Reading Matters

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Reading Matters

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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

SCIRA's *Reading Matters*

Classroom teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and researchers are invited to submit manuscripts to SCIRA's professional journal, Reading Matters. Authors are requested to submit unpublished work not under consideration by any other publication.

Types of Submissions:

Reading Matters welcomes practical, theoretical, and research articles, generally no more than 15 pages, related to all areas of literacy. Articles should be clearly written, purposeful, and discuss the topic in some depth where treatment of the topic is interesting, insightful, and based on the writers' experience. Brief commentary pieces on teaching literacy are welcomed, as well as short teaching tips, teacher or student poetry, vignettes of classroom experiences, and student writing and/or artwork (with parental permission).

Manuscript Form:

Manuscripts should follow APA 6 style guidelines. Please be sure to include an abstract. As manuscripts are subject to blind review, content should not reveal author identities or affiliations. Full references for all citations should be included, following APA guidelines.

Submitting a Manuscript:

Manuscripts should be typed in Microsoft Word and sent as an email attachment to shunt-barron@uscupstate.edu and malloy2@clemson. edu. When naming your file, please use simple, clear file names. Include a cover page giving the author(s)' names, affiliation, complete mailing address, email address, and home and work telephone numbers. Manuscripts will be peer reviewed and edited for style, content, and space limitations by the editor.

The Review Process:

Manuscripts undergo a blind-review process, with at least two reviewers from the Editorial Review Board. Acceptance decisions are based on interest and relevance to SCIRA membership, usefulness, clarity, timeliness, and cohesiveness. The overall balance of the journal's content also influences editors' selections.

Manuscript Deadline: May 30, 2017

Letter from the President

Cathy Delaney
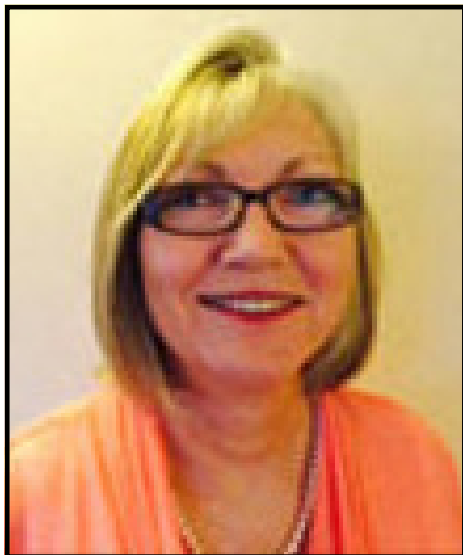
Each year the South Carolina Council of the International Literacy Association brings you an annual edition of *Reading Matters*. Sarah Hunt-Barron and Jacquelynn Malloy, co-editors, work diligently with committee members to produce a quality professional journal to support literacy educators. On behalf of SCIRA, I am honored as this year's president to bring greetings in this 2016 edition. *Reading Matters* articles are contributed by educators and other professionals committed to the continuous improvement of literacy instruction. As an organization, we appreciate and value the submissions. It is our hope that you are challenged and inspired by this edition.

SCIRA is a non-profit organization. Our goal is the improvement of literacy. We are affiliated with the International Literacy Association. Through an annual conference, literacy workshop, newsletters, journal, website and social media, SCIRA provides professional development. Educators are encouraged to grow professionally through scholarship opportunities, grants for Teachers as Readers, Literature Grants, and Community Service Grant Awards. If you would like more information concerning our organization, please visit our website, www.scira.org.

Also, mark your calendar for the 42nd annual SCIRA conference, *Team Up With Literacy and Win*, scheduled for February 23-25, 2017, at the Marriott Resort and Spa, Hilton Head. Dale Anthony, President Elect and her committees are preparing an outstanding conference program. We hope to see you there.

Cathy Delaney
2016-2017 SCIRA President

Letter from the Editors

Sarah Hunt-Barron & Jacquelynn Malloy

Dear Readers,

It is with pleasure that we bring you this 16th edition of *Reading Matters*. In this presidential election year in which we cast our vote as citizens to set the direction of our nation, it seems only fitting that our theme for this issue is Literacy for a Just World. Throughout this election cycle, we have heard rhetoric related to equity and justice from all candidates; debates have been focused on how to achieve economic and social well-being for all Americans. This issue examines both obstacles to equity in our educational system and approaches to overcoming these obstacles as agents of change toward a more equitable and just society.

In RM, you'll find articles focused on social justice issues, with calls for equity pedagogies in our classrooms (Farley & Ross) and authentic learning based on students' funds of knowledge (Roberts). We'll see teachers reaching across the digital divide to empower students to tell their stories (Hughes & Evering) and help students make cogent digital arguments (Howell). If adolescent media practices have you scratching your head, Laurie Sharp's article on media multitasking adolescents may be for you. Learn how even our youngest readers can develop research skills that will serve them for a lifetime thanks to the wonders of Google (Salley, Ross, & Hubbard).

In other Research Matters articles, we follow a successful pen pal project between elementary students and pre-service teachers (Helf, Barger, Brandon, Nash, & White) and gain insights into tutoring relationships among pre-service teachers and striving readers (Pletcher & Warren). Explore the use of graphics in persuasive texts to scaffold younger readers comprehension (Martin & Myers) and learn how one teacher educator revamped her own literacy instruction to provide authentic literacy experiences for her pre-service teachers and graduate students (Jocius).

Books are the focus of Tricia Huff's insightful evaluation of read-alouds in classrooms and Lee Johnson and Elizabeth Brinkerhoff offer not only literature suggestions for teaching mathematics in our classrooms, but also solid strategies that work with the texts suggested. As always, Jonda McNair and her students offer reviews of the latest and greatest in children's literature, including many multicultural texts that are sure to enhance your classroom library.
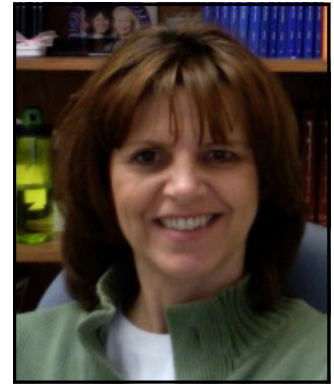
Sarah Hunt-Barron *Jacquelynn Malloy*

We also hope that you will be inspired to consider the issues of social justice and equity that are occurring in your schools, colleges, and universities and to confront, investigate, and practice ways that literacy educators can be agents of change in our state and beyond. As teachers, we are in a unique position to shape the future of our nation each day. We have the ability to teach our students how to engage in civil discourse, respect the views of others, and conduct research in search of the truth. These skills are critical to the survival of our nation, as democracy relies on an educated citizenry to select our leaders.

Alongside authors residing in South Carolina, this issue includes voices from authors in Texas, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Virginia. The authors include classroom teachers, teacher educators, literacy researchers, and graduate students. It is exciting to see our journal continue to extend its reach to include more voices, hoping that soon you too will be inspired to add yours. We are proud to serve you, the teachers and teacher educators who stand between our students and an excellent education for all. Please join in the conversation that starts with the publication of these articles. We look forward to hearing your voices in our next issue of *Reading Matters*.

Be inspired and inspiring,
Sarah and Jackie

Planting Seeds for New Perspectives: Bringing Equity into the Literacy Classroom

By Grace Farley and Rachael L. Ross, Clemson University

ABSTRACT — American classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse. Teachers are charged with meeting the diverse needs of the individual learners in their classrooms. Teachers should enact equitable practices that allow students of various backgrounds to engage in learning that incorporates their diverse culture and provides opportunities to learn about others. Social justice education seeks to create classrooms where students feel their voices are heard and their identity matters. This article shares a framework that teachers can use to evaluate everyday situations to arrive at the most equitable outcome for their students. The authors also share ideas for classroom instruction that promote social justice. Teachers can begin planting seeds of social justice through their equitable classroom practices.

Prejudice embedded in the fabric of a nation can appear to be impossible to change, especially when we repeatedly learn of tragedies across the country that are committed on the basis of deeply-held beliefs of ignorance and hatred toward a specific group of people. In the midst of these unjust acts, schools remain a potentially powerful avenue in which to shift these mentalities in future generations. The Southern Law Poverty Center (2010) explains "[b]ecause stereotypes underlie hate, and because almost half of all hate crimes are committed by young men under 20, [acceptance] education is critical. Schools are an ideal environment to counter bias, because they mix youth of different backgrounds, place them on equal footing and allow one-on-one interaction."

Whether it is in pre-k or high school, the amount of time students spend in school is one of our biggest assets for planting seeds of acceptance. In order to create a more just society, schools need to better include the voices of non-majority students. All students should be educated on the value of diversity and given the knowledge and tools to combat historical and present-day inequities. Social justice education seeks to create classrooms that promote social equity where all children feel valued and secure in their identity through equity pedagogy. From a social justice framework, equity pedagogy promotes teaching that investigates the nature of power structures that are inherent in our current racial, socioeconomic, and class hierarchies. Beyond simply recognizing differences, equity pedagogy takes a critical stance that moves from word to actions to ensure all students are provided a just and fair education.

The need for a focus on equity pedagogy grows even more essential as the amount of ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity increases. Ethnic diversity is increasing rapidly as a result of natural population growth and recent immigration (Boser, 2014). Additionally, this kind of education is important if we are to tackle the issues of inequity within our own school systems that are the result of past injustices against particular groups of people. Our education system cannot be separated from our government and political systems, the historic oppression and inequity (e.g., segregation and Jim Crow Laws; the invasion and forced assimilation of Native American communities) that has had a lasting effect on the degree of academic engagement, achievement, and corresponding economic success that students from these communities are able to enjoy (Bell, 2007).

Ideally, all students would encounter a culturally-relevant pedagogy (Ladsen-Billings, 2014) and learn about the value of diversity by the very nature of schools themselves—where all students would have teachers and peers from a variety of backgrounds. The reality is that our schools remain quite segregated and our teachers are mostly white, cis-gendered women (born with female anatomy and who identify as female) (Boser, 2014). In fact, the amount of diversity among teachers has decreased recently though the amount of diversity among students continues to increase (Boser, 2014). As a result, teachers need to be even more intentional about tackling topics of inclusive diversity and corresponding issues of social equity as part of the school day.

In order to do this, teachers must include all students in the curriculum, challenge anything that prevents their full inclusion, and provide opportunities for all students to learn about equity issues. Research has shown that attention to cultural context within a learning environment greatly affects student achievement (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). If students connect with the material and see themselves represented in the learning, they can learn more and perform at higher levels. Furthermore, students who have developed an understanding of equity and respect can use those tools to educate those around them. In order to become advocates for positive change to this end, young people need to have their own identities validated, challenge their own ignorance and biases, develop a conscious understanding of the role of inequity in their world, and find their voice to take action for justice.

Preparing to Be an Equitable Educator

The first steps toward supporting students in an equitable classroom involve developing a lens to recognize inequity and then finding the tools to act on these issues. Universities have a unique opportunity to instill these mindsets in their teacher candidates so they enter the field motivated to create equitable classrooms. By offering courses related to social justice and the 21st century learner, preservice teachers can develop the mindset of an equitable educator through understanding equity pedagogy. Teachers in the field can also begin to develop these attitudes and beliefs by diving into the literature and seeking out activities, resources, and ideas that promote equity in the classroom. This article provides a list of resources and ideas that teachers can take into their classrooms.

Developing an Equity Framework

Recognizing the inequities that exist around us is not always an easy task. People from different backgrounds and walks of life may see situations differently. By developing an equity framework, teachers can begin to evaluate the everyday situations they experience on the ground teaching. One powerful way to build this skill is through analyzing real world scenarios based on actual events (Gorski & Pothini, 2014). Research shows that case studies deepen critical thinking and problem solving skills (Brown & Kraehe, 2010; Heitzmann, 2008). Through reading and examining case studies, teachers, both in training and in the field, can participate in a process that can build their capacities for evaluating and executing mindful responses to the multifaceted, and often inequitable, classroom environments in which they work (Leonard & Cook, 2010).

In their text dedicated to case studies involving diversity and social justice education, Gorski & Pothini (2014) provide a framework to help educators as they begin to dissect the cases presented in the text. The framework involves critical examinations of obstacles, perspectives, solutions.

Identify obstacles. Identifying the obstacles that students face in schools is often difficult because these biases and inequities are "hidden in day-to-day practices, school traditions, and quiet interactions" (Gorski & Pothini, 2014, p. 15). Identifying these obstacles can be especially trying for a teacher who has never faced those obstacles in their own life. The big question here is: what is the obstacle to equity? In other words, what is preventing a student (family, teacher, group, etc.) from being able to fully participate? It is important to remember that an obstacle to equity is never the student's identity itself, but rather the system in place that bars that student from participating based on their identity.

Look at multiple perspectives. When examining a situation using an equity framework, it is key to determine the players in the case. By taking stock of varying perspectives, it becomes easier to understand where others are coming from. It is often easy to take the side of the individual who appears wronged in a situation. It is more difficult to understand the person who caused the harm. Seeking to remain neutral and understand the motivations of each person involved opens an avenue for understanding that can lead to more efficient solutions.

Determine micro and macro solutions. After closely analyzing the problem and the perspectives of those involved, its time to come up with solutions that are fair and equitable. The proposed equity framework pushes for the consideration of equitable outcomes for everyone involved. It's important first to distinguish between equal and equitable. Equality is viewed as sameness while equity is fairness (Gorski & Pothini, 2014). Some solutions may provide the same treatment for all students but may not be equitable and fair for all. An example of this may be a teacher who takes off points if homework isn't signed by a parent each night. This is the same treatment for all but it would not be fair for a student whose parent works the evening shift. There's a chance this child doesn't see their parent after school. This would be an unfair policy for students like this.

Using the framework to deepen our awareness of problems that actually occur in classrooms gives teachers a process for working through the situations that arise in their work. Grappling with case studies through conversations with others enhances equity skill building through open exchanges of ideas. With enough practice, the equity lens will become natural as teachers begin to evaluate complex daily interactions with students, parents, and colleagues.

Integration into curriculum

Integration of equity pedagogies into the literacy curriculum involves changing not *what* is taught, but rather *how* it is taught. In other words, the content and standards remain the same, but we shift our educational strategies to encourage children to develop a mindset of inclusivity and empowerment. This begins with the materials teachers use in their classroom. Using an equity framework to evaluate classroom materials can help literacy teachers expose students to a variety of texts that promote acceptance mindsets by sharing texts that are culturally responsive. Picture books, music, sculptures, videos, plays, paintings, poetry, speeches, and political cartoons are all excellent resources for learning across many content areas (Ciardiello, 2010; Lucey & Laney, 2009; Serriere, 2010).

Teachers' text selection should include multilingual and multicultural books, even if all students in the class share the same language and cultural background. It is important to avoid token books about diversity by incorporating a variety of authentic texts that do not include stereotypes (Shumaker & Quiñones, 2015) throughout the curriculum. Ensuring that resources express authentic representations of communities and people and avoid stereotypes and generalizations is an important part of the literacy educator's role (Cunningham & Enriquez, 2013). For example, including picture books written in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the classroom library validates students who are from communities that use AAVE and promotes the idea that dialects and vernaculars are valid languages (McCreight, 2010). Teachers should use resources that children relate to as well as ones that they may not in order to honor their identity and expose them to cultures other than their own. Literacy educators can also use resources that challenge and encourage discussion of current events through the use of magazines and newspaper articles (Soares & Wood, 2010; Spearman & Eckhoff, 2012).

Another aspect of curricular integration involves shifting the manner in which instruction is presented. The objective of this practice is to encourage agency, citizenship, and critical analysis. The goal is that students will develop confidence in the power of their own voice and see the importance of using that voice to advocate for change.

To promote agency, or confidence in one's voice, instruction should be contextualized, relevant to the lives of students, and offer an opportunity for every child to participate. Establishing a safe environment for conversation in the classroom and stressing the importance of each child's voice encourages students to become

confident in their individual ideas. One specific way teachers can do this is to utilize literature Talking Circles (Hung, 2015). In a literature Talking Circle, all students sit in a circle and designate a talking stick or other object. When asking and responding to a question, the stick moves around the circle to give each student an opportunity to answer. The second time around, students share new insights or reactions to their peers' ideas from the first round. This ensures that every child shares their ideas and practices developing their voice (Baker, 2011; Thacker & Christen, 2007).

To promote a sense of citizenship and a desire to contribute to decisions affecting their world, instruction should offer students the opportunity to empathize with a variety of perspectives (Marshall & Klein, 2009; Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009). When students write responses to texts incorporating occasional role-play by having students write from the perspective of someone else or even write one piece from multiple perspectives can help students see multiple perspectives that exist. For research and journalism reports, students can do projects that are close to home such as using photojournalism to report news about their own classrooms, schools, or communities. Service learning provides a great opportunity for students to learn while doing that allows them to see themselves as having power to serve and make change (Jones & Hébert, 2012; Marshall & Klein, 2009).

To promote the development of an equity lens, teacher can show children how to be critical analyzers and self-reflective. Teachers can help students critically analyze a picture book from a perspective of equity. When introducing texts that have a perspective that is new to students, KWL charts can help students examine their biases before reading and what they have learned after reading (Al-Hazza & Bucher, 2008). Additionally, teachers can encourage students to analyze power and difference in their reading. For example, when reading a story about a middle-class American family, teachers can ask questions which prompt students to analyze the lifestyle presented in the book and compare it to their experiences based on varying socio-economic status (Jones, 2012).

