel sequences in the two languages. Also, word recognition strategies require special consideration due to the highly phonetic quality of Spanish in contrast to the many orthography to phonology inconsistencies that occur in English. However, these linguistic differences require modifications that are relatively minor in nature and can be implemented in heterogeneous classes with both ELL and non-ELL populations. Again, the article provides specific details for effectively dealing with these linguistic differences that the classroom teacher will find useful.

About the author: Lois Lawler Brown, Ph.D. teaches courses in English Language Learning. She is certified in and has taught English as a Second Language and is a National Board Certified Teacher in World Languages Other Than English.

References:


Professional Resources

Reviewed by Susan Curtis, M.Ed.

All teachers need manageable ways to engage children in effective oral reading activities with the goal of students becoming proficient readers and meaning makers. Opitz and Rasinski acknowledge that silent reading is a daily key component of any effective, comprehensive reading program; but they explain through many examples how oral reading is also beneficial in developing strategic, comprehensive readers. Oral reading is put into its proper perspective. This quick read is 10 years old, yet full of the most current and pertinent information applying to all classroom
teachers hoping to produce successful readers.

Research-based, practical and kid-tested methods for oral reading are explained throughout this text to ensure success when using oral reading in the classroom. Whether developing comprehension, sharing information, or discovering effective reading strategies, oral reading can aid in the many facets of becoming a skillful reader.

My interest in oral reading has increased immensely in the last several years. In my role as a University Supervisor for Student Teacher Interns, I see many beginning reading lessons revolve around a round robin read. Students are often anxious, uninterested, disengaged, unable to comprehend, and fluency is disrupted frequently during the reading. As a reading specialist, my goal when teaching reading is to convey exactly the opposite of what I typically witness. I want to evoke interest, engage readers, as well as teach and model fluency and comprehension through a variety of strategies and activities.

It seems the moment I discuss with an intern that randomly calling on students to read text they have not been exposed to is not an effective way to teach reading, confusion sets in. I explain that a well-planned reading lesson with goals and objectives, where pre-reading strategies, building background, vocabulary introduction, and prior exposure to material to be read aloud is more conducive to ensure feelings of success. Students, instead of focusing on when they will have to read and controlling nerves, can pay attention to text and gain an understanding of content. Fluency is not as disrupted when students have had a chance to read, practice material, and understand the vocabulary. It is important to consider when doing round robin reading how a fluent reader is able to read at a steady pace and comprehend, while a struggling reader is trying as hard as they can to stay afloat and keep their eye span following the fluent reader. The focus is so much on the spot in the book that comprehension is lost, therefore negating the purpose of why one reads. Since I have read this book, I am able to articulate the importance of oral reading in the classroom while doing it with purpose, objectives, and results.

Throughout this book are researched-based strategies, suggestions and techniques to promote an understanding of effective oral reading. There are plenty of teacher-lead activities discussed, such as Think Aloud, Directed Listening Thinking Activity, and Rapid Retrieval of Information. These teacher-lead reading experiences strive to create well rounded readers and model behaviors and thoughts of fluent, experienced readers.

“Clearly, when oral reading is used for authentic purposes, students have reason to read with good expression and sense of meaning, the keys to good oral reading” (p. 31). Preparation for audience is especially important in Chapter 3 which conveys the importance of sharing and performing when we read, often why we read aloud outside of the classroom. Students enjoy meaningful partner and group activities and because they are rehearsed and prepared reads, once read aloud, students are able to feel a sense of success and accomplishment.

The chapter discussing using oral reading assessment to guide instruction is of great interest to me. After all, if teachers do not use assessment to drive instruction in order to help student achievement, then what is the purpose of time spent assessing? Teachers can use oral reading assessment to plan lessons and activities that reach out to struggling readers while allowing other readers to model comprehension and fluency in non-threatening ways.

Another particular chapter of this book helpful to other teachers is the concluding chapter that answers questions about oral reading that I think many teachers contemplate. These questions are common and the answers are well thought out explaining the origin of round robin, why so many teachers still use this method to teach reading, and how to move forward
using effective oral reading strategies in the classroom.

Teachers must show a complete picture and expose children to the various thoughts and strategies a proficient reader uses. This book shares knowledge and allows teachers the opportunity to balance both teacher-lead and student-driven activities. It seems not all learning can be “fun” yet it can be engaging and have purpose. When students understand the purpose for learning, often motivation and drive will ensue, thus accelerating student performance.