Conclusion

In a study of new teachers' efforts to address social justice in their classrooms, it was found that the greatest difficulties for teachers were the lack of support and resources on this subject and the vagueness of the materials that are available (Philpott & Dagenais, 2011). It is our hope that the use of the equity framework and the resources above can provide assistance in combatting this teacher development obstacle to equity. While it can certainly be difficult and sometimes awkward to address issues of inequity, the literature suggests that teachers need to be intentional, brave, and reflective. Teachers have the power to plant seeds for new awareness and action that is needed desperately in our country and world.

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Speak Up! The Unintentional Silencing of Minority Students

By Leslie D. Roberts, Clemson University

ABSTRACT — The dissonance between the dialectal language minority students use at home and the language expected of them at school may interfere with their engagement in the classroom and this lack of engagement may hinder motivation to use 'standard English' accurately and often. In a typical classroom setting, standard English is expected of all students. However, when non-standard dialect students feel they are being judged by their dialect, they may be more concerned with how they speak instead of the information they are expressing. Unknowingly, teachers may be silencing minority students through their expectations of language use in the classroom. When all students are able to participate in authentic learning based on their funds of knowledge, they will also be more engaged in their learning. This review showcases some of the language barriers that can exist between minority students and their teachers, along with offering solutions to these barriers.

Differences in Language Use at Home and in the Classroom

Language is the first place that students feel accepted or not accepted in the classroom (Behrend, 2009). Oftentimes, teachers do not realize the dissonance between the standard English dialect used in the classroom and the dialectal versions some students use at home. In fact, very few children arrive to school fully capable of the academic language that is expected of them in the classroom (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). However all students, including dialectal language minority students, are expected to speak a standard English in the classroom, even if it is a dialect they are not comfortable using. This expectation teachers have for their students to use a standard English dialect in the classroom may hinder the language minority student's overall academic performance by unintentionally silencing them from communicating in their preferred dialect.

The language practices used at home would be included in the student's funds of knowledge. Teachers,may overlook these funds of knowledge that students bring from home as they concentrate on the content they are expected to teach. According to Delpit (2006), "Children have the right to their own language, their own culture… [and should] be allowed to express themselves in their own language style" (p. 37).

Standard American English vs. Non-standard Dialects

Students who speak non-standard dialects come into classrooms and are expected to use standard English regularly, accurately and to do this as quickly as possible with minimal help from the teacher (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Standard English (SE) refers to language that is both written and spoken without regionalisms and accents; non-standard dialects (NSD) incorporate regional word choice, pronunciation, sentence structure, and voice inflection (Burdette, 2011). There are many dialects heard across the country and just about everyone speaks with some sort of dialect. Therefore, there really is no true 'American Dialect;' rather, standard English (SE) is the language spoken by schools, media outlets, the government, and so forth (Burdette, 2011). According to Adams & Curzan, (2009), because language is constantly changing and varies by situation, no one is said to speak a "perfect" version of SE. By implying that SE is the only form of language to be used in the classroom, teachers may inadvertently cause students to disengage from wanting to even participate in class.

Miscommunication between the Teacher and the NSD Student

When NSD students feel they are being judged by their dialect, they may be more concerned with how they speak instead of the information they are expressing. These students, now feeling disconnected in the classroom, could begin to resent using SE dialect. Ogbu (1999) attributes this miscommunication between teachers and minority students to the different structural rules of dialect used at home and school. Students may discover many differences and an overall disjointedness between the language and cultural understandings used at home and in school (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Dialect usage and rules for language use are vastly different in both of these contexts, so these students may have a difficult time using SE in each of these settings. Teachers and students bring their own personal/cultural characteristics to the classroom. Cultural characteristics can include attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, ethnicity, social class, and verbal language such as varying dialects and accents (Irvine, 1990). Often, the cultural and personal characteristics that teachers have differ from those of their minority students. These differences are sometimes conflicting and create a sense of discontinuity (Irvine, 1990). Eventually, this discontinuity could lead to an overall disengagement from learning.

Unintentionally Silencing Non-standard Dialect Students

In a typical classroom setting, SE is expected of all students. However, for some minority students, SE is not the dialect they feel most comfortable using. Already, a misconception that one form of language is 'right' and another is 'wrong' is created. If a student feels uncomfortable using their dialectal language from home in the classroom, they tend to remain silent. This silence may cause students to fall further and further behind academically while simultaneously resulting in disengagement through a lack of authentic learning.

Minority students may grow up in a distinct culture with their own language systems of varying dialects and accents (Hale, 1986). Unfortunately, these language systems are often overlooked or even ignored in the classroom. Although it is unrealistic for teachers to abandon their teaching of standard English in the classroom, denying students the ability to use the dialect that they feel comfortable with in the classroom is ultimately alienating these students and creating a further divide between SE and NSD students (Brady, 2015). NSD students may feel unaccepted in the culture and environment of school. Ogbu (1999) notes that a lack of acceptance in the classroom, pushes NSD students further away from the school climate and creates an 'us versus them' mentality and an unwillingness to participate.

African American English

Sometimes, the unwillingness of minority students to use SE instead of their own dialects is due to the fact that they fear fitting the stereotypes of White society. One of the most commonly spoken dialects of minority students is African American English (AAE) or Ebonics, as it is often referenced outside of academia. AAE is one of the oldest, yet most scrutinized form of English and has sparked many controversies over its usage in the classroom (Wolfram, 2007). However, forcing minority students to use SE in the classroom could have some negative repercussions as well. Some Black students fear 'sounding White' because it could signify adopting White attitudes and vindicating them as superior (Ogbu, 1999). There is even a certain amount of mistrust from the minority community for a minority child who wants to assimilate into White culture by using 'proper' English. It is looked at as 'turning their back to the community' or 'acting fake' (Ogbu, 1999). Some minorities describe their use of 'slang' as membership to their cultural community and therefore, are unwilling to completely conform to using SE.

The dialect dilemma. Though this unwillingness to continually use SE exists, NSD students still understand that SE is the language of power - this creates the *dialect dilemma*. Ogbu (1999) defines the dialect dilemma as minorities understanding the need to conform to SE, but they also have a reluctance to do this for fear of losing their cultural identity. Minority students understand that SE is the way to obtain success in school and in the future, but do not feel fully capable in their ability and willingness to use it.

Recognizing the Push-Back on NSD Use in the Classroom. There has been a great deal of push-back on the idea of allowing NSD students to use their preferred dialect in the classroom. The 1996 Oakland California School Board was one of the first school districts to actually recognize Ebonics as a primary language for some students. This school district then allowed those students who actively used Ebonics to participate in Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) classes in which Ebonics was used in the classroom to help teach standard English (Messier, 2012). Though this idea of using Ebonics to teach SE has since been rescinded, the Oakland California School Board still advocates the recognition of Ebonics as a dialect used by the majority of its students.

Similar methods of using Ebonics in the classroom through SESD classes were used with African American inner-city students just outside of Chicago. These methods produced promising results when various samples of student writing showed a 59% drop in the use of Ebonics (Messier, 2012). These results clearly show that acknowledging language and dialectal differences and specifically teaching SE through the use of NSD examples in the classroom yields more success with NSD students. This method of using Ebonics in the classroom and recognizing it as a legitimate dialect is a more effective teaching practice than ignoring the dialectal differences altogether.

Though there continues to be push-back on the use of Ebonics or other forms of NSD in the classroom, Wheeler (2016) reminds teachers to at least appreciate the dialectal differences of students. Instead of trying to change the way students speak, teachers should try to change the prejudices held against non-standard dialects. If a low value is continuously placed on non-standard dialects in the classroom, NSD students could then become less confident in their oral expressions and more reluctant to contribute to class discussions (Snell, 2013). This reluctance to participate in class could have negative long term effects for these students.

How this Silence Affects Literacy

Delpit (1997) found that teachers are more likely to correct their students who are reading a sentence correctly using a non-standard dialect than those students who read a sentence incorrectly using SE. Teacher corrections to a student's dialect and speech does not enhance their linguistic repertoire (Snell, 2013). Additionally, these corrections are oftentimes not just limited to teachers, but soon come from other student peers directed towards NSD students as well. Teachers are sometimes more concerned with how a student sounds, rather than the student's understanding of the material.

NSD students who continually receive corrections for dialectal miscues while reading aloud could soon learn to resist reading and resist the teacher (Delpit, 1997). This resistance is seen with Godley et al.'s (2007) study of NSD high school students and their struggles with using SE during grammar instruction. Eventually these students refused to even speak in class to avoid the discomfort they felt being corrected by the teacher. "Students should be encouraged to respond, question, challenge, and elaborate their thinking using whatever [dialect] they find most comfortable" (Snell, 2013 p. 22). Eventually, these disengaged students are at risk for becoming poor readers (Gavigan, 2011); minority students have been shown to dislike reading and school work because they believe it will never benefit them long term (Schwartz 2002). Some students may feel they will never play an integral part in 'White society,' which leads them to believe that school is something unnecessary for their future.

Failed attempts at literacy. The majority of students who are considered 'struggling readers' have encountered some sort of failure while embracing the literacies faced at school (Gavigan, 2011). This embarrassment of failure leads to an overall aversion to the school literacies and languages. However, teachers often forget that these 'struggling readers' are already readers. Reading is not just limited to 'school material'; reading any genre is still considered being a proficient reader. Reading does not just

have to be for school or even academic in nature, it can also be used to gain life-related information. By forcing a student who already has an aversion to school or school literacies to read only academic texts, teachers are essentially creating a struggling reader (Alvermann, 2001) instead of helping one.

What to do: Practices to Accommodate All Dialects

Discard the Deficit View. It was once thought that standardization, particularly language standardization, was the 'fix' for diverse students and an attempt to bring all students to the same learning level. However, now the norm is diversity (Genishi & Dyson, 2009), which implies a need to embrace all students' cultural and linguistic practices. Teachers should not assume that there is something wrong with a student when their dialect is not what is considered SE (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Non-standard dialects should not be viewed as a deficit of a student; rather, they should be celebrated and considered part of a student's personality. It is the job of teachers to understand the ways their students communicate and accommodate their dialects in the classroom without correcting, or worse, shaming them. Ladson-Billings (2016) reminds us that all students have different upbringings, so teachers should alter their teaching to best accommodate these students.

Allow Students to Construct Identity Through Their Language Use. It is clear that language and power are closely related. In fact, "non-standard language practices [could be] associated with 'bad' morals and a myth arises [that] bad language signifies bad people" (Brady, 2015, pp. 150-151). However, for teachers to put a ban on non-standard dialect use in the classroom would be infringing upon a student's freedom and prohibiting them from establishing a group and cultural identity (Brady, 2015). It is imperative to allow opportunities for NSD students to explore their identities through their use of language and dialect.

Introduce Code-Switching to NSD Students. Oftentimes, the dialects students bring from home are extremely different than the SE used at school (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). It is often misconceived that only SE could be used in the classroom; however, the language practices students bring from home can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. Code-switching refers to switching from one language (or dialect) to another - depending on the situation. This could be an extremely valuable tool for NSD students so they can still keep their dialectal/cultural identity. Teachers should encourage NSD students to use their own dialect during informal, social conversations in the classroom, but provide them with standard codes for the writing and speaking that is expected in academia and in the workplace. Additionally, allowing NSD use in the classroom will help students feel more comfortable through oral expression, further encouraging participation and engagement. Communicating to students that even though the language that is expected in formal environments may not match their familiar/ cultural dialect, they are not 'wrong' for using their dialects in social/ informal settings such as group work or discussions is critical to developing inclusive classrooms. This practice lets NSD students know that their dialects are valid and can be valued in the classroom.

Practice a Culturally Responsive Teaching Pedagogy. This theoretical practice embraces the idea that social justice and equity should exist among all students in the classroom and should be practiced by teachers. This means "providing a way for students to maintain their cultural integrity while still being able to succeed academically" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). One way to do this is to invite a student's funds of knowledge into the classroom content through their dialect usage. It has already been stated that students and teachers bring their own, often differing, cultural beliefs and values to the classroom. Oftentimes, teachers simply overlook the differences between themselves and their students. However, instead of being 'color-blind' to the differing cultural beliefs and values of students, culturally responsive teachers celebrate and accommodate the cultural values and beliefs of all students.

Balancing a classroom that has the requirement of standard English with non-standard dialect students is often a challenge many educators face. Brady (2015) recommends the use of transformative practices that utilize a collaborative relationship among the teacher and students. Through this collaboration, both teacher and students are able to work together to achieve the common goal of social justice and acceptance of all students in the classroom. Collaborative practices may include: student-led instruction, project-based activities within groups, and a focus on the student's diverse communities or funds of knowledge that they bring to the classroom (Brady, 2015). These transformative practices embody the culturally relevant pedagogy and may empower the dialectal diversity students bring to the classroom.

Improve the Student/Teacher Relationship. All students are entitled to a quality education regardless of background, ethnicity, beliefs or socioeconomic status (Anyon, 2014). With this in mind, it is usually minority students who are left behind in their education (Anyon, 2014). The reasons these students fall behind are endless, but if they do not feel an authentic connection to the classroom through a solid student/teacher relationship, then there is no motivation to continue learning. A strong student/teacher relationship, increases the motivation of students, especially minority students (Delpit, 2006). This promotes feelings of acceptance and emotional closeness; which ultimately influences the motivation of student's academic achievement level. One way to improve the student/teacher relationship is to allow students the opportunity to express themselves in their own preferred method and medium in order to show true ownership of their language development (Ushioda, 2011). This includes allowing NSD students to use the language or dialect they feel most comfortable with in the classroom freely without judgment. A close student/teacher relationship allows all students to feel more accepted in the classroom community and gives them more opportunities to succeed.

Improving Literacy Practices with Minority Students

Students need to see themselves through their reading. Connecting students to what they read in the classroom would benefit those students who have an aversion to reading. Culture influences a reader's identity (Alvermann, 2001), so teachers should draw upon the identities of their students while identifying books

to use in the classroom. Using a variety of books or even books that are considered culturally aware, would allow minority students to feel more accepted in the school climate by seeing themselves characterized in the books used in class. All students would like to see themselves represented in the books they read (Henry, et. al, 2012).When students can see themselves in the literature that is used in class, they are able to feel a sense of inclusiveness and belonging. Additionally, Brady (2015), encourages students to use texts that are relevant to their lives outside of the classroom. This will help promote their sense of belonging in the classroom.

Using a student's funds of knowledge. Many teachers may be concerned that the encouragement of a student's use of a non-standard dialect may affect their ability to learn to read. However, there is little evidence that supports this fact (Delpit, 1997). Research has shown that learning based on student's background knowledge or cognitive skills creates an increase in the student's overall reading comprehension (Logan, et. al, 2011). Teachers should focus on a student's funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et. al, 2005) to gain a better understanding of their interests and life outside of the classroom. This theory alludes to bringing knowledge that students already know and participate in at home into the classroom. Using vocabulary, terms, or themes that students are familiar with from outside of the classroom, could increase their comprehension in the classroom. These vocabulary and themes could easily transition into a writing project that focuses on a student's funds of knowledge. These examples of writing are what Bernhard et al, (2006) describes as "identity texts" in which students can express themselves through their writing while focusing on their cultural diversities.

A student's household contains numerous cultural and cognitive resources that could be of ample use to teachers in providing authentic experiences in the classroom (Moll et. al, 1992). A specific way that teachers can utilize their student's funds of knowledge in the classroom would be to invite student's family members to come and talk about their culture and share their diverse experiences with the class during the literacy block. All students could practice speaking and listening skills while learning about their peer's cultural differences through a more knowledgeable other. Additionally, the family members who are invited to speak to the class may appreciate being able to share their history with a new generation of young learners. The culturally relevant and authentic experiences children have in school greatly influence their motivation (Wigfield et. al, 2004). By using students' funds of knowledge and building bridges between a student's natural learning style from home to the classroom (Hale, 1986), the student would be more engaged in the learning taking place and that learning becomes more meaningful.

Conclusion

Unknowingly, teachers may be silencing their minority students through their expectations of language use in the classroom. There can be an underlying sense that one language or dialect is superior to another. Minority students who experience tension between their language use and the language expected in the classroom may feel disconnected from school and experience an overall aversion to school languages and literacies. However, by being mindful of all students' backgrounds and funds of knowledge, the classroom can be a more inviting space for all students.

When all students are able to participate in authentic learning based on their funds of knowledge, they will be more engaged in their learning. Giving minority students the confirmation that their culture, identity and dialectal language use is valid in the classroom also gives these students more motivation to continue their educational experience far into adulthood. By employing techniques in the classroom to accommodate all dialects, teachers can help students find their way by finding their voice.

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More Than a Literacy Lesson:
Pre-Service Teachers' Connections with Students in a University-Based Tutorial Program

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ABSTRACT — In this teaching narrative, the authors discovered the importance of the relationships tutors and children built during a university course-based reading tutorial program. During the brief time period of eight tutoring sessions, the course instructors noticed two pairs of tutors/tutees who had positively impacted one another. Not only did the children learn more about the reading and writing process and the teachers learn more about teaching it, the children and their tutors created relationships that illustrate the affective aspect of tutoring. The authors conclude that more can occur, beyond academic learning, in eight tutoring sessions than would usually be expected.

We know that on the first day of our undergraduate diagnosis of reading problems course, our pre-service teachers will be uneasy when we tell them they will be spending approximately ten hours working with a student. As soon as we share this fact during the first class, we know that hands will go up. *Where will these children come from? Where will we tutor them? How will I know what to teach?* They have many "initial doubts and fears" in the weeks leading up to the actual tutorials (Richards, 2006, p. 777).

When we taught this course for the first time, we had wonderings as well. *Just how much of a difference can tutoring a child for eight sessions make? How will our tutors know when they have made a difference?* As teachers of children, we firmly believe in the power of one-to-one interventions; however, for interventions to be effective, they need to occur at least four days per week and be delivered by expert teachers. We have not abandoned these beliefs, but we have become more convinced of the power of the pre-service teacher.

Setting

The reading tutorial program is situated in an undergraduate course titled Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Problems. In each section of this course, 25 pre-service teachers attend five traditional classes at the beginning of the semester. For the subsequent eight classes, we meet with our students for an hour and a half and then they tutor children for an hour and fifteen minutes. The course takes place on the university campus in the late afternoons, creating an after-school tutorial setting. The course instructor guides students in the use of several assessment tools, and tutors then analyze the data they gather from these assessments to provide one-on-one instruction for children, ages six through eleven, participating in the program. Although this experience is "practice" teaching, it is a crucial piece in the development of skills that impacts the reading and writing of the children involved in the tutoring program.

Review of the Literature

A search of the literature finds information pertaining to the beliefs, skills, teaching strategies, and effectiveness of pre-service teachers in university-based tutorial programs. A deeper look uncovers other dimensions of literacy tutoring that we were interested in learning more about, specifically how tutors develop relationships with the children they teach. In fact, in studies conducted by Hedrick, McGee, and Mittag (2000) and Worthy and Patterson (2001), most comments made by tutors revolved around these relationships.

The Compassionate Practitioner

As mentioned in Worthy & Patterson (2001), it is a delightful experience to watch tutors and children on the first day of tutorials as they meet each other. There are some pairs who hit it off immediately and others who are unsure due to nervousness or anxiety. Over the course of the first couple sessions, it is evident which pairs are working together naturally and which pairs are going through the motions of planned tutorial lessons. The ideal situation is that, as pre-service teachers have the experience of sitting alongside a child, a bond develops. As the tutor listens to the child and follows that particular child's path to learning, a "natural caring" occurs that is "driven not by obligation but by personal feelings for the student" (Worthy & Patterson, 2001, p. 331). As instructors of this course, we want our students to understand that teaching begins with connections, and that teachers form these connections by engaging in authentic conversations with children (Assaf & Lopez, 2012; Lysaker, McCormick, & Brunette, 2004). As noted by Hedrick, McGee, and Mittag (2000), the one-to-one tutoring situation lends itself to this level of rapport. Another salient outcome of individualized tutoring is that pre-service teachers learn to empathize with children who are developing as readers and writers (Richards, 2006; Worthy & Patterson, 2001), and this is a valued trait for teachers to possess before they enter the field as practitioners.

The Social Spaces of Tutoring

The bond between each pair is a natural outgrowth of the underlying social "scene" to which both the tutor and child now belong. Upon meeting and spending time together, they etch out a space for themselves in which they learn and grow together. Their interactions during tutoring sessions help students become more comfortable and help tutors develop an appreciation of their students' personalities and struggles (Worthy & Patterson, 2001). For the first time for many of them,

our undergraduate students gain hands-on experiences to prepare for their future roles as educators. We watch as they work to create responsive and supportive learning environments that ultimately result in what Worthy and Patterson (2001) call "productive relationships" (p. 330). These are evidenced by the child's attendance and overall progress, as well as the camaraderie within each pair—the smiles and high-fives during sessions. We

Table 1. Overview of Lessons

1.	Practice using senses for descriptive writing. Introduce prewriting strategies. Model how to write a paragraph using prewriting
2.	Divide students into groups for each sense (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch). Have students write words or phrases describing a weather patter (rain, snow, sunshine –choose one) on sticky notes. Post notes on board under corresponding sense. Discuss examples and create a collaborative description of chosen weather.
3.	Discuss the purpose of editing for publication. Introduce proofreading marks. Practice editing as a whole class then individually. Emphasize how everyone makes errors and good writers edit their own and have other people edit their work before publication.
4.	Students revise an informative paragraph about weather they have written. Give students feedback using two stars and a wish.
5.	Model how to revise a paragraph about your favorite season. Emphasize the use of descriptive words and explaining why. Have the students choose a season and begin the prewriting process by using a bubble map. Students should continue working on this draft.
6.	Students review peers' writing using a checklist and two stars and a wish. Encourage some students to share a sentence they are proud of. Students draw pictures to coordinate with their writing.
7.	Once final drafts are approved, students can begin compiling their digital stories. Demonstrate how to use the digital storytelling app such as 30 Hands. Have students create a practice story with a partner to gain understanding of the application.
8.	Across multiple days, Students create their digital stories by organizing their pictures and recording their scripts with the digital storytelling application (e.g., 30 Hands). Students may need assistance by numbering each picture with corresponding sentence(s). Encourage students to play back their recordings and edit them as needed. Then students will publish their stories to create a movie. As the teacher you can download or upload these movies to share with parents and friends.

see children run toward their tutors each week in anticipation of the afternoon's activities, and we hear the laughter shared over a poem and the compliments for a job well done.

Such mutual affection becomes the driving force not only for the child, but also for the tutor, specifically with regard to lesson planning and implementation. Worthy and Patterson (2001) note that the bond that grew between the tutors and their tutees during a semester course and the shared excitement "led to tutors' confidence and eagerness to do their best in planning and teaching lessons" (p. 330). Similarly, Lysaker, McCormick, and Brunette (2004) discuss the happiness expressed by tutors in their written reflections. They write, "These pre-service teachers articulated joy and emotional fulfillment about spending time with their buddies…" (p. 29). The tutors' primary concern at the start of the semester is how to create plans that will both interest their tutees and grow their reading and writing strategies. After the initial session during which the tutors interview their children and learn about their overall attitudes toward reading, they discover that a key factor in planning and teaching is learning who they

are outside of school, for example their interests and hobbies, and using this information to plan engaging lessons. Assaf and Lopez (2012) declare, "We must 'count' the importance of developing relationships as much as we 'count' learning to implement an assessment protocol or writing a lesson plan" (p. 377). The relationship between the tutor and child is what sustains the highs and lows of the tutoring sessions. When the task is challenging, the children persevere because of the relationship with their tutors, who have built instruction around their individual needs and are "responsive educator[s]" (Assaf & Lopez, 2012, p. 378).

Vygotsky (1978) describes this relationship as an apprenticeship wherein the tutor works with a child, serving as a mentor until the child is capable of assuming more responsibility in future endeavors. As the tutors work with their children, there is a sense of competence that motivates the children, and they see themselves as capable. We watch our tutors take notes each session, sharing their children's reactions to the various reading materials and activities and adjusting the following week's instruction to meet their individual needs. The tutors administer assessments throughout the semester to aid in their cognitive responsiveness to the children, and they learn how to socially engage with children while working in texts. As Noddings (1984) explains, "If I know how my student typically reacts to certain topics and tasks, I am in a better position to guide him [sic] both sensitively and economically" (p. 180).

Tutor as Reflective Practitioner

It is our hope that students who take our course not only learn what it means to get to know a child as a reader and writer, but also what it means to be a teacher. In doing these things, they learn about themselves as caring individuals. Our tutors display initial hesitancy with regard to their ability to meet students' needs (Richards, 2006; Tuten & Jensen, 2008) and this then grows into focused efforts to do this through various strategies. They engage in instructional practices that lead them to make what Tuten and Jensen (2008) call "well-informed, responsive decisions, rather than preprogrammed responses" (p. 30). At the end of the semester, they express how much they learned and how they appreciated the experience. Recently, one tutor considered abandoning the teaching profession due to the challenges of her tutoring sessions, but realized she would rather work with older children. She was grateful for the difficulties she faced throughout the semester because these experiences encouraged her to not only be a reflective practitioner, but also to evaluate her identity as an educator (Hedrick, McGee, & Mittag, 2000).

This course is designed to provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to apply their content knowledge in an informal setting with the hope that such an experience will impact their future classrooms. Throughout their previous coursework, pre-service teachers learned about theories and pedagogical practices—a general and broad view of teaching. It is not until they enroll in our course that theory and practice move closer together (Worthy & Patterson, 2001). Our tutors begin to view themselves as educators and assume new identities as they recognize the complexities of teaching, which helps them

gain confidence as they move toward student teaching and ultimately their own classrooms. This course also encourages pre-service teachers to collaborate with one another and serve as a support system through the ups and downs of tutoring sessions. We want our students to understand that teaching is a collaborative effort and that seeking help from fellow teachers is not only encouraged, but necessary. Each week, tutors participate in cadre meetings during which they share teaching strategies, review the results and analyses of assessments, and engage in teacherly discourse that guides them through the semester. They learn that their fellow teachers can offer a new perspective or approach when needed. Similarly to Assaf and Lopez's (2012) and Massey and Lewis's (2011) views, we too encourage the talk in these meetings to revolve around their students' interests and attitudes, not only academic work.

Success Stories from the Course

Although we may not be able to tell the stories of our students as personally as they could, we will recount their experiences through our lenses as instructors. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe this as "living, telling, retelling, and reliving" (p. 187). Here, we collected stories, wrote them down, and blended them together in order to present the topic of study (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). We offer two stories from one semester.

Kira and Mandy (as told by Bethanie)

The way we match our pre-service teachers and elementary students is arbitrary. Our department's program specialist sends out a call to parents who are interested in bringing their children on campus for the tutorials. We then take the list of children's names that we are given and assign each to a tutor. We usually know very little about these children; however, we try to account for our undergraduate students' interests by matching them with children in grade levels they would like to teach. This is deceiving, though, since we serve, for example, first grade children who read at a fourth grade instructional level and fourth grade children who read at a first grade level. We do the best we can and hope for acceptable partnerships, and we are flexible and will switch pairs if it needed. So, when a tutor and child are randomly paired and the result is an exemplary match, it is a sight to behold. This is what happened with Kira and Mandy (all names are pseudonyms).

My first thought was that we had recruited children who may not need this intervention, as many were reading above grade level. So, in the back of my mind, I thought that Kira was fortunate for being assigned a student who bounced into the first tutorial session ready to read. I would later learn more about Mandy, her student.

During the first evening of tutorials, I could tell something amazing was happening. As I sidled up to the duo while Kira, the tutor, administered one of the required assessments, I noticed the "leaning in" that naturally occurs when a teacher and student are working

so well together that they create a visual rapport. There was Mandy, Kira's third grade student, sitting on the edge of her seat, her body tilted forward, with wide eyes and a wide smile. Kira also leaned in, smiling and gently nudging Mandy to try the next item of the assessment task. It was as though there were not ten other pairs of tutors and tutees working near them. Each session after this was the same during the entire 75 minutes of tutoring. Kira had found a "connection," which is consistent with Lane, Hudson, McCray, R. D., et al.'s findings as they observed undergraduate tutors (2011, p. 209).

One of my roles as an instructor for this course was to find out what Kira did to engage Mandy so that I could share ideas with other pre-service teachers in our program. So each week, I hovered over the pair for a few minutes and watched. Kira used everything she learned about Mandy during the first week's "reading interview" to select texts and literacy activities that would appeal to Mandy. Kira's method aligns with Allington's (2006) assertion that when children are given choices to read materials that interest them, they are more likely to "tolerate challenging reading" (p. 57). Rather than designing each week's tutorial lesson according to her own agenda, Kira chose to follow her child, and that yielded a great return.

At the end of the eight sessions, Mandy's mother approached me and shared that Mandy told her she hated reading before the tutorials began. Her mother practically had to force her to attend the first session. She also told me that Mandy was at the bottom of her third grade class at school when it came to reading; however, since the tutorial program had started, she bounded out of bed each Tuesday morning, in anticipation of the evening's trip to the university to meet with Kira. I have spoken with many parents over the course of my teaching career, but this exchange was different. This was the moment where I answered the question asked at the beginning of this article - How much of a difference can tutoring a child for eight sessions make? It can make a monumental difference, of course.

Alex and Dylan (as told by Christie)

I watched as Alex stood at the foot of the stairs, holding her "limo sign" with Dylan's name written in bright blue, anxiously awaiting his arrival. Given that this was her first time to work one-to-one with a child in an educational setting, I knew she was headed for an incredible experience that would impact her future as a teacher. When the door opened and a frightened, tear-stricken boy entered, cowering behind his mother, I worried what the next weeks would entail.

Dylan was not only timid and frightened to be separated from his mother; he was a struggling first grade student on the brink of being retained. Our tutoring program was the last intervention his mother was willing to try before

paying a hefty fee to enroll him in a commercialized reading program. She was also in the process of having him tested for a learning disability through his school.

Alex embraced the challenge and did not allow Dylan's demeanor, or the presence of his mother during the first several tutoring sessions, to deter her from establishing a positive rapport in a focused, engaging learning environment. She knew he needed help, and though she often questioned her own ability to meet Dylan's unique needs as a reader and writer, Alex designed and implemented lessons that met him at his instructional level. As I talked with her each week about various activities and reading materials, as well as Dylan's overall progress, it occurred to me that our tutoring camp is as much a positive learning intervention for students as it is for pre-service teachers.

Alex wrestled with the same doubts and fears that plague classroom teachers every day. *What else can I do to help? Am I an effective teacher? Are the lessons I teach really making a difference?* Alex also found herself questioning her career choice—*Is teaching really for me?* She experienced for the first time the exhilarating pleasure and frustration of being an educator. Up to this point, Alex had only textbook vignettes and professors' anecdotes to which she could refer. Now, she knew firsthand what teaching is all about.

I observed Alex and Dylan as they traversed this path together. I witnessed a shy first grader morph, at times, into an eager learner willing to try anything that Alex offered. He showed improvement in word recognition and letter formation, as well as in writing. These little victories occurred sporadically throughout the semester, similar to the real classroom. I witnessed the birth of a teacher, as she experienced success and "exhibited greater feelings of self-efficacy" (Wasserman, 2009, p. 1049). She also responded to the obstacles and reality of teaching much like a boxer counters an opponent in the ring—recoiling from the pain of one blow, a failed lesson, all to shake it off and return with an equally packed punch, an engaging and effective activity. At the end of the semester, Alex was not only committed to the education profession, but also for the first time referred to herself as a teacher and "visualized [her]self in [this] role" (Lane, et al., 2011, p. 209).

Final Thoughts

As professors of future reading teachers in this diagnosis of reading problems course, it is our duty to help our students understand the reading and writing process and how to assess and instruct young readers. However, it is always our wish that, at some point during the semester, we notice that our students have similar experiences to those of Kira and Alex. We want to look around the room and see pairs of tutors and students who are so engaged in what they are doing that they have no idea

what else is happening around them. We can teach pre-service educators how to instruct children in the areas of comprehension, word recognition, and writing. What we cannot teach and can only model and explain (Noddings, 1984) is a passion for working with students, a passion that has to come from within.

Our observations in our course align with what Assaf and Lopez (2012) argue, that "we must nurture caring relationships by providing the time and space for our pre-service teachers to share their lives and personally get to know their students" (p. 377). We are fortunate to have witnessed examples of this in our after-school tutorial course, and we carry these stories into the next courses we will teach.

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Making Space for Multimodal Storytelling:
A Formative Case Study

By Elizabeth Hughes, The Pennsylvania State University
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The large windows look out onto the paved parking lot. Child-sized desks are arranged in groups of four, systematically organized in the center of the long classroom. Each desk is decorated with the child's name and has a folder that serves as a pocket hanging from the side of each desk. This folder is where the students organize their iPad activities. A bulletin board dedicated to the class' current iPad project is located next to the rectangular table where the teacher frequently meets with students about their projects. Although the classroom is quiet at the time, soon it will be bustling with children eager to work on their multimodal storytelling projects.

Literacy in today's world is not limited to words that fit neatly between the covers of a book or on the pages of a newspaper. Twenty-first century literacies are multimodal, requiring readers to attend to narrative, image, sound, and video in a cohesive production (National Writing Project with DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, & Hicks, 2010). Technology has forever changed not only what students need to learn, but also the way in which they learn. As such, literacy experts are calling for an expanded definition of literacy and literacy instruction. The New London Group (1996) argued by broadening the definition of literacy and in turn literacy instruction, educators must address not only traditional print text but the variety of modes of communication present in the world today. The National Council of Teachers of English (2005) encouraged the integration of different modes of communication into the overall literacy curriculum as well as the investment of adequate time and resources for implementation. Educators are encouraged to follow standards of excellence and best practices in learning, teaching, and leading with technology in education (ISTE, 2016; NETS, 2011). More recently the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) require students to be able to analyze multimodal texts (National Governors Association & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). In addition, society's swift adoption of new technologies and the new modes of communication afforded by the technology also challenges teachers to expand their understanding of the potential of these technologies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Shannan, 2013). Teaching students to be literate in a tech savvy world requires teachers to have the skills, training, and tools to teach students how to attend to, evaluate, and synthesize information utilizing a variety of modalities

One way to introduce technologies to students is through the promising practice of multimodal storytelling. In tangent with new multimedia literacies are unique opportunities for teachers to differentiate literacy instruction to meet varied literacy needs of diverse student populations. Multimodal storytelling provides opportunities for teachers to develop students' literacy skills and for students to (a) read independently, (b) read, analyze,

and interpret texts, (c) compose multiple texts for a variety of purposes and audiences, (d) develop and expand oral language and vocabulary, including speaking and listening skills, and (e) use information, communication, and technology tools and skills to enhance literacy development. Interacting with multimodal storytelling requires students to understand implications associated with selecting, manipulating, and merging technologies and which technologies can serve multiple purposes (National Writing Project with DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, & Hicks, 2010). The integration of technology and literacy allows students to express ideas in in non-linear ways, ways that incorporate interaction of visuals and text, videos, and other graphics. A growing body of research supports the use of multimodal storytelling to teach students with diverse literacy needs including English-language learners (Rance-Roney, 2010), urban students (Lu, 2010), and struggling writers (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Robin (2008) reported that multimedia projects such as digital storytelling increased students' academic skills, motivation, social, language, and critical thinking skills. Multimodal stories provide opportunities and space for the students to identify as active participants in the learning process (Honeyford, 2014) and share personal challenges and successes (Lu, 2010). For example, Schultz and Coleman-King (2012) reported that students who were immigrants shared their voice and developed a sense of belonging in the classroom through multimodal stories. Honeyford (2014) documented that English language learners developed ownership of their learning. Multimodal storytelling can be used to empower students to share personal or learned information in ways that integrate technology and literacy.