I am thankful to have encountered this useful resource because never had I intended to communicate not to utilize oral reading in the classroom, yet sometimes I think that was the interpretation. On the contrary, oral reading should be done with passion and purpose. Opitz and Rasinski clarified my understanding that oral reading benefits all classrooms and allows teachers and students to open doors to rich and various uses of language, share information, and display that reading and listening are integral to everyday life. My hope is through this professional resource teachers explore the social dimension of reading in the classroom and realize there is so much more than round robin reading!

**About the author:** Susan Curtis a former elementary teacher, received a M.Ed. in Reading Education from the University of Oklahoma. She currently supervises student teachers at OU.

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**Technology**

Jiening Ruan, Ph.D.
Column Editor

**Internet Websites that Support Visual Literacy**

by

Jiening Ruan & Kilie Duncan

More than a decade ago, in recognition of the ever growing presence and important role that visual texts play in our society, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 1996) proposed the inclusion of viewing as a critical Language Arts competency that students are required to develop in order for them to become informed, productive members of society. Visual texts convey meaning through visual images, and they may range from simple arrangements of dots and lines in print to cartoons, films and videos in electronic forms or on the Internet. In our current digital age, students constantly encounter visual texts delivered through traditional media and more so through multimedia. This phenomenon calls for teachers to re-examine what literacy means in the digital age. How to adequately address visual literacy in our literacy curriculum is considered a pressing issue for many literacy educators (Burniske, 2008; Valmont, 2003).

Burniske (2008) defines visual literacy as “the ability to read, interpret, and understand what one sees based on careful examination of the nature and context of the images one encounters” (p. 93). Valmont (2003), however, also considers that students’ ability to produce visual texts/images represented in various formats for effective communication is a critical aspect of being visually literate. To develop visual literacy, students need to have sufficient knowledge of basic visual elements such as the dot, the line, shape, dimension, direction, hue and saturation, texture, scale, etc. (Valmont, 2003). In addition, they need to be able to understand how visual images such as icons, visuals, and graphics support or interfere with the
intended messages. Furthermore, students whose visual literacy is well-developed are also able to use visual texts to create meaning and support their learning of traditional literacy.

As teachers we have the responsibility to support students in their visual literacy development. The task of preparing students to understand and critically evaluate visual information and use visual texts/images to communicate effectively has never been so vital to teachers of technology age. We recommend the following websites to help you make further efforts to support your students’ visual literacy development.

- **International Visual Literacy Association Website**
  [http://www.ivla.org/portal/intro.htm](http://www.ivla.org/portal/intro.htm)
  This website provides a wealth of information on visual literacy. It offers articles and reports on visual literacy studies as well as links to various websites that support the teaching of visual literacy. On this website, you can also find a wide variety of visual literacy learning tools and image collections that students can use at home or at school for visual literacy projects. Links to renowned art museums and galleries are also provided.

- **The Visual Literacy Tool Box Website by University of Maryland**
  This toolbox for visual literacy experiences is valuable for teachers, parents, and students. The website is made up of lessons and tutorials about visual literacy. It is broken up into an introduction, online activities, activity plans, questions, learning objectives, additional resources, basics, and comments. Teachers and students are able to submit their own visual literacy activity on this website. The learning toolbox for visual literacy is easy to access and uses language that is appropriate for many types of readers.

- **Visual Literacy K-8 Website by Steve Moline and David Drew**
  [http://k-8visual.info/](http://k-8visual.info/)
  Created for K–8 classroom teachers, this website is rich with information and resources that teachers can use. It provides teacher-friendly explanations and examples of various visual texts that are frequently seen in K-8 reading materials, including maps, tables, graphs, timelines, and storyboards, etc. In addition, it offers recommended lists of books for students and teachers to use to support visual literacy learning and teaching. Suggestions on how to use the books to support the teaching of visual literacy are also provided. The website has a separate section on assessing visual literacy, an important but often neglected topic in visual literacy instruction.

- **Visual Literacy in the Elementary Classroom Website by Mary Cox and Cherry McNease**
  [http://www.rapides.k12.la.us/nitro/visual_literacy.htm](http://www.rapides.k12.la.us/nitro/visual_literacy.htm)
  This website has a phenomenal PowerPoint presentation that discusses the reasons for teaching visual literacy as well as examples of visual literacy in action in the classroom. As you scroll down the page it has a table of various websites for teachers, students, and parents to use to enhance their knowledge of multiple aspects visual literacy. The table contains many templates, graphics and fonts, interactive websites, tutorials, free printable items and articles about visual literacy.