In order for students to benefit from technology and multimodal storytelling, educators must have the skill to effectively integrate the two to teach multimodal literacies. Unfortunately, teachers may not have the knowledge nor the skill to effectively integrate technology. One reason for the teachers' limited abilities to integrate multimodal instruction may be the lack of teacher preparation and professional development directly related to multimodal literacies (Connors, 2012). Connors contends classroom teachers are often left to their own devices to figure out how best to integrate a skill with which they might lack expertise. In addition, the fluid nature of technology makes it challenging for practicing teachers to implement literacy instruction that meets the needs and interests of students growing up in an ever-changing digital, global society.

Teacher dispositions regarding technology influence practice (Prestridge, 2012), suggesting that even as teachers are developing skills, teachers who are more willing to integrate technology will more likely be successful with it. It is suggested

that teacher beliefs about technologies in the classroom have great impact on the implementation of the technologies (e.g., Becker, 2000) and can therefore be a vehicle for change, or contribution to the obstacle. In actuality, addressing teacher beliefs about technology may be a more challenging barrier to overcome that of limited material resources (Donnelly, McGarr, & O-Reilly, 2011). Recent research fails to explore practical applications as action-oriented research. As a result, teachers and researchers fall short of being able to address how availability to technology and willingness to integrate multimodal literacies translates into action and application from the teacher.

The purpose of the research was to identify triumphs and challenges a teacher encountered while incorporating multimodal storytelling into literacy instruction. Meeting research objectives requires working with teachers to increase technology in the classroom through training and implementation of multimodal storytelling. Findings from this research aim to help guide professional development and improve implementation of multimodal storytelling as an effective literacy practice.

Theoretical Framework: TPACK Model

This research is framed by the TPACK Model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), which examines teaching with technology via the complex relationships between technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge. TPACK conceptually frames how teachers implement technology in their own classroom, by navigating multi-faceted nature of knowledge, specifically technology, pedagogical, and content knowledge. Ideal instruction with technology integration is where the three bodies of knowledge intersect. Teachers are currently expected to be proficient in grade-level content with a level of pedagogy understanding about the theories of learning. Graham (2011) emphasizes a need to clearly define the constructs and the boundaries that separate the functions. Additionally, Graham emphasized the need to provide rationales for practice.

Technological Knowledge

Technological knowledge refers to basic understanding of technology, including use and application of technological devices. In educational practices, technology literacy may have a wide range of applications. These include functional use of the technological devices, such as basic computer skills and knowledge with standard software (e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, email, Internet, Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Pedagogical Knowledge

Teachers demonstrate pedagogical knowledge on a daily basis, as they are required to plan and deliver instruction. This requires an understanding of development and learning and students' intra- and inter-individual differences to develop and deliver lessons. Pedagogy is often understood as the art and science of teaching. Pedagogical knowledge contributes to how the information is presented to students within a unit, lesson or project and may vary based on teachers' perceptions of student needs.

Content Knowledge.

Content knowledge includes an understanding of content material (e.g., language arts, mathematics). This includes understanding of grade-level standards and sequence of instruction in both conceptual and procedural contexts. Grade level content is dictated by CCSS or state standards.

The TPACK framework recognizes that for teachers to effectively integrate technology into instruction, teachers must have a substantial understanding of technology and educational uses of technology. Hence, it is only when teachers understand the dynamic relationships between technology, content, and pedagogy (i.e., how technology influences content, how content influences technology, how technology influence pedagogy, how pedagogy influence technology, how content influence pedagogy, and how pedagogy influence content) that they can successfully integrate educational technology in the classroom (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

While each component in the TPACK framework is necessary for effective teaching, it is through the overlap of the three knowledge bases that we create meaning and opportunities for learning. In addition to pedagogical and content knowledge that is traditionally required of teachers, teachers must understand how to use and integrate technology to facilitate good teaching practices and enhance content delivery. Consequently, research must examine effective implementation of technology through lenses that recognize and document the individual and communicative contributions of the three knowledge bases.

Method

This study utilized a formative research design to help the teacher successfully implement multimodal storytelling in her classroom. While formative experiment has been used in the field of literacy for many years (e.g., Jimenez, 1997; Reinking & Pickle, 1993, Reinking & Watkins, 2000, Tracy & Headley, 2013), it, like its design for research, continues to evolve. Unlike traditional research that poses a research question and then, within a stagnant framework, assesses the effectiveness of the intervention, formative design poses a goal and documents the steps necessary to reach that goal. The research was designed to deepen the teacher's understandings of how to use technology, specifically multimodal storytelling, to enhance students' literacy development and document the trials and tribulations in the process. We asserted that simply providing opportunities to use technology is not enough to transform learning. It is only when teachers develop ways to use the technology complemented by content and pedagogical knowledge of literacy that student learning is maximized. Following the guidelines set forth by Reinking and Bradley (1998, 2000, 2008), we employed a formative experiment, chronicling efforts to effectively implement multimodal storytelling into elementary literacy classroom. Guidelines anchoring this study included (a and b.) identify and justify both pedagogical goals and instructional interventions, (c.) evaluate factors that enhance or inhibit efforts toward pedagogical goal, (d.) modify intervention as necessary to successfully achieve the goal, (e.) identify changes in instructional environment and (f.) document unintended

consequences of the intervention, (Reinking & Watkins, 1998, 2000). Consistent with formative design, our research question is more of a pedagogical goal (e.g., Reinking & Watkins, 1998, 2000).

This research aimed to help a teacher successfully incorporate multimodal storytelling into her classrooms as an effective means to enhance students' literacy. Formative design allowed, us, the researchers to be active participants in the research and in accomplishing the pedagogical goal, rather than being passive bystanders until the conclusion of the intervention. Within this goal we explore the benefits and obstacles to teacher implementation of multimodal storytelling, as well as the supports that strengthen teachers' content, pedagogical, and technological knowledge bases with regard to literacy. Data collected were used to make ongoing decisions to best support the teacher as she implemented multimodal storytelling. This formative process naturally mirrors the ongoing problem-solving that teachers do in their class on a daily basis. By documenting this process, we were able to identify and communicate triumphs and challenges to a teacher's successful implementation of multimodal storytelling and document how we attempted to reinforce the successes and overcome the challenges. Consequently, implementing multimodal storytelling in the classroom incorporates evidence-based strategies that aimed to meet the unique classroom needs. The results are presented categorically as the triumphs and challenges are described.

Subjects and Setting

The study took place in a suburban school district, directly outside a large urban city. The majority of students who attend the school district are Caucasian (97%). The district serves 4,634 students in grades k-12 across six elementary schools (primary and secondary elementary), one middle school, and one high school. The primary elementary school where the research took place is considered to be an Elementary and Secondary Act Title I primary elementary school, which serves students in grades kindergarten through third grade. Approximately 47 % of the students who attend the school receive free or reduced lunch. District-wide, 18.9% of students receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The teacher-participant, Ms. T. (pseudonym), was an energetic third grade teacher. With 15 years of experience, and the last 13 in a third grade classroom, she was a veteran teacher. Ms. T. had the inclusive third grade classroom at the time of the study. She had a Master's degree in instructional technology, thus minimizing the risks associated by the impact of learning a new technology compounding learning new applications for the technology (Donnelly et al., 2011). Ms. T. volunteered to be involved in this study, as she was interested in integrating technology into her classroom, but sometimes found it difficult to balance the various demands faced by educators in the current educational system.

Description of Intervention

The pedagogical goal was to help a teacher implement multimodal literacies using multimodal storytelling as the vehicle, documenting her triumphs and challenges along the way. Ms. T.

was given two iPads in protective cases, a BlueTooth keyboard, and iTunes credit to use for multimodal storytelling in her classroom.

The researchers had six meetings with Ms. T, one prior to the start of the research, four during the intervention, and one after the intervention. In addition to this, the researchers were available to meet or talk with Ms. T, as needed. The primary method of communication was e-mail.

At the first meeting, the researchers described the nature of the research and the roles of the teacher and researcher. The researchers shared a table demonstrating how multimodal storytelling aligned with third grade CCSS . Ms. T. was instructed to implement multimodal storytelling as she saw fit in her classroom and communicate with the researchers via journal, meetings, and electronic communications. The researchers established their roles as supports for the teacher, acting as consultants, resources to finds apps, and resources to provide support and ideas. This included providing guidance on how to incorporate multimodal storytelling in established units. The researchers facilitated in the multimodal storytelling when requested by the teacher, as not to impose "more work" on her or distract from her planning and instructional routines. By the second meeting, Ms. T. had created a table that shared with the school district's pacing guide for third grade writing instruction. On the table, she listed type of writing (e.g., persuasive, perspective, poetry), activity using the iPad, and brainstorming notes. She used this to create a schedule and organize what apps would work best to meet the writing standards.

Data Collection

Teacher Journal. Ms. T. maintained a running record of multimodal storytelling activities and the lesson, the apps that she used, what she felt were the triumphs and challenges to the lesson, and questions she had for the researchers. These running records were recorded in an online journal. The researchers had access to the journals and responded to concerns via standard communications (e.g., e-mail or meetings).

Interviews and Informal Discussion. Ms. T. met with the researchers six times throughout the instructional period. More structured interviews were conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the intervention at a public location. Informal meetings took place in the teacher's classroom, after school hours, and between the first author and the teacher. These meetings were often used to discuss upcoming iPad projects and troubleshoot any anticipated complications to implementation. The first author took notes during the meetings and summarized the notes with the participant at the end of the meeting to ensure clarity and correct collection of information. Although meetings between the researcher and participant were not audio-recorded, the first author summarized and reviewed all notes with the participant prior to the end of each meeting to ensure clarity and accuracy.

Additional communication. Occasionally, the participant would email the researchers for help with issues that needed immediate responses. All communications were recorded and analyzed as data and analyzed for recurring patterns and themes.

Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed data from multiple sources to ensure findings were evidenced through multiple sources. Borrowing from Strauss and Corbin (1989), the researchers analyzed data line-by-line, as all qualitative data were considered to be expressions of significance statements. Open codes were used to identify meaningful expressions (e.g., words, phrases, sentences). Each expression was coded by the researchers, who wrote down what anchored that expression in meaning. The researchers then evaluated the codes using axial coding. During this portion of the data analysis, the researchers evaluated the open codes for relationships among the codes. The codes clustered as themes and patterns emerged from the data. Items that required explicit and immediate attention were addressed in a timely manner via electronic communication. Ongoing data analysis allowed the researchers to identify elements that contributed to or detracted from the success of multimodal storytelling. The researchers provided suggestions to the teachers and changes to the implementation of multimodal storytelling as necessary. Upon completion of the study, all data was evaluated and analyzed. Special attention was paid to topics that appeared in multiple sources and over periods of time. The first two authors discussed the open codes, themes, and patterns to determine the overarching themes that contributed to and provided a barrier to success.

Results

Data revealed several factors that acted as triumphs (i.e., enhanced) or challenges (i.e., inhibited) for successful implementation of multimodal storytelling in an elementary classroom. The six major themes (i.e., three enhancing, three inhibiting) are briefly discussed. The themes that enhanced the intervention included: a.) willingness to be a part of change, b.) student-centered attitude, and c.) ample choice in technology supports and applications. Themes that inhibited the intervention included: a.) limited resources, b.) structural constraints, and c.) overabundant choice in technology and applications.

Triumphs that Enhanced Instruction

Today the students are learning how to use Skitch. Ms. T decided to start multimodal storytelling in her class by teaching her students to use Skitch, an application that allows students to annotate pictures, because it allows students to explore non-linear texts and the interaction of texts and images. During this lesson, Ms. T discusses the importance of integrating visual images and text to communicate meaning. Students discuss how this interaction between text and image is different than traditional books where pictures often support text (such as reading a book and looking at the pictures on each page). In the future, students will have the option to take a picture, upload a picture, select a picture from the Internet, use a map, select a .PDF or draw a picture and elaborate on their annotations with more complex texts, emoji, and shapes. For now, however, Ms. T. has already uploaded a picture for them so they can learn to use the tools within the app. Ms. T begins the whole-class lesson by passing out handouts with the directions and the students cluster in their tables around the iPads (see Figure X). In this introductory lesson, Ms. T. shows students how to access the app and describes each of the icons. The students are clustered around the iPads and take

turns holding the iPad and follow Ms. T's directions. One student selects the picture and passes the iPad along to the next student who adds an arrow. The students take turns adding texts and arrows. As students became more familiar with the application, students are able to extend beyond labeling and use Skitch as a platform for informative texts, describing their understanding of the lifecycle of a butterfly. Later in the year, students are able to take pictures using the camera and write personal narratives about the pictures they took.

Willingness to be a part of change: Preparing a digital-rich classroom. Our data from this study overwhelmingly supports that the teacher we worked with was willing and eager to incorporate technology in her classroom and embrace the changes that digital-competent classrooms require. Ms. T's was able to draw from her prior knowledge of technology when using the apps in her classroom and learning about new apps. The teacher integrated multimodal storytelling and multimodal literacies so that they were not something "else" or an "additional" task for teachers. Rather, she accepted multimodal literacies as another modality of literacy, an extension or arm, not a separate entity or body. These fundamental beliefs were evident in conversations, correspondences, and classroom actions. "This application could be used in our SS class. It would be great to use to find out information about community leaders." The teacher documented how she met the standards through classroom lessons that allowed students to utilize multimodal storytelling to demonstrate skills. Ms. T. listed all of the standards met for each lesson in her lesson journal. For example, Ms. T. documented how she used SKITCH to meet both literacy standards, "1.4. Types of Writing; 1.9. Information, Communication, and Literacy Technology," and science standards, "

3.1. Unifying Themes of Science;
3.3. Biological Science".

Student-centered attitude. This study focused on supporting multimodal storytelling at the teacher level, not at the student level. Therefore, the discussion of student learning is anecdotal from the teacher's perspectives and focuses on the actions of the teacher to meet the perceived needs of the students. The teacher prioritized teaching the students how to use the applications prior to allowing them to work independently. Conversations, interviews, and questions that she asked the researchers support that she made decisions based on the activity and perceived needs of the students for that activity. Data supported that she had pedagogical and content knowledge to integrate technology into quality teaching. After her first lesson, an introduction lesson on how to teach SKITCH, the participant documented,

> "It worked!!! – The lesson took no more than 25 minutes. I was hesitant about this form of instructions. Ten students to one iPad seemed a bit difficult to manage when planning the lesson. The students were motivated and knew this was the beginning of a new iPad project, so they were eager to learn SKITCH. (They also knew they needed to stay focused to be able to complete the upcoming project.) I am hoping to model all apps in this way. The process of giving the students a guided lesson of the app and its features, then providing an introductory task for each large group was successful."

Ms. T. introduced Skitch to students and allowed them to practice using the icons to create a Skitch with science content. Please see Appendix A for an adapted version of the handout. The handout shared here was adapted for general application.

Eventually, students demonstrated that they could work independently and in small groups to take ownership of their learning through the projects. For the second SKITCH project, Ms. T indicated that she arranged cooperative learning groups. The participant's student-centered focus on student learning resulted in marked changes in the instructional environment. Such that, Ms. T. created handouts, instructional guides, graphic organizers, and centers to support the multimodal learning. Ms. T. positioned multimodal learning within evidence-based instructions and differentiated the lessons based on students' needs.

Ample choice of technology: Using the right app to do the job. We begin by stating the obvious: there are a lot of educational apps available. Sorting through them takes time. Some apps can be downloaded for no cost, while others provide free, basic versions with the paid option to upgrade. Therefore, we consider the vast number of apps available both a triumph and a challenge. Although we provided a list of apps and suggestions, we did not require that Ms. T use any particular app and instead let her select which app she thought would best meet the needs of her classroom. Mrs. T. selected the app that fit the purpose of the project. Students created narrative stories in an app where they wrote and selected/uploaded/took pictures, they annotated picture or series of annotated pictures for expository writing.

Challenges that Inhibited the Instruction.

Limited Resources. A theme that was intertwined throughout conversations was use of the limited resource of time and hardware. As this was the first time implementing multimodal storytelling in the classroom, there was a learning curve as the teacher became familiar with the apps available and how to develop expectations and routines in the classroom for students. Once the function of an app had been mastered, it is easier to generalize that app to another project or unit than to teach a new app that demands a new learning curve. Ms. T. implemented multimodal storytelling in her third grade classroom with two student iPads. This was a concern of Ms. T., as stated in her SKTICH journal, "How will I manage this lesson with the large classroom? How will I ensure that each student gets an opportunity to use (the app)?" Limited hardware acted as a barrier to Ms. T's ability to implement multimodal storytelling.

Overabundance and Appropriateness of Applications. Another challenge which relates to time is the sheer amount of apps available for multimodal storytelling. For this study alone we looked at over 20 apps. Each app has strengths and limitations in design and ease of use. The challenge was to select an app that students could effectively learn to use so that they may work independently or in small groups. Multiple the volume of apps with time required to identify student friendly app equals a challenge difficult to overcome for my time-strapped teachers.

Structural Constraints. Many of the challenges to student learning noted by the teacher were challenges to the organization and structure of class. Several conversations with the teacher focused on finding the time to have students meaningfully work on their multimodal storytelling projects. She addressed this issue by creating an iPad Project Guide and iPad Time Cards. As documented in her lesson journal,

> "A guide was created to outline the project task. This enabled students to guide their own instruction at an appropriate pace. An iPad time card holder and iPad time card were attached to each student's desk. This provided the date and time for the students to work on their project. Students had to bring their time cards to the iPad area and place them in the receptacle in order to begin the task. This was helpful in managing all students and the completion of the SKITCH project."

Additionally, the teacher had a classroom board dedicated to the current multimodal storytelling project and each child had a folder that shared when they were to have access to the iPads.

Discussion and Implications

Technology provides access to these literacies, but teachers need support to become effective technology users allowing them to integrate technologies to development multimodal literacies of their students. Professional developments, therefore, need to support teachers to be successful with this endeavor. The theoretical framework of the TPACK model compliments the formative design of the study contributed to a successful multimodal storytelling experience. As suggested by the results, the teacher demonstrated strengths in each of the three major TPACK areas. Mrs. T. used her pedagogical, content, and technology knowledge to develop opportunities for students to meet grade-level standards and communicate learning and understanding in multimodal ways. When she felt she was weak in an area, the researchers were able to work with her and contribute strategies, ideas, and supports. While she began with an initial knowledge of technology, her knowledge in multimodal literacies increased with use, reflection, and guidance from the researchers. Participation in the research afforded Mrs. T the opportunity to learn more about technology applications available to support student learning. As indicated by the data, she was *willing to be a part of change* and use technology in her classroom. Perhaps, as teachers consider implementing multimodal storytelling, it may be beneficial to form a support group of teachers with similar goals to use multimodal storytelling. The collective strengths of a team interested in implementing multimodal literacies in the classroom likely outweighs that of an individual. As suggested by Donelly (2012) the willingness collaborate with other motivated educators contributed to successful application of multimodal storytelling.

Willingness to be an agent for change did not come without its share of limitations and challenges. Juxtaposed, the factors that acted as roadblocks to success lay outside

the overlapping components of the theoretical framework. Structural constraints and limited time resources, which both fall outside of the knowledge domain for teachers, acted as roadblocks to success and required the teacher to use additional time and energy to overcome. School-level administrative supports to recognize and prioritize multimodal literacies in curricula may proactively address such barriers alleviating responsibility of teachers to address the barriers.

Mrs. T. was *child-centered* in her actions. She introduced and modeled each application prior to letting students use it in groups or independently. Mrs. T. created directions for how to use each app that included pictures and text. Most of the pictures were screenshots of icons and screens in the app. She purposefully had students practice using the app with content from across the curriculums. For each project, Mrs. T. created a project guide. The guide explicitly communicated the students' expectations for the project, provided a checklist, and included instructional supports for students to organize content. Mrs. T incorporated evidence-based practices, such as graphic organizers, which allowed her to differentiate supports for students with different learning needs (e.g., students with disabilities, English-learners). Once she created these resources, she had them for future projects and was able to edit and revise according to her students' needs.

She explored the *ample use of technology*, but concluded that it was best to purposefully use fewer apps that were more versatile, thus allowing students to focus on learning and communicating the content of the digital story- not the app itself. Mrs. T. created a table that documented the strengths and limitations of the apps that she used, allowing her to make informed decisions when selecting which application to use for which project. (something about documenting and sharing with teacher and principal)

The formative design of this research allowed the researchers to identified three major challenges, limited resources, structural constraints, and overabundance of choice. We conclude that appropriate resources including material items (e.g., devices and apps) and non-material items (e.g., time, community of learners) are basic needs for success. For example, Ms. T. documented concern about the student/iPad rations and this worried her. However, Ms. T. strongly believed in the importance of multimodal literacies, so she addressed the problematic ratio by incorporating iPad use into her centers.

While access to technology is essential to prepare students as competent 21st century learners, mere access is not sufficient. Teachers need knowledge, addressed in the TPACK framework, and support, addressed through the formative design. For teachers attempting to integrate instruction which fosters multimodal literacy, we propose that teachers would benefit from being a part of a multimodal learning community where they can build knowledge and work through the obstacles together. This recommendation supports teachers' need for opportunities for collaboration and reflective practices (e.g., Dewey, 1998/1933),

supporting professional developments (Connors, 2012) and opportunities to use technology as a learning tool. School-level administration can support teachers by prioritizing shared time and space in a structured learning environment.

Limitations and Future Research

We recognize the limitations of case study for the purpose of generalizability. The findings from this study; however, contribute to scholarly discourse about how to support implementation of multimodal storytelling in classrooms as well as how to support teachers by building a community of learners engaged in ongoing professional developments. Future research may address how best to deliver professional developments and support teachers' learning communities.

By documenting the triumphs of multimodal storytelling implementation, we recognized characteristics of our participant that aided in the success of multimodal storytelling as judged by the researchers and teacher; however, we did not document the impact on student learning. Anecdotal evidence from the teacher interviews suggested that the students enjoyed and valued iPad time. Conversations with the teacher and stories she shared indicated that students enjoyed the activities and looked forward to using the iPad. Fostering a child's love for learning is fundamental to our jobs as educators and incorporating current technology is a promising way to do that. Abundant data exits documenting the relationship between motivation and learning (e.g., Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo, 2011), therefore we see the excitement to use the iPad as more than just a novelty, but as a natural way to foster learning. Documenting these relationships and student outcomes were beyond the scope of this research. More research is needed to document how teacher implementation of multimodal storytelling translates to student learning and improved student outcomes.

Conclusion

The formative research followed one third-grade teacher at an urban elementary school as she implemented multimodal storytelling in her academically diverse classroom. This current research shared a collective picture of how attributes and factors coexist to promote or detract from successful implementation of multimodal storytelling. The combination of TPACK and formative design provided a powerful professional development tool that allowed the teacher to expand her technology, content, and pedagogy knowledge in a supported learning community. This combination allowed for the successful implementation. With the ultimate goal of student achievement, we must first establish classrooms where teachers have drive, resources, and supports, in efforts to build a classroom for 21st century learners. It is necessary that we foster learning communities and professional developments that contribute to transformative learning with technology (ISTE, 2016).

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Pen Pal Book Study Project: Authentic Literacy Experiences with Third Graders and Preservice Teachers

By Shawnna Helf, Bettie Parsons Barger, Hannah Brandon, Haley Nash, Winthrop University & Kim White, Sugar Creek Elementary, Fort Mill, SC

ABSTRACT — *Authentic learning is critical to the development of readers and writers. These types of experiences have been found to improve student achievement and motivation. In this article we describe an electronic pen pal book study project between third graders and preservice teachers. We will share the perspectives of the participants and offer considerations for designing authentic literacy experiences.*

Authentic practice has been defined as a "combination of personal meaning making and purposefulness within an appropriate social and disciplinary framework" (Stein, Issacs, & Andrews, 2004, p. 241). Research supports the use of authentic literacy in accompaniment with reading and writing instruction (Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall & Tower, 2006; Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo, 2011; Parsons & Ward, 2011; Schmoker, 2007; Teale & Gambrell, 2007; VanDeWeghe, 2008). These experiences provide real-world texts for a real-world purpose, which may result in tasks students value (Perry, 2012; Tompkins, Campbell, Green & Smith, 2014). Often, authentic literacy tasks require social interaction and collaboration among participants (Tompkins et al., 2014). These types of activities have been shown to increase students' academic achievement on general and standardized tests, as well as motivation (Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo, 2011; Teale & Gambrell, 2007). As university professors, we (Drs. Helf and Barger) advocate for these types of learning opportunities as we seek to enhance the intellectual development of our students.

In the fall of 2015 we designed a book study project with third graders at a local elementary school and preservice teachers. Essentially, the third graders and preservice teachers were electronic pen pals, reading/discussing a piece of children's literature over a seven-week period. The purpose of the project was to (1) engage elementary school students in an authentic literacy activity and (2) provide undergraduate, preservice teachers opportunities to observe the features of elementary school students' literacy development and respond to the students in a meaningful context. In this article we will provide an overview of the project, share the perspectives of the project participants, and offer considerations for designing authentic literacy experiences.

Book Study Project Overview

From the beginning, we knew book selection was critical to the success of the project. The novel had to appeal to both third graders and preservice teachers. It had to have short, manageable chapters and be on an instructional or independent reading level for the third graders. It

also had to have an eventful plot for students to want to, and be able to, engage in a discussion of the story.

After conversations with the classroom teacher, learning more about the abilities and interests of her students, we decided on *Toys Go Out: Being the Adventures of a Knowledgeable Stingray, a Tough Little Buffalo, and Someon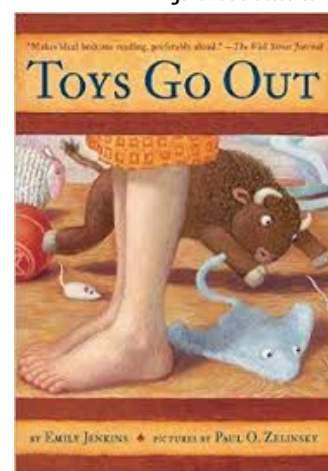e Called Plastic* by Emily Jenkins (2006). In this short novel, three toys (Stingray, Buffalo, and Plastic) go on adventures, learning more about their world and themselves in the process. This novel is written on a 3.9 reading level, with a Lexile level of 730. Each chapter has a problem and a resolution, providing students enough material to generate discussion. There are six chapters, which fit perfectly with the timing of our project and the elementary school and university calendars.

Figure 1. Selected text.

Setting up the Technology

The next step was to create an online forum for the book study project. The first design included email correspondences between elementary students and preservice teachers. However, because of privacy and security concerns the third graders did not have individual access to email; therefore, we had to explore other platforms. Our university had just moved to Microsoft Office 365, so all of our preservice teachers had access to Microsoft OneNote. This program allows multiple people to share access to the same notebook, which provided a layer of security for the students involved. The university professors, preservice teachers, and classroom teacher had access to the notebook.

OneNote allows for multiple dividers in each notebook. We set up the notebook so that each third grade student had his or her own tab across the top of the notebook. This organization allowed us to keep all responses in one notebook, with specific locations for each student. Under each student tab, we inserted multiple pages, one for every pen pal entry across the book study. We wanted to ensure that the organization made it clear where each entry should go. See Figure 2 for a picture of the Notebook layout (names of the participants have been removed). Each student tab was password protected (accessible to the university professors,

the preservice teacher working with the specific student, and classroom teacher). When entries were posted, they would instantly sync with all devices logged in the OneNote notebook.

Figure 2. Pen pal book study figures.
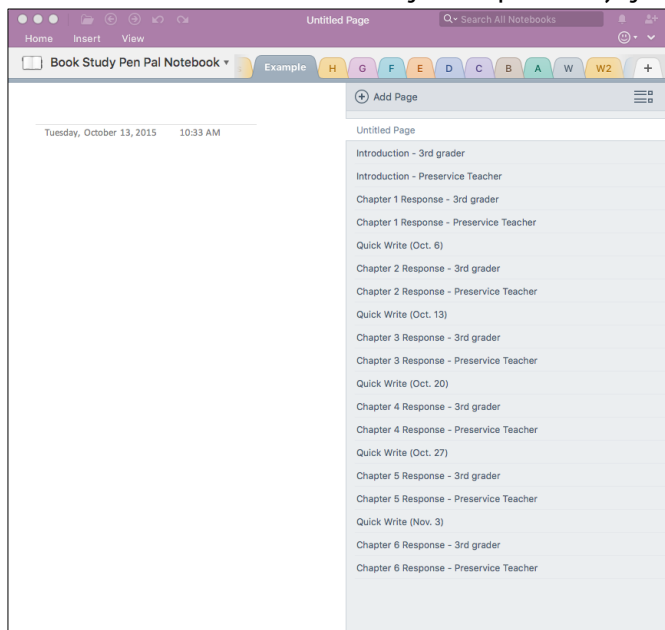
For clarity of the project, we designed the same procedures for each week, ensuring that third graders and preservice teachers knew the expectations. During the week, third graders and preservice teachers read one chapter independently. On Fridays, third graders would respond to the corresponding chapter in OneNote. The preservice teachers would read their pen pal's entry and respond in OneNote by the following Monday morning. Then third graders would read their pen pal's entry and type a "quick write" response by Tuesday. We wanted the correspondence to feel more like a conversation, so we gave the third graders both formal (hand-written chapter responses) and informal (typed quick write responses) opportunities to interact with the preservice teachers.

Participants and Preparing for the Book Study Project

Preservice teacher participants were members of Winthrop University's IRA Student Council and successfully completed the undergraduate Children's Literature course. We wanted preservice teachers who were active in promoting literacy and who had experience examining children's literature, learning about the benefits of children's literature, and exploring the different ways children can respond to literature.

Prior to the start of the book study, we delivered a one-hour training to the preservice teachers to go over the procedures for the project and review key content covered during the Children's Literature course (e.g., characteristics of children's literature, ways to respond to literature). We wanted to provide preservice teachers flexibility in terms of how they could engage with their pen pal, but we also wanted to encourage them to make thoughtful decisions about their responses. We asked students to analyze their partner's writing each week using the Student Writing Analysis form (see Figure 3). We wanted preservice teachers to think critically about

the different types of entries they read, the reading and writing ability of their pen pal, and their responses. The analysis consisted of: categorizing the content of their pen pal's response (when they asked questions, summarized, predicted, identified story elements, made a personal reflection, referred to the author's purpose, etc.); indicating whether or not their pen pal made any text-to-text, text-to-self, or text-to-world connections in their response (providing specific evidence from the entry); selecting one of the six traits of writing (providing a detailed description of the use of the trait or need in that area); and finally, describing how they would decide what to write about next based on their analysis.

The analysis forms were housed in a separate OneNote notebook (organized in the same way as the pen pal responses), and each tab was password protected. Only the preservice teachers and university professors had access to the analysis to provide the security that the preservice teachers were free to critique writing without the possibility of other preservice teachers, the third grader, or classroom teacher, seeing what he or she said.

Figure 3. Student Writing Analysis form.

Analyzing Student Writing

Your student will respond to you once each week. At the end of the week, please analyze your student's responses and complete the following:

Part 1: How would you categorize the content of the student's responses? Mark (x) all that apply.

___ Asking Questions - If yes, the questions were literal ___ inferential ___
___ Summarizing
___ Story Elements
___ Personal Reflection
___ Predicting
___ Author's Purpose
___ Other: _____

Part 2: Did your student make any of these connections? If you mark (x) in the Used in Responses column, please provide evidence from the student's response.

Type of Response	Used in Responses?	Evidence from entries (if used):
Text to Text		
Text to Self		
Text to World		

Part 3: Select one of the Six Traits of Writing (i.e., Ideas, Organization, Word Choice, Voice, Conventions, Sentence fluency) and provide a description of your student's use of the trait or need in that area.

Trait	Description

Part 4: Briefly describe how you will decide what to write about next.

To make the project more authentic and personable, we started with brief video introductions. The classroom teacher individually filmed each of her students introducing themselves to their pen pal and sharing information about their favorite book. She uploaded each video in the corresponding tab in OneNote. In return, preservice teachers viewed and filmed their responses to these introductions. Following the exchange of videos, the book study began. When the pen pals finished the book, the preservice teachers visited the elementary school to meet their pen pals in person and celebrate the project. The preservice teachers brought

along Big Stuff (Winthrop University's mascot), which was a highlight for many of the third graders. See Figure 4 for a picture.

Figure 4. Photo of participants.

Perspectives of the Project Participants

At the end of the book study, we administered questionnaires to the classroom teacher, all of the third graders (via in-person interviews), and preservice teachers (see Figures 5a and 5b). In the sections below we will share each perspective. We organized these reflections by some of the key concepts that emerged from their responses: working with pen pals, using technology, creating responses, and the benefits of participating in this project.

Figure 5a. Teacher questionnaire.

Questionnaire for the Classroom Teacher Pen Pal Project					
	not at all		a little		very much
1) Overall, did you like the pen pal project? Why or why not?	1	2	3	4	5
2) Would you want to have pen pals again? Why or why not?	1	2	3	4	5
3) Was the pen pal project provide valuable for your students? Why or why not?	1	2	3	4	5
4) What did your students learn about reading?					
5) What did you learn about writing?					
6) What were some of the challenges you faced?					
7) What were some of the benefits of this project?					
8) What did you think about using technology?					
9) Do you have any other observations or reflections on this project?					

Classroom Teacher

When I (Mrs. White) was approached about participating in a book study with my students, I was instantly hooked and excited to begin. I spent time in the classroom activating my students' prior knowledge about book studies, working with pen pals, and the types of interactions you have during these experiences. This definitely sparked an interest in my students. They were visibly excited, especially when they learned their partners were going

Figure 5b. Pre-service teacher questionnaire.