- **Merriam Webster Visual Dictionary Website**
  [http://visual.merriam-webster.com](http://visual.merriam-webster.com)
  This visual dictionary is a great way for children and adults to learn vocabulary visually. It is a helpful website for visual learners who need to rely on visual aids to support their learning. Each word is accompanied by a picture. In addition, it provides a group of words that are conceptually related to the target word. It also offers a pronunciation for each target word to support decoding.

- **AT&T Visual Literacy Website**
  This website from AT&T has several valuable sections, among which is the section on visual literacy. This website
provides lessons, articles, curriculum standards, resources, and organizations and associations for the visual and media literacy links. This website is beneficial for the teacher to utilize in the classroom as well as to put on their website for students to utilize at home.

- **Visual Literacy Website by Frank Baker**
  http://www.frankwbaker.com/vis_lit.htm
  This website is a useful resource designed to provide K-12 educators with ideas, readings, lesson plans and other valuable tools for teaching visual literacy. It provides a collection of websites regarding different aspects of visual literacy instruction. It also has information on the texts, videos, and journals that can enhance teachers’ knowledge about visual literacy.

- **Visual Literacy Website by Sue LaBeau**
  http://www.suelebeau.com/visualliteracy.html
  This website is an informative resource for teachers interested in exploring the various aspects of visual literacy. It provides a list of books addressing visual literacy. It also offers a compilation of websites related to visual literacy and media literacy. Of particular interest are links to different websites on using picture books, photography, and digital storytelling to support students’ visual literacy development.

**References**
Oklahoma Reading Association
Call for Program Proposals

The Oklahoma Reading Association, an affiliate of the International Reading Association, invites you to submit a program proposal for the 2009 Oklahoma Reading Association Conference.

**Tales and Trails...**

**Sharing our Stories**

Saturday, March 7, 2009
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

**General Information**
- As a professional non-profit organization, the Oklahoma Reading Association is unable to reimburse program participants for travel, honorarium, or hotel expenses.
- All program participants must register and pay regular conference fees.
- Overhead projector and screen will be provided. Handouts and other AV equipment will be the responsibility of the presenters.
- One-hour breakout sessions are designed to provide an overview of a particular topic related to a conference strand.

**Criteria for Selection**
- Relevance of topic to the conference theme and/or conference strands
- Implications for theory and practice
- Interest of topic to proposed audience
- Clarity, conciseness and coherence of proposal
- Organization and clear method of presentation
- Innovative presentation of content

**Disqualifying factors**
- Promotion of commercial materials or programs
- Content unrelated to literacy
- Failure to complete the proposal according to guidelines
Oklahoma Reading Association
Conference March 7, 2009

Tales and Trails…
Sharing our Stories

Check for conference registration information at
www.oklahomareadingassociation.org

Conference Location:
Clarion Meridian Convention Center
737 South Meridian Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK

Enterprise Way
Clarion Convention Center

I-40
S. Meridian Avenue
I understand that the Oklahoma Reading Association does not provide honoraria or expense reimbursement. All presenters and co-presenters for this session will register and pay for the conference.

Signed ________________________________

I. Individual submitting proposal:

Title   First Name   Last Name

Affiliation__________________ Position____________________

Address _____________________ City/State/Zip ________________

Day Phone _____________Evening Phone ________________ Fax ______________

E-mail (Required for contact purposes)

II. Co-presenter information:

Please attach a list of additional presenters including names, addresses, and institutional affiliations. It is the submitter’s responsibility to correspond with the individuals included on the proposal.

III. Conference Strands (Select one or two strands)

 coherent Learning

 Family Literacy

 Fluency

 Literature

 Mentoring/Coaching

 Motivation

 Phonics/Word Study/Spelling

 Technology and Literacy

 Vocabulary

 Writing Across the Curriculum
IV. Grade Span the Topic will Cover (Check one or two as appropriate):

- Preschool/Kindergarten
- Primary (1st -3rd)
- Intermediate (4th -5th)
- Middle School
- High School
- College/Adult

V. Intended Audience (Check all that apply):

- Classroom Teachers
- Reading Teachers/Specialists
- Teacher Educators
- Administrators/Supervisors
- Special Education Teachers
- Parents
- Media Specialists
- Title I Teachers
- ELL Teachers
- Undergraduate/Graduate Students
- Reading/Literacy Coaches
- All Attendees

VI. Title of Presentation: ____________________________

VII. Presentation Abstract: On a separate sheet, describe your presentation content in 50 words or less. This abstract will appear in the conference program, and may be edited, if necessary.