Questionnaire for Preservice Teachers Pen Pal Project					
	not at all		a little		very much
1) Did you like writing your pen pals about this book? Why or why not?	1	2	3	4	5
2) Would you want to have pen pals again? Why or why not?	1	2	3	4	5
3) Do you think other preservice teachers should have this experience? Why or why not?	1	2	3	4	5
4) What did you learn about reading when corresponding with your pen pal?					
5) What did you learn about writing when corresponding with your pen pal?					
6) What were some of the challenges you faced when corresponding with your pen pal?					
7) What were some of the benefits of communicating with your 3rd grader about this novel?					
8) What did you think about using technology to "talk" to your pen pal?					
9) Do you have any other observations or reflections on this project?					

to be college students. This excitement was motivating for my students and remained consistent across all aspects of the project.

Using technology. As noted earlier, we used Microsoft OneNote for the book study. This required some professional development on my part. I had to become acquainted with the organization of the notebook and learn how to access/add content. To prepare for the project, not only did my students need to know what the project was and what was expected of them each day, but they also needed to understand how they would use technology. Therefore, I conducted a series of mini-lessons on (1) how the individual folders would serve as the means of communicating with their pen pal, (2) classroom procedures on how they would access and interact with the technology, and (3) the classroom schedule (approximately 20 minutes per day) for completing and submitting responses.

Consistency was an important element established right from the start. I have five classroom iPads. Therefore, it was critical to have a system in place for my students that allowed them all access when needed. In other words, the time I spent delivering the mini-lessons I outlined above was time well spent! After two weeks, my students did not need any guidance other than technical support. This allowed them to become independent in their work with their pen pal, giving them autonomy.

Creating responses. To start the project and set clear expectations, I read the first chapter of *Toys Go Out* (Jenkins, 2006) aloud while my students followed along in their own books. Afterwards, I put students into small groups to discuss the chapter and share their ideas and predictions. At this point, my students were almost ready to write their first chapter responses. I designed another mini-lesson to review the friendly letter format and brainstorm ideas that could be used when creating responses (this included the use of illustrations). For the first entry, I found the majority of my students created responses based on basic story elements including plot, setting

and characters/traits. As the project progressed, the content of their responses became more varied, including predictions, inferences, using supporting details from the text, illustrations.

The project was designed for my students to make all of their responses electronically. As students began their initial responses, I realized they had a lot to say. My students' lack of fluent typing abilities, and the few iPads available to us, was impeding their ability to communicate with their pen pals efficiently. As a result, their first entries were actually hand written, scanned, and uploaded to the corresponding sections in the OneNote notebook. After this experience, we decided to keep the initial chapter responses handwritten. This turned out to be an important element in the project because the preservice teachers were able to see genuine, unedited third-grade writing samples (without the use of spellcheck) and handwriting patterns. The student writing also allowed preservice teachers to see a variety of responses, with the inclusion of illustration as a means of communication. My students were able to communicate all they wanted to say with the handwritten responses, but we also provided the opportunity for them to type a response. We called these "quick writes" and they occurred midweek, after they read their pen pals' entries. These entries were much shorter, but students were able to respond while practicing their typing skills.

Benefits of participating in the project. The project was an amazing experience for my students and for me. My students were engaged at all times in both the reading and writing aspects of the project and the benefits of this experience were abundant. Not only did they learn to hold themselves and each other accountable for deadlines, but receiving responses from their college-aged pen pals made them want to do their personal best in each phase of the book study. Because my students were responding to text daily, they began to read for meaning, question characters and their motives, and make logical predictions. Further, being able to read their partners' responses helped them validate their thoughts and opinions as readers and also allowed them to hear other points of view.

I was also able to see the differences in my students' abilities almost immediately. This information helped inform my instruction and meet the needs of all the students in my classroom. I noticed three of my students experiencing extreme difficulty organizing their thoughts before ever getting to the written phase of the project, while five of my students could not get started fast enough. By providing my struggling students with a basic outline of what to include in the initial response, they were able to get their thoughts down on paper in a more efficient manner. As a professional, this project emphasized the importance and effectiveness of allowing students to interact, create, and learn with others - of any age.

While it was nice to see my students interacting with college students electronically over the course of book study, it was really a JOY to see them meet at the end of the project. They had a clear connection to each other; they were into the book and having purposeful conversations; and they were excited to be talking about reading together. And the fact that they brought along Winthrop University's mascot

was just icing on the cake. Big Stuff posed for pictures, sat at their desks, and "participated" in the discussions with the pen pals. It just added an additional level of fun to the celebration and made the experience even more memorable.

Third Graders

We (Drs. Helf and Barger) conducted individual interviews with the third graders to gain insight into their experiences participating in the book study. We recorded all of their responses and identified patterns and themes across the group.

Working with pen pals. One of the clearest patterns to emerge from the third graders' responses was their excitement to work with college students. "Fun" was the most frequently used word in the questionnaire transcripts. One student commented, "You get to talk to someone you don't know or get to talk to all the time. And they go to college!"

Several of the third graders' responses also illustrated the importance of writing for an audience. For example, one student said, "I always wanted to go back and reread my writing to make sure my pen pal would understand what I was saying." Another commented, "They [college students] would know that we would make mistakes sometimes. It was so fun to work with someone older who would read my stuff and listen to me." The third graders also made connections to the active nature of reading and writing with a pen pal. For example, "I like knowing what they thought about the book and I liked telling my partner what I liked about the book." Another student shared, "I liked writing to my pen pal, and I learned that reading with someone can be more fun than reading just to yourself. It makes you think different." Another said, "It was so fun to have someone to write with. Sometimes writing is hard and you are alone, but with a partner you feel like you are not alone. It makes it easier to write because it feels like you are talking to each other about what you think about when you read and about the story." Writing back and forth with college students provided a real audience for these third graders, someone who would "listen" to them, which made reading and writing enjoyable. They recognized that they thought more about the reading and their writing, and that they were motivated throughout the project.

Using technology. Another theme that emerged was their high level of interest in the project because of the use of technology. One student (referring to OneNote) shared, "I thought it was pretty cool because I don't really see apps like that where you can set up [writing space] for all different kinds of people." The classroom teacher kept the iPads in a specific area at the back of the classroom. She'd check the OneNote notebook in the mornings and would call the students back (a few at a time because there were only 5 iPads) to read their pen pal's entry. A third grader shared, "I loved when (my teacher) would call my name. It was like getting mail. I couldn't wait to see what she wrote to me!"

While [the classroom teacher] noticed the lack of fluent typing skills and the increased time to produce less writing (compared to handwritten responses), the students thought the writings they created on the iPad were "easier." One third grader shared, "I think it was easier because you didn't have to sit there and write

it with your hand. You could type it." Another shared, "I think it was easier for [my pen pal] to read my writing, and it was better for me because I didn't get ink on my hands or blisters." Several students also mentioned how the technology would help them as they wrote. A student shared, "It was so awesome because the drop down box would help me make sure I spelled things right."

Creating responses. The third graders provided insight into how they created their responses. They reported using look backs in the text, thinking about themselves, looking at their pen pal's questions, asking their own questions, sharing their opinions, telling things that happened in the story, and guessing what would happen next. See Figure 6 for samples of third grade student entries. At the beginning of the project, many of the responses relied on summarization of the story. One student shared, "I just don't write exactly what's there [in the story]. I use my own words. I write about what's happening but not exactly." Quite a few students noted how it was difficult to write at first but got easier when "we could keep going back and forth." In fact, student responses increased in length as the project progressed. One student shared, "At first I didn't want to write at all. But then I thought if I write something short, she'll write something short back. So I decided to write long so she would write long."

Figure 6. Sample student responses.
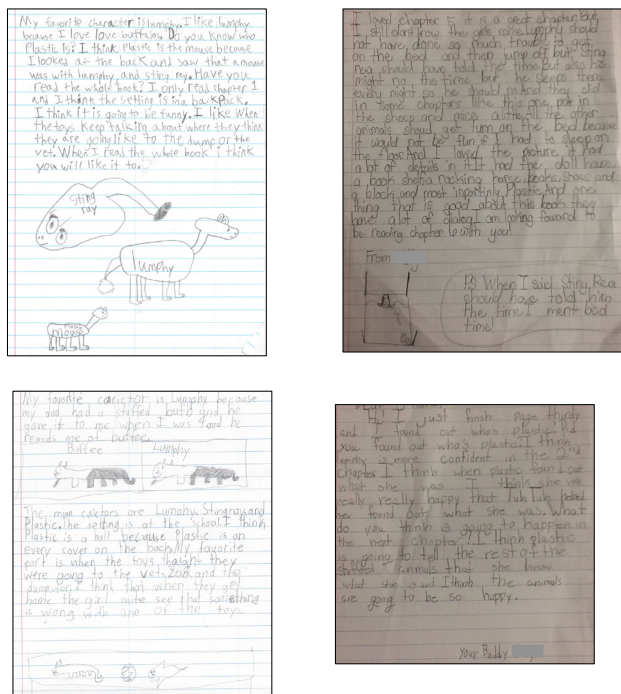
Many students felt supported in their writing when their pen pal would ask them questions about the story and when there were opportunities to have personal interactions. One student commented, "Sometimes [my pen pal] would write questions for me. It was easier for me to write and think about things to say when this happened." Another shared, "I could add stories about myself and that stuff is really easy to write about."

These young writers also seemed to feel less pressure when they were allowed to select the type of responses they wanted to make. For example, some shared pictures as part of their

responses. One student commented, "It was actually fun to write… [but sometimes] you can draw pictures and it might be fun to share that [pictures from the story]." Another student shared, "You can tell things in pictures too. Not just in writing." Third graders felt a sense of autonomy during this project because they had the freedom to write about what they were interested in writing, use illustrations to communicate with their pen pals, and make personal connections with their pen pals and with the novel.

Benefits of participating in the project. Again, the third graders reported high levels of enjoyment throughout the project. All of the third graders reported that they would want to work with pen pals again and thought that other third graders should have the experience as well. This project supported South Carolina literacy standards, stimulated communication, and engaged students of different ages socially and academically.

Preservice Teachers

We (Ms. Brandon and Ms. Nash) were each responsible for corresponding with a third grade student, analyzing his or her writing, and creating an entry responding to the student's entry. We identified whether the student made textual connections and chose one of the six traits of writing to analyze the student's relative strengths or needs with regards to the writing sample. Our students' writing continually informed the way that we responded each week. The reflection on our experiences is provided below.

Working with pen pals. We enjoyed working with elementary students because it allowed us to understand a child's perspective. The students' reactions and responses to the events in the book made us aware of a third grader's point of view while reading the novel. For example, we learned that, in general, students enjoyed the humorous scenes in the book and enjoyed mysterious characters. In addition, this study gave us the opportunity to interact with the students in an informal setting, which is not typically granted in the field experiences we have through our coursework.

Using technology. At the beginning of the study, we exchanged introductory videos with the third graders. This visual introduction made the connection with the students more personal, as we "met" our pen pals before corresponding. It set the tone for positive interaction throughout the project, and allowed us to feel as if we were developing relationships with the students.

In addition, using OneNote was an advantage. This online platform made responding a fast task. The flexibility to use the technology to respond whenever we wanted was a benefit because it never conflicted with coursework or with our work schedules. We also felt that the use of technology developed a risk-free, informal atmosphere for pen pals who had low self-efficacy as writers. Overall, the technology enhanced this project.

Creating responses. Participating in this book study project gave us experience in supporting students' development in literacy. We learned (or were reminded) that everyone brings a little something different to a book. It's interesting how people can read the same book but draw different

conclusions and make different connections. Not knowing what our pen pals would pull out of the text was exciting and something we looked forward to throughout the project. It gave us practice adjusting our writing style to the reader and showed how thinking and writing skills develop over time.

For each of the chapter responses, we used our pen pals' writing to guide our responses. If our students focused on a certain event in the book, our response would also include a reaction to that event as well. We used this technique in order to validate their ideas and perspectives. We also designed our responses with the intention of developing our pen pals' critical thinking skills. For example, we modeled making personal, textual and worldly connections, as well as, provided essential questions about the chapter in order to extend our pan pals' thought processes. See Figure 7 for examples of preservice teacher entries. Many of us observed that as the project progressed our pen pals' writing increased in length and included more varied types of responses.

Figure 7. Sample pre-service teacher entries.

Dear S,

I'm so glad that you enjoyed Chapter 4! What was your favorite part? I really liked reading about Plastic's trip to the beach with the Little Girl. It was quite an adventure! Have you ever been to the beach before? I think that Lilly would be a nice name for the Little Girl. Maybe we'll find out her name in the next chapter! My favorite part of Chapter 4 was when Plastic came back from the beach and told StingRay that dry-clean-only stingrays are smarter and stronger than water stingrays. This really cheered StingRay up and made her feel proud. Why do you think that Plastic lied about reading about dry-clean-only stingrays in the animal book? I'm very happy that Plastic and StingRay made up by the end of the chapter. What do you think will happen in the story next? I can't wait to read the next two chapters with you. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

H

P.S. - I really liked your drawing of the book cover!

Hi D,

I also enjoyed chapter five! I have many favorite parts from this chapter. I also liked the part when Sting Ray whispered subliminal messages into Little Girl's ear. I would have never thought about using those types of messages! I also thought that it was very clever of Lumphy to fall off of the bed each night so that he could play games with the other toys. I also thought that Little Girl was smart for tying Lumphy to the bed to keep him from falling off. If I were dangling by my tail like Lumphy, I would feel panicked! How would you feel if you were Lumphy? I love the picture that you drew of Lumphy falling off of the bed! "Plop" is a great word to describe his fall! I am excited to read chapter six! The chapter title makes me think that it will be about a birthday party! Enjoy reading the last chapter!

From: H

L,

Chapter 5 was such a fun and exciting chapter to read! I cannot believe that Lumphy lost his tail on the string! I definitely still think he is my favorite character. I know how he feels though, have you ever felt left out/never got the chance to do something? It is no fun. Even in the end, Lumphy discovered that he did not even like sleeping on the bed; He knows that the Little Girl will still love him just the same. I had a lot of stuffed animals when I was growing up, but only a few would sleep with me on the bed. That did not mean I liked them any more than the rest of my animals! Do you have certain animals you sleep with every night? I cannot wait to read the last chapter, but I am little sad the book will be over. We will have a lot to talk about when we meet next week!

Your friend,
C:)

Creating responses prove challenging at times. For example, we have not had many opportunities to observe the features of third grade writing. This made responding difficult because we were not always sure if the errors appearing in our pen pals' writing were age appropriate. Further, we were unsure about the amount of feedback (positive and constructive) we should provide. We wanted to focus on the positive aspects of the students' responses in order to encourage them to continue writing. Therefore, we focused on the content of our pen pals' responses, and indirectly suggested improvements for their future responses. As a result, another take away was

that simply modeling effective writing practices does not guarantee students will generalize and respond accordingly. They need a lot of practice and support along the way.

Benefits of participating in the project. Participating in this study project provided third graders with the opportunity to grow as both a reader and a writer, and it helped us develop as educators. We were able to learn a third grader's point of view through the responses each week, viewing the story from a different perspective. Their authentic writings allowed us to develop a better understanding of the ways third graders interact with and process text. It also allowed us to see the types of connections they made.

After a while, we were able to anticipate the questions that they would ask and the connections that they might make. This was extremely beneficial to us as future educators, because it showed how to ask the right questions in order to gauge student understanding and comprehension. In our course work, we learned about writing instruction and the need to plan and implement instruction based on the needs of our students. This project gave us the chance to really practice that. Each of the third graders were given the freedom to respond however they wanted and we were able to see their work, challenge them to think critically, and talk positively about reading. This required us to reflect on the student's strengths and needs in order to respond. We learned about the essential components of writing, textual connections, and the various types of inferential and literal questions.

Further, we learned first-hand the importance of individualized instruction for students. We were able to link the instruction from our university coursework on student development to real-life student work. We learned that teaching students about textual connections and inferential questions are essential skills in developing our students' writing. We discovered that teaching students how to write about textual connections can help them generalize this skill to reading comprehension and higher order thinking by taking the book's content further than literal interpretation. This experience has taught us how to intentionally and appropriately support student learning in both reading and writing.

Considerations for Designing Authentic Literacy Experiences

Based on the variety of experiences detailed above, we offer some considerations for teachers interested in designing authentic preservice and elementary literacy experiences.

- *Make it manageable.* Start small! Mrs. White dedicated twenty minutes a day to the project. She taught a few new skills and reinforced skills already taught through authentic learning experiences, and she was able to meet the needs of her students. This project started with one class of third graders and only went for seven weeks. This was manageable for the third grade class and also for the preservice teachers as well. They could easily commit to seven weeks of reading and an additional week of responding and visiting.

- *Ensure student interest.* Student interest is critical in authentic literacy experiences. When students are corresponding with pen pals, there is more situational interest in reading, writing, and discussing literature (Gambrell et al., 2011; Nolen, 2007). This situational interest can deepen into general interest in reading and writing. Wollak and Koppenhaver (2011) found that students reported they enjoy writing when writing to an audience, expressing situational interest in their pen pals. A few of those students claimed to love writing after communicating with pen pals, when they hated it before the project. They developed a greater general interest in writing due to their participation in a pen pal project.

- Throughout this project, both sets of students were interested in corresponding with each other. They enjoyed reading the novel, writing their responses, and reading notes from pen pals. This interest and enjoyment was often a strong motivator for third graders and for preservice teachers. Therefore, it is critical that you design projects that will spark and keep students' interest.

- *Use technology as a tool.* Technology can be an important component of authentic literacy correspondence. Research indicates technology can facilitate communication and improve student learning outcomes (Andes & Claffett, 2011; Boling, Castek, Zawlinski, Barton & Nierlich, 2008; Larson, 2009; Mills & Levido, 2011; Yearta, Stover & Sease, 2015), increase student motivation and enthusiasm towards writing (Couse & Chen, 2010; Mills & Levido, 2011), and increase student attention towards the task (Hitchcock & Noonan, 2000; Mechling, Gast, & Thompson, 2008).

- While this project was feasible without it, the addition of the technology accelerated communication delivery, increased access to student work as it was all in one location, and interested third graders. It makes the project smoother. One potential risk of using technology is that it can impede learning by being distracting or too complicated. Therefore, we encourage you to thoughtfully make decisions about how technology will *enhance* your learning experience in ways that are appropriate for the task.

- *Provide opportunities for students to generalize learning.* Pen pal are beneficial to student literacy development because they can lead to increases in the quality of students' writing, conceptual understanding of the writing process, and overall self-efficacy and motivation (Parsons & Ward, 2011; Tompkins et al., 2014; Yearta et al., 2015). Pen pals positively influence the learning of preservice teachers as these experiences can bridge their learning about literacy in methods courses to actual experiences with children (Austin, 2000; Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich 2000; Moore & Seeger, 2009; Stover, Yearta & Sease, 2014; Yearta et al., 2015). It provides them the opportunity to learn the essential reading and writing skills of elementary students.

- In this project, the classroom teacher started with friendly letter format and how to respond to texts. She then gave students the opportunity to apply these skills on their own, and learn more about how to correspond with their pen pals. They were able to take specific strategies for the classroom and apply it to real-life. Likewise, the preservice teachers

also had the opportunity to generalize their learning across contexts. Content they learned in their course-work at Winthrop became real and they were able to apply what they had learned to authentic work and conversations with elementary school students. Experiences like these are invaluable.

Conclusion

Throughout the book study project, students at both the elementary and undergraduate levels learned from each other. Both groups participated in authentic experiences that allowed them to communicate with a very real, and motivated, audience. Preservice teachers read writing samples from third grade students, analyzed students' connections to text and their writing, and made thoughtful decisions about how to best help their pen pals. This was a unique opportunity for them to apply what they have learned in their coursework. Third grade students learned how to make strong connections to texts, read for meaning, and communicate their opinions through writing. And we (university professors) remain committed to providing these experiences in our teacher preparation program.

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Bringing Read-Alouds Back Alive

By Tricia M. Huff, Lake Murray Elementary School

ABSTRACT — Despite what professional educators know about best practice and reading aloud, many teachers do not use the strategy of reading aloud to the level at which they could. Reading aloud is a tool that can serve many purposes beyond teaching standards. It can be used to build community in classrooms, to provide enjoyment for students, and to teach content area standards. Through professional reading and experience, I have discovered that teachers, including myself, need to bring reading aloud back alive in classrooms. This article reminds teachers why reading aloud is such a powerful teaching tool and strategy. Teachers can make a difference in their classrooms and the lives of their learners through read-alouds.

What would your students think if you brought in a wrapped gift each morning? What if you unwrapped a book every day together to celebrate the greatness in stories, poetry, and words? Imagine the excitement this would create in your classroom.

I vividly remember when one of my elementary school teachers read Beverly Cleary's The Mouse and the Motorcycle to our class each day after lunch. I can still see Mrs. Moe sitting behind her desk and turning the crisp yellow pages. I can still hear Mrs. Moe's voice as she read each character's words. And I can still feel the disappointment I had when Mrs. Moe slowly put the bookmark in between the pages at the end of that day's chapter.

Unfortunately, this is the only book that I clearly remember a teacher reading aloud to me during my years of elementary school. I can only wish that more teachers had read aloud the words of E.B. White or Eric Carle. I often wonder if my life as a reader and a writer would be different if I had been read to and taught how to listen to the picture an author paints with words using figurative language and vivid verbs. I can only dream what kind of magic that could have created in me as a kid.

According to research in best practice, reading aloud is one of the most important strategies we can use in the classroom to affect a child's attitude toward reading and writing. "It is said that we make time for what we value, and if we value reading, we must make time for it." (Miller, 2009).

Reading aloud is a strategy that teachers can have in their back pocket to meet the numerous needs of their students and the demands of teaching. It can be used to build community or to help students solve a problem (Laminack, 2006). It can be used for pure enjoyment, for listening to language, or for hearing a great story. Teachers can also use read-alouds to get to know an author, teach about sentence structure, or to experience how an author builds action before the climax (Ray, 1999). It is a teaching tool that proficient teachers have been using for many years and for many invaluable purposes.

With the ever-changing demands of standardized tests and the implementation of new initiatives, many teachers have casually forgotten about the best practices that are foundational to the teaching of language arts. Teachers are busy doing important work preparing their students for the next level. However, is there a way that teachers can work smarter instead of harder? Bringing reading aloud back alive in our classrooms is a logical answer.

So, how can we bring reading aloud back alive? We can do it by reading aloud multiple times a day and with intentional purposes in mind (Laminack, 2006).

Reading Aloud to Build Community

Books are the perfect pathways to building community in your classroom. The books you choose can begin your day and be part of your morning meeting or settling in time. This is the perfect way to set the tone and plan for a day of great learning. I can't think of a better way to help students prepare their minds and hearts for the learning they will do.

Titles can be chosen with specific purposes in mind. Perhaps you need picture books to read during the first weeks of school to build relationships among your students (Laminack, 2006). Or maybe after a few weeks, you are looking for a book to help two students work through a conflict. You may want to celebrate diversity by reading a book from a culture represented in your class. Books can be read to jumpstart conversations about difficult topics.

I love to read aloud books like *Don't Need Friends* by Carolyn Crimi and *The Brand New Kid* by Katie Couric during the first days of school to have discussions about the importance of friendship. Most students can relate to Dog and Rat or Lazlo since they have all been either the new kid or the kid that is looking for a new friend. The first part of the day is also a great time to read books like *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson and *The Honest-to-Goodness Truth* by Patricia McKissack to think about how we should treat others. These great titles offer so much to the young readers, writers, leaders, and friends in our classrooms.

Many of the titles listed above bring characters to life and create a place for the characters in our classroom. My students often refer to the characters by first name as if they are people that we know. Sometimes we even say things like, "Do you want to be remembered like Libby?" or "Let's be more like Rat and Dog at the end of the book." My class is even known to take on the language from a read aloud and make it their own "inside" language. Sometimes my students can be caught joking around with each other by saying, "Don't need friends, don't need them at all!"

When I hear students referring to our read-alouds throughout the day, I know they are truly living in our books and the books are impacting their thoughts, decisions, and lives. That's a gift!

Reading Aloud for Enjoyment

I can't think of anything better than listening to a great story read aloud and hearing the reader slow down during a somber and serious conflict or speed up with a loud voice during the exciting climax. Readers have the power to create a performance through their read-aloud by adding voice and suspense.

All students deserve the opportunity to hear stories read aloud by us for pure enjoyment. Whether it is after recess or at the end of the day, this is a fun time to gather your students close together on the carpet and share a favorite book, poem, or short story. You can put on your "acting" hat and play the part of India Opal in *Because of Winn-Dixie* or the part of Jeremy in *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*.

Before I begin to read, I like to call my students to the rug and share a personal story, connection, or book talk. My students become engaged and are able to transition into a time to listen and enjoy. I want to give my students a preview of what is to come in the read aloud and to captivate their attention before the read aloud begins. I select my words carefully to give them something to look forward to in the book, and at the same time I try not to say too much. I want the book to speak for itself.

One of my favorite times of the day is when I get to read our "just for fun" chapter book. As soon as my students see me pick up our current book and head towards the rocking chair they begin to move eagerly to the rug and start to chatter about what they think will happen with the main character or the conflict. I love to hear their excitement and eagerness to unlock the reading magic in our carefully chosen book. I have a few favorite authors that I typically read with hopes that students will rush to the library for other titles under the same name. Some of my "go to" authors include Bruce Coville, Peg Kehret, and Cynthia deFelice. They have the power to engage the reader and create a desire to read other titles. I feel successful when I have introduced students to new authors or hooked them in to a series.

Picture books that are seasonal, relate to subject area content, and ones that may be new to the school and classroom library are also on my shelf of read-alouds for pure enjoyment. Books like *Silver Packages* and *Jackalope* are among my favorites. These books may be used again throughout the year to teach content, author's craft, or for the rich language found in them (Ray, 1999). It is a good thing for students to hear books read aloud multiple times and to get to know them so when the text is used for instructional purposes, students have familiarity with them.

Use your read aloud time to have fun with your students. Laugh with them when it's funny and cry with them when it's sad. Those are the moments they will remember.

Reading Aloud for Teaching

Reading aloud can meet many of the standards in English Language Arts if planning is intentional and purposeful. This one teaching tool can serve teachers well throughout reading and writing workshop. The list of what you can teach with a book in your hand is unlimited.

Perhaps you want to teach students about strong characters, man versus man conflict, or build background for a genre (Miller, 2009). You can also use your read aloud books to teach about author's craft and the use of punctuation. Read aloud books are the perfect tool for all of these skills and concepts. It is important for teachers to take read-alouds seriously and plan ahead. Lester Laminack also suggests practicing your read aloud in order to make the words sound just right (Laminack, 2006).

If your purpose for reading aloud is for teaching a specific skill or strategy, you will want to pre-plan your think aloud, questions, and teaching points in advance. Take the time to pre-read and consider where you want to stop and think aloud. These moments should be planned and written down so your read-aloud provides the desired outcome. Keep your notes in front of you or stick them inside the book. Explain to your students that you jotted them down since you didn't want to forget to share your thinking.

As readers, we want our students to be able to make predictions, analyze character actions, and ask questions while they read. Normally, these do not come naturally to young readers. We must explicitly model for our students the silent conversation that happens in our minds as we read a text. This can include think alouds and written responses to a book. Our students need to hear us stop occasionally and consider or question why a character treated another character badly or what affect one character may have on another. Be careful not to overdo the teaching during one read-aloud. Choose one or two teaching points for a focus and use the text again at another time if there are multiple opportunities for teaching and learning.

Read alouds are the most perfect way to teach students how to use writerly moves in their work and develop their own author's craft. Great authors such as Lester Laminack, Cynthia Rylant, and Jane Yolen can teach us how to use repetition and circular endings in our stories intentionally (Ray, 1999). Students can begin to listen to read-alouds like writers.

The read-alouds you choose to share with your writers during writing workshop will be very different than the read-alouds chosen for readers. Writers need to hear texts full of craft and words that come alive through description and sound. These texts should invite students to try some of the writerly moves in their own writing. Readers need to hear books full of rich character, conflict, and resolution. The strong plot will captivate readers and keep them coming back for more. Choose your read-alouds for your specific purpose and audience and use them to do powerful teaching.

Resources for Read Aloud

Making sure you are reading the right kinds of things to your students is just as important as your purpose. Carefully choose books, poems, and articles you will read aloud. Be picky about what you are sharing with students. If it isn't full of rich language, theme, and plot, don't read it. Look for books

that have a message and teach a lesson. Read books that will cause the kids to belly laugh and maybe even cry a little.

Access suggested titles from our distant co-teachers such as Lester Laminack, Katie Wood Ray, Jim Trelease, and Donalyn Miller. Their books contain list after list after list of books that can be read aloud for many purposes. In *Learning Under the Influence of Language and Literature*, Laminack has built shelves of titles to provide teachers with stories for all times of the school day. Katie Wood Ray, in *Wondrous Words*, focuses on books that contain rich author's craft and writerly moves. *The Book Whisperer's* author, Donalyn Miller, publishes a list that she calls the ultimate library list.

Resources such as the *The Read Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease, the American Library Association, and The Horn Book are great places to find new titles for reading aloud. Make good friends with your school media specialist and your fellow colleagues and borrow books from them. It's a great idea to be a frequent shopper at your local bookstore to stay afresh on newly published books.

Reading Aloud is a Gift You Can Give Every Day

Research shows that reading aloud to children 15 minutes every day can make a huge impact on their life as a learner (Read Aloud National Campaign, 2015). In *Learning Under the Influence of Language and Literature*, Laminack suggests that we read aloud much more than that. He suggests that teachers read aloud as many as six times every day.

So, consider your purpose and plan your read-alouds intentionally throughout your instructional day. When can you steal a few minutes to take advantage of these opportunities? When can you replace a strategy you currently use with a text instead?

If reading aloud hasn't been in your teaching toolbox or has been dead for a while, you can bring it back to life. Make reading aloud part of your day by setting the tone in the morning, hearing beautiful prose during transitions, connecting to content in science and social studies, looking for author's craft in writing workshop, and getting to know characters after recess. You will have fun and your students will thank you for contributing to their literate lives.

Ideally, language arts teachers all share a common goal. We want our students to develop a love for reading and writing. We work to build and foster that love through reading aloud, talking about books, and writing our own stories. We work our magic everyday so that our students will share the same passions as we do.

Take advantage of the gifts that have been given to us by our distant teachers, the authors. Unwrap these gifts with your students each day so that they may hear rich stories and learn to love words like you do. You will be glad that reading aloud is alive in your classroom.

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Using Children's Literature and Trade Books for Mathematics Instruction

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Connecting children's literature to mathematics instruction is beneficial for a variety of reasons. It helps promotes critical thinking and links mathematical ideas to students' personal experiences (Murphy, 2000), accommodates children with different learning styles (Gardner, 2000; Murphy, 2000), and provides a context for learning mathematical concepts (Jacobs & Rak, 1997). Additionally, children's books can be used to introduce manipulatives, inspire creative mathematical experiences, pose interesting scenarios for mathematics, and develop/review mathematical concepts and skills (Welchman-Tischler, 1992). Whitin & Whitin (2004) suggest that students who are more language-oriented are more likely to learn mathematics when it is connected to language arts as it centers on their linguistic style of learning. Further, integrating literature and mathematics can develop a more positive classroom environment and improve student attitudes toward mathematics (Mink & Fraser, 2005). Children's literature is a valuable strategy to assist the teaching and learning of mathematics, but it is important to maintain the integrity of the curriculum (Perger, 2004).

Using children's books allows mathematical and language skills to develop together while enriching the learning experience and increasing students' engagement. For teachers who are not familiar with specific books that are relevant to teaching specific mathematical concepts, however, the idea of tracking down useful materials is somewhat daunting. This article provides ideas for integrating children's literature into mathematics instruction. We will present a group of children's books, including references and summaries of each, and a series of mathematics activities to accompany each.

Integrating children's literature into mathematics instruction

Some have suggested methods for integrating literature into math instruction. Courtade, Lingo, Karp and Whitney (2013) posit that students with learning difficulties or English learners benefit from integration of children's literature because it provides context and relationship to real life situations that fosters engagement and motivates students to persevere in problem solving efforts. They suggest four steps for planning to integrate literature into math instruction. Choosing the text based on the standard(s) and students' interest is the first step. Then, identify key vocabulary and concepts to be emphasized during instruction. Choose concrete examples and develop the instructional plan, and, finally, decide on the assessment that will be used.

Hintz and Smith (2013) suggest a three-step method for planning to integrate literature into mathematics instruction, a plan that they call "mathematizing books" (p.103). They begin

with "choosing a book to read aloud" (Hintz & Smith, p.105). The second step is the actual reading aloud of the book with discussion and questioning. The final step suggested by Hintz and Smith is to extend the text by having students write or illustrate a response to the text or participate in some other related activity or discussion. A "Planning Sheet for Mathematizing Books in Three Easy Steps" (p.104) is included in their article.

Marilyn Burns (2016) suggests that children's literature is one way to develop children's background knowledge for mathematics instruction. Reading books aloud provides context and real-life application of mathematics concepts. Her "Step-by-Step Lesson" process begins with reading a text aloud. After that, she suggests planning for discussion about counting, addition and subtraction, and comparing numbers. Other steps include planning for graphing, using manipulatives, working with partners, extending the lesson, and finally a closure activity.

Summaries and activities

The following are ideas for using specific texts for building children's mathematic skills. We start by summarizing two series of literature that can be read-aloud to children at the beginning of lessons. Then, we have included summaries of several trade books and ideas for teaching related math skills including division, geometric shapes, fractions, linear measurement, etc.

MathStart

There are two series that provide a good "jumping off" point for teachers who are in the early stages of using literacy to teach mathematics. The first is the *MathStart* series of approximately 60 books published by Harper Collins Publishers and distributed through the Scholastic Corporation. Each book is written by Stuart J. Murphy and illustrated by a variety of illustrators. Topics are broken into three levels and cover various mathematics concepts such as division, comparing, regrouping, addition, subtraction, capacity, geometric shapes, linear measurement, calendars, etc. On the back cover of each book is a section entitled "For Adults and Kids" with helpful hints for activities for parents and teachers to complete with the learners. This section combines suggested activities for literacy skills (e.g., retelling the story using descriptions, sequencing events, discussing settings, etc.) with mathematics skills (e.g., using math vocabulary, drawing symbols to represent specific numbers, comparing numbers and locations within the story, etc.). In addition, some activities address higher levels of thinking by asking "if/then" questions (i.e., "If you did this, then what would happen?"), presenting scenarios in which students solve problems, having students act out solutions, or relating the

story contents to real life applications. The ideas go so far as to suggest activities for things to do in the car, on the playground, taking a walk, having a snack, cooking, games, shopping, etc.

Math Matters

The second series is *Math Matters* published by Kane Press. This 38 book series, written by a range of authors, also covers a variety of math skills such as counting, measurement, patterns, attributes, time, distance, etc. In the back of each book is a section called "Activities that Matter" which gives activity suggestions for parents and teachers. The literacy piece addresses using pictorial and context clues to make inferences or predictions, and recalling details. The math piece has suggestions relating to content skills such as graphing and charting, creating puzzles, using sponges or art stencils to make shapes and patterns, and making meaning of mathematical terms. Higher level thinking is encouraged with "how" questions and "why" questions and by suggesting activities for home and school.