VIII. Presentation Description: On a separate sheet, provide a description of the proposed presentation. Presentation descriptions must be typed or word-processed in 12-point font. The total presentation description should not exceed 250 words and should be organized around the following headings: (Reference list is not included in the word limit).

A. Objectives of the presentation
B. Content and research base
C. Method(s) of Presentation

Please mail three (3) copies of the application form and presentation description to:

Dr. Liz Willner
Oklahoma City University Department of Education
2501 N. Blackwelder
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

You may submit your application electronically as an e-mail attachment to: ewillner@okcu.edu

If you choose to submit your application electronically, please mail a copy of the first page with the required signature.

Proposal Deadline: Monday, December 1, 2008
All applicants will be notified of the Program Committee’s decision by January 15, 2009.
Notification will be sent by e-mail.
Oklahoma Reading Association Annual Conference
Saturday, March 7, 2009
Clarion Meridian Conference Center (Phone: 405-942-8511)
737 South Meridian (I-40 and S. Meridian), Oklahoma City, OK 73108

Please Print or Type

Last Name___________________First Name_______________________ *IRA#__________________
Address_____________________________ Home Phone (_______)
City______________________ Zip ________________Work Phone (_______)
E-mail_________________________________Fax (_______)

Early Bird Full Conference Registration (Postmarked by Saturday, Feb. 8, 2009)
ORA Member $65.00____________
ORA Non-Member $85.00____________
**University Student (Full time student with a valid ID) $35.00____________

Regular Full Conference Registration (Postmarked Feb. 9, 2009, or later)
ORA Member $75.00____________
ORA Non-Member $95.00____________
**University Student (Full time student with a valid ID) $45.00____________

All registrations postmarked by February 22nd include author luncheon!

Mail this form and payment/purchase orders to: Oklahoma Reading Association
Liz Willner, Conference Chair
Oklahoma City University
2501 N. Blackwelder
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106-1493
Questions? Contact Liz Willner at: ewillner@okcu.edu; 405-208-5935 (office)

www.oklahomareadingassociation.org

Come enjoy excellent professional development with us! The keynote speaker will be Jeff Wilhelm, author of Reading IS Seeing and Action Strategies for Comprehension; the luncheon speaker will be Jerry Pallotta, author of many alphabet books for younger and older readers; and our featured speaker will be Maryann Manning, IRA Board Member and author of professional books and articles. We will also have morning and afternoon performances featuring Oklahoma City University’s Theatre for Young Audiences, under the direction of Judith Palladino.

Please check here if, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you require specific assistance or accommodations during the conference. We will contact you and make appropriate arrangements.

*To join International Reading Association, call 1-800-336-READ or visit www.reading.org.
**A copy of current full time student ID must accompany student registration.
Oklahoma Reading Association Membership Form

ORA DUES: $20  Local Council name or #  
(Enter “At Large” if you do not belong to a local council)
Local dues $____  Check ______  Cash ______
College Student Dues: $5 ________  Name of Higher Ed.Institution _____________

Contact Information – Please PRINT legibly

Date___________________ mm/dd/yy
Name (Last, First) ______________________ MI ______
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(email is important for membership renewal dates)
Mailing Address______________________________
City__________________ State____ Zip__________
Phone Number______________________________

ORA Membership: New ____ Renewal ___
IRA Membership: Yes_____ No_______
If yes, IRA # _______________ Expires ____

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All areas are required to check membership status on-line, especially middle initial.
www.oklahomareadingassociation.org

Oklahoma Reading Association Membership Form

ORA DUES: $20  Local Council name or #  
Local dues $____  Check ______  Cash ______
College Student Dues: $5 ________  Name of Higher Ed.Institution _____________

Contact Information – Please PRINT legibly

Date___________________ mm/dd/yy
Name (Last, First) ______________________ MI ______
E-mail______________________________
(email is important for membership renewal dates)
Mailing Address______________________________
City__________________ State____ Zip__________
Phone Number______________________________