Another resource for books that lend themselves to math integration are the Hershey's Chocolate series. What kid doesn't like candy, right? Hershey's has partnered with Scholastic to establish a series of books by Jerry Pallotta where the candies can be used for mathematics activities. The series covers skills such as counting, adding, multiplying, fractions, and weights and measurement. Activities to accompany and expand upon these books can be found online in such sites as teachersnetwork.org, teacherspayteachers.com, mathforum.org, and even pinterest.com.

All of these series are easily found online by publisher, company, or author. For those teachers who wish to venture away from the prearranged series, there are many other books available that lend themselves to math instruction. The following book summaries and activity suggestions will help teachers implement the use of children's literature for math instruction.

Division

The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins (1986) is about a mother who makes a batch of cookies and tells her children to share them. When they divided the cookies between the two of them, each had six (inferring that the original batch consisted of one dozen). Visitors begin to arrive, prompting the group of twelve cookies to be divided by four, then by six, then by twelve. When they get down to one cookie per child and the doorbell rings again, grandma arrives with more cookies.

In order to actively engage students, the teacher gives counters which represent the cookies to the students (in small groups or individually, depending on the ability levels of the students, the number of available counters, and the number of students.). Students divide the set into two groups (6 each), then four groups (3 each), then six groups (2 each), then 12 groups (1 each) as the story progresses. Students are not only engaged in the story, but are actively engaged in the hands-on division process. Encourage students to represent their work by drawing their answers on paper or a dry erase board. For students who have difficulty in drawing, consider having students paste paper cut-outs, or have students place circle stickers on index cards. Move students into

problem solving and higher level thinking with questions such as:

"What if only one guest had shown up first?" Students must add one arrival to the original two children to determine that three children were dividing the batch (4 cookies each).

"What if five children were dividing the. cookies?" This would require a remainder.

"What if Grandma brought 20 cookies? This requires addition to arrive at a new total, thus changing the dividend in the division problems in the story.

Geometric Shapes

Grandfather Tang's Story by Ann Tompert (1990) is a delightful story told by a grandfather to his granddaughter. This magical tale is about two little foxes that change into other animals only to find that danger ensues. In the end, their friendship saves them, and they return to their original fox form. Each page of the book has sketches of Tangram animals. As the teacher reads, students make their version of the animal with their own set of Tangrams. This activity offers an opportunity for students to explore size, congruency, slides, flips, turns, etc.

Students can explore the Tangrams making a square, a triangle, or a parallelogram, as well as non-standard polygons. They can create their own Tangram puzzles by arranging the pieces into a design and tracing around them to create the puzzle template. Students will write on the design the number of pieces required to make the picture on the template and trade with a friend to solve.

Students can work in small groups to make a square, a rectangle, a parallelogram, and a trapezoid with their Tangrams. Further skill is required when students record their results and the different ways that they solved for making each shape (and with how many pieces). Students can begin to categorize their polygons according to convex and concave. Once they have shown their ability to identify each type, they may begin to create their own. Additionally, students can identify angles within the polygons as acute, right, or obtuse. Once students show that they are able to identify the types of angles, have them create polygons that have specific guidelines (i.e. a polygon with four right angles, a polygon with four right angles, etc.).

Time

The Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle is about a ladybug that is grouchy and doesn't like anyone. She is mean and cranky and is always trying to pick a fight as she comes across different critters throughout the day. On the top right corner of each page, there is a picture of an analogue clock, and when the narrator says a specific time, children can see what it looks like on the clock. At the end of the story, the grouchy ladybug is back where she started, tired and humbled. Not only is this book a great opportunity to talk to children about manners and kindness, but it also lends itself to teaching about size and time.

As the story progresses, students can work with geared mini-clocks individually or with partners to set the time on the clock

each time change within the story. When students are practicing using clocks, it is important that the teacher or assistant monitors students as they move the clock to make sure that their settings are correct. Once students have had some experience working with manipulating the clocks, they can make their own *Grouchy Ladybug* clock. The template for making the clock can be found at http://www.memphis.edu/socialwork/pdfs/thegrouchyladybug_teacher.pdf. Additional math activities (and other subjects) relating to this adorable book can be found on Pinterest, as well.

Linear Measurement

How Big is a Foot? by Rolf Myller (1990) is about a king who wants to have a bed built for this queen. He walked the perimeter of the rectangle in the space where the queen lay in order to have the measurements for her new bed. The apprentice had a smaller foot than the king, so the bed was too small. The problem is solved when the apprentice makes a sculpture of the king's foot in order to measure properly.

There are several places in the story where students have an opportunity to problem solve. First, when the king wonders how big to make the bed, students can identify a variety of ways to find the right size. When the bed is too small and the apprentice must find a solution, another opportunity arises for students to problem solve. In both cases, some students will go directly to standard forms of measurement whereas others will come up with less conventional ways (non-standard measurement). Small groups can determine a solution, and each group can share with the class.

In order to actively engage students in arranging items from smallest to largest, each student can work with a partner and trace around each other's foot (with the shoe on) on construction paper, and then, students cut out their paper foot. After that, students arrange the paper feet side by side from smallest to largest. Further develop this activity by having each student measure their paper foot with non-standard (i.e., paper clips or gummy bears) and standard units of measurement. The unit of measurement should be appropriate for the grade level and the standards being taught. If the topic is US customary measurement, some students may measure to the nearest inch, half inch, quarter inch, eighth inch depending on the level of the student. If the topic is using metric measurement, a centimeter is a reasonable unit for linear measurement for small items. Additionally, students can trace the foot on a square centimeter grid or square inch grid to determine the area. The next higher level of thinking requires students to sketch a rectangular bed using square grid paper when given specific linear measurements and then to determine the area (i.e., 6 feet long and 3 feet wide renders an area of 18 square feet, or 5 feet long and 4 feet wide renders an area of 20 square feet, etc.). Finally, it is beneficial to provide closure by asking a question such as, "Why do you think the ruler was invented?" Students should demonstrate an understanding that a standard unit of measurement is necessary so that everyone has the same concept of specific lengths.

Measuring Circles

Sir Cumference by Cindy Neuschwander (1997) tells the story of King Arthur and his knights. The meetings they held were so long that King Arthur became hoarse from speaking loudly to be heard at the other end of the table, so he asked for the table to be redesigned. Designers experiment with several different shapes as vocabulary is introduced throughout the story. Finally, the round table came to be.

After the story, give students different cylindrical shapes (cans of different sizes work well). Allow students time to explore with string and a ruler to investigate any relationships between the diameter and the circumference of the cylinders. Direct students to measure the diameter of the cylinders and make predictions about the circumference. Students can record their predictions and mark which ones they predicted the closest. At some point, students will begin to realize that the circumference is a little more than three times the diameter (i.e., 3.14 to be exact).

Fractions

Full House by Dayle Ann Dodds (2007) is a colorfully illustrated book about Miss Bloom who's Strawberry Inn has six rooms. When she is there alone, she uses 1/6 of the bedrooms. This delightful rhyming format follows the arrival of each guest as the house fills to 6/6 and ends with a midnight pizza party.

In this activity, each child (or partners) has one circle of fraction pieces broken into sixths and separated as the story begins. Miss Broom is the only person at the inn, so students will place one fraction piece (1/6) in the circle. As each guest arrives and the fraction is named in the book, the students place an additional 1/6 in the circle until all six pieces are in place, making one whole. On the last page, have the students demonstrate what happened by removing five of the six pieces leaving the one piece for Miss Broom. The teacher should allow students time to explore with their own full set of fraction circles, investigating greater/less than and equivalency. Once the story is finished and students have had an opportunity to explore, students create their own fraction story. Dayle Ann Dodds has designed a Common Core aligned literacy-based set of lessons and activities to accompany this book, and it can be accessed through teacherspayteachers.com by searching for the author.

Conclusion

It is necessary to engage students in mathematics instruction, but this may be difficult to do at times. Integrating books into mathematics instruction is one way to engage students and to develop their understanding of real-life applications of mathematics. We have provided suggestions for planning and using children's literature to support learning mathematics that we hope will be helpful for teachers.

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Learning to Practice What I Preach: Designing Authentic Literacy Assessments for In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers

By Robin Jocius, The Citadel

ABSTRACT — *In South Carolina, the introduction of the Read to Succeed (R2S) Act has presented new possibilities—and new challenges—for literacy teacher educators. As more pre-service and in-service teachers seek to fulfill the R2S coursework requirements, literacy teacher educators must find new ways to provide meaningful assessment experiences. This article introduces six authentic assessments that can be adapted for pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in a variety of literacy courses: a multicultural book blog, literacy videos, literacy action plans, coaching observation reports, professional development presentations focusing on culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and Teaching Tips.*

It's the second day of my Literacy Foundations course, and I've asked my group of seasoned in-service teachers to do a quick think-pair-share around the following topic: *Discuss a positive personal experience with assessment.* I've intentionally left the question open to interpretation, and I'm expecting a rich discussion of best assessment practices.

At first, there's silence. Gradually, students begin to pose questions to their colleagues, sounding both doubtful and hesitant.

"Like on the SAT?"

"The Praxis? The Teaching and Learning one, maybe?"

"Not the GRE."

"Do you think it can be an assessment that we did in our *real* classrooms?"

As I move around our *not-real* classroom, prompting students to think outside the standardized assessment box, I soon realize that my class – filled with talented in-service teachers with more than a century of collective teaching experience—is stumped. While one student points out, "I just don't think I've ever had a positive experience with assessment," another puts it more bluntly: "Assessments are always terrible."

As I reflected on this conversation, I realized that even as I espoused the benefits of authentic formative assessment in the P-12 classroom, my own assessments often failed to make meaningful connections to the practices that shape the schools and classrooms in which my students would and did work. In short, I had often failed to practice what I preached.

So, I set out to transform my not-real assessments into authentic measures of learning that involved "opportunities for developing and examining teachers' thinking and actions in situations that are experience based and problem oriented and that include or simulate actual acts of teaching" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2001, p. 524). In this article, I introduce six authentic assessment ideas that can be adapted for both pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in a variety of literacy courses and share the success stories and roadblocks that my students and I encountered in this journey.

Assessment of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

"The work of teaching is both complicated and complex…if we understand teaching as a highly complex endeavor undertaken by professionals, then we are compelled to develop assessments that are highly sophisticated and nuanced." (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 266)

In recent years, researchers, policy-makers, and teacher educators have begun to develop summative performance-based assessments of pre-service teacher candidates. One such assessment, the edTPA, was developed by faculty and staff at Stanford University's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity to emphasize, measure, and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from Day 1 in the classroom. In 2015-2016, it was used by more than 800 teacher education programs across 40 states (Pecheone & Whittaker, 2016). Proponents argue that the edTPA is a "step toward more authentic ways to assess readiness for teaching than the typical standardized tests about pedagogy that use multiple choice items and are disconnected from authentic teaching situations" (Sato, 2014, p. 2). While some critics have questioned the role of Pearson Education (Au, 2013), other scholars have decried the assessment's lack of attention to local cultures and contexts (NAME, 2014).

Despite the controversy, recent analyses of the edTPA, such as a policy brief released by the National Education Policy Center (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016), have found that this tool has the potential to "prompt professional learning for candidates, programs, and institutions under some conditions" (p. 15). As Sharon Robinson, the president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education stated, "These findings [regarding edTPA] are very encouraging. They certainly indicate that, to date, the wisdom of the profession has created the most viable tool for innovation in teacher education" (McCabe, 2016, para 5).

However, despite the growing attention to more comprehensive and performance-based assessments of pre-service teacher candidates, there have been few efforts to re-envision assessments used within teacher education coursework.

In South Carolina, as more pre-service and in-service teachers seek to fulfill the Read to Succeed Literacy Teacher and Literacy Requirement, literacy teacher educators must find new ways to provide meaningful assessment experiences that explicitly connect to our students' past, present, and future classrooms.

Something They Can Use on Monday Morning

One of my goals for any professional development or class session is to provide teachers and teacher candidates with at least one tool, one idea, one activity, or one principle that they can use on Monday morning. Of course, not every assessment in a pre-service or in-service education course can or should be used on Monday mornings. For instance, during class discussions about the most important attributes of literacy leaders and coaches, my students often mention one trait—resourcefulness. The traditional research paper, which could ostensibly be held up as an example of an "inauthentic" assessment, allows students to develop essential skills in locating, evaluating, and adapting information. Likewise, written reflections, which are generally created for an audience of two (the student and the instructor), provide powerful forums for critical thought and personal development.

However, one of the perennial complaints of both experienced and novice teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs is that their coursework is too far removed from classroom realities— in short, that there is too much theory, and too little practice (Zeichner, 2012). In reimagining assessments as responsive to both context and culture, I wanted to provide opportunities for teachers and teacher candidates to wrestle with the ways in which evolving policies, increasingly diverse student populations, and 21st century digital tools continue to shape student and teacher learning. In addition to scouring pedagogical articles, blogs, and syllabi from literacy education courses across the country and in international contexts, I surveyed students, visited classrooms, talked with school administrators, held focus group discussions, and went through the process of completing each potential assignment myself—all with the goal of creating assessments that bridged theory and practice.

Grossman and McDonald (2008) suggest that a shift from pedagogies of investigation to pedagogies of enactment, in which teachers and teacher candidates engage in "deliberate and systematic experimentation with a variety of approximations of practice," can connect "the everyday and the academic" (pp. 190-191). In my own course redesign, I envisioned assessment not as an end in and of itself, but as a means of actively engaging students in a recursive cycle of inquiry, application, reflection, collaboration, and action. In shifting the focus to enactment rather than investigation, students were able to make explicit connections between practice, research, and theory, grapple with the social and political aspects of education in the real world, and understand the whys as well as the rubrics.

Six Ideas for Authentic Literacy Assessments

In the following sections, I describe six assessments that attempt to bridge the everyday and the academic: a multicultural book blog, literacy videos, literacy action plans, coaching observation reports, professional development presentations focusing on culturally and linguistically diverse

learners, and Teaching Tips. All assessments are aligned with the 2010 International Literacy Association (ILA) Standards for Literacy Professionals and can be used in a variety of commonly offered literacy courses, including Foundations of Literacy, Literacy Assessment, and Content Area Reading and Writing.

Multicultural Book Blog: Identifying Mirrors and Windows

As more and more teacher education courses move to an online or blended format, there is a growing need to think beyond the text-based discussion board to the development of innovative ways of sharing ideas and resources. Although asynchronous discussions allow students time and space to create thoughtful reflections on critical ideas, "discussions do not automatically become interactive and collaborative simply by virtue of being in an anytime/anywhere asynchronous medium" (Pawan, Paulus, Yalcin, & Chang, 2003, p. 138).

The goal of the Multicultural Book Blog blog was to build a collaborative repertoire of texts, ideas, images, videos, and resources related to multicultural children's and adolescent literature. In order to encourage students to collaborate, post, and access resources long after the course had finished, we used Google's Blogger, a free blog-publishing site, rather than a learning management system. For each post, students were asked to focus on texts that honored the cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds of their students—texts that served as both *mirrors*, which reflect the cultural norms and values of the reader, and *windows*, which juxtapose the familiar with the unfamiliar (Bishop, 1990). In their initial posts, students created four responses:

> READER RESPONSE: As a reader, what was your aesthetic response? Your efferent response?
>
> EVALUATOR RESPONSE: Imagine that you are a children's/YA book editor. Critically evaluate distinct elements of the text, such as the words, images, format, structure, plot, and characters. What are its strengths? Weaknesses?
>
> TEACHER RESPONSE: How might you engage students in reflecting on social and political issues present in the text and the world? What texts might provide students with an alternate perspective that challenges their thinking?
>
> LITERACY COACH RESPONSE: What suggestions and strategies would you provide for teachers using this text in the classroom? What resources (websites, articles, lessons, units, discussion prompts) would you share?

Initially, students were required to respond to two colleagues' posts. However, in a class discussion after the first blog posts, many students pointed out they were commenting to earn a grade, rather than engaging with their colleagues' ideas. So, we collaboratively decided to make blog responses optional and to instead dedicate time to in-class reflection. After making this change, students actually began to post more detailed and specific responses on the blog. We used a variety of formats for

the in-class discussions, including shout-outs, book discussion circles, and controversial conversations, in which students debated the inclusion of diverse characters and political themes in children's and YA literature. As the semester progressed, we also modified the structure of the posts to address specific types of literature; in a post on series reading, for instance, students created multimodal collages about their own series reading histories.

Literacy Videos: Using Digital Tools to Connect with Families and Communities

Research on school-based efforts to connect to families and communities shows that many 21st century collaborative tools, such as interactive websites and multimedia content, are often underutilized resources. For instance, Olmstead (2013) found that most teachers updated their websites only 1-2 times per month, and as a result, parents don't find teacher websites to be useful or a good source of information. My students reported similar concerns; although many said that they often spoke with parents and families via email or text message, students were hesitant to utilize classroom websites and other 21st century collaborative tools. As one student said, "Every year, my principal tells us to make a classroom website. And every year, I have no idea what to put up there."

The Literacy Video assessment required students to design a short digital video (2-3 minutes) introducing a topic of their choice (e.g., inferring; fluency, phonemic segmentation, reader's theater, disciplinary literacy, academic vocabulary) to an authentic audience of parents, guardians, and community members. The assessment