ORA Membership: New ____ Renewal ___
IRA Membership: Yes_____ No_______
If yes, IRA # _______________ Expires ____

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All areas are required to check membership status on-line, especially middle initial.
www.oklahomareadingassociation.org
Editorial Review Board Application

Name____________________________School_____________________________

Current Job.________________________E-mail ____________________________

Have you ever reviewed articles for a journal or newsletter? Yes No

If so, which journal(s) or newsletter(s)? __________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Educational background: Please list your degrees:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

List all teaching certifications that you hold.
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Circle the areas that you could review articles about. These areas should be ones on which you have expertise or special interest.

Fluency  Adolescent  Critical Literacy  Comprehension

Adult  Spelling  Early childhood  Vocabulary

Comprehension strategies  Phonics/word work  Phonological awareness

Literature  Assessment  Reading Policy  Struggling readers

Writing  Professional development  Language skills

Content area reading  Research skills  Reading research

List any publications you have or presentations that you have made.
Guidelines for Authors

Authors are requested to submit only unpublished articles not under review by any other publication. A manuscript (1500-3500 words) should be typed, double spaced, not right justified, not hyphenated, and should follow APA, 5th edition guidelines (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association). Tables and graphs should be used only when absolutely necessary. Include a cover page giving the article title, professional affiliation, complete address, e-mail, and phone number of the author(s). Special sections have specific requirements which are described below. The editors reserve the right to edit all copy.

Submit the manuscript electronically as either a Word or rich text file attached to an e-mail message. The e-mail message should include information about which section the manuscript is being submitted for (articles, Teacher to Teacher, Teacher Research, Research Summary, and Professional Resources), the title of the manuscript, and a brief description of the topic. All correspondence regarding the manuscript will be electronic. Send manuscripts to Klaudia Lorinczova, Editorial Assistant at klorinczova@ou.edu.

**Teacher to Teacher:** Submit descriptions of teaching activities that have helped students learn an essential literacy skill, concept, strategy, or attitude. Submissions should be no longer than 1500 words, typed and double-spaced, and follow the following format:

- Title (if adapting from another source, cite reference and provide a bibliography).
- Purpose of activity, including the literacy skill, concept, strategy, or attitude the students will learn.
- Description of activity with examples, questions, responses. Please provide enough detail so someone else can implement the activity.
- How activity was evaluated to know if purpose was achieved.

**Teacher Research:** Submit manuscripts that describe research or inquiry conducted in classrooms. Submissions should be 1000-2000 words, typed and double-spaced following guidelines of the APA, 5th Edition, and follow this format:

- Description of the question or issue guiding the research/inquiry, including a short review of pertinent literature
- Description of who participated in the study, what the sources of data were, how the data were gathered and examined.
- Description of the findings and conclusions from the research/inquiry.

**Research Summary:** Submit manuscripts that summarize either one current published piece of research or two to three related studies. Submissions should be 1000-1500 words, typed and double-spaced following guidelines of the APA, 5th Edition, and following this format:

- Introduce and describe the study or studies, including purpose, information about who participated and in the study, how and what type of data was gathered, and the findings or conclusions.
- Discuss the implications of the study or studies for classroom teachers. The implications could include a discussion of what the study told us about literacy learners and literacy learning and/or what the study implies teachers should do to support learning.

**Professional Resources:** Submit reviews of professional resources of interest to teachers or reading specialists. Resources reviewed could include books for teachers, books for children, curriculum packages, computer programs or other technology, or games for children. Reviews of technology will be forwarded to Dr. Jiening Ruan, editor of the Technology and Literacy column for her review. Submissions should be 500-1000 words, typed and double-spaced following guidelines of the APA, 5th Edition, and following this format:

- Title, author, publisher of the resource.
- Short description of the resource.
- Critical review of the resource, including strengths and weaknesses.
- Short discussion of how the resource might be useful to a teacher.
**Doing something in your classroom that really helps kids learn literacy skills?**

**Researched an issue or problem in your classroom?**

**Read a great professional book?**

**Learned something new about Research-based best practices?**

Write about it for *The Oklahoma Reader.*

Share what you know and do with others by submitting an article, an activity description, a research summary, a review of a professional resource, or a summary of your own action research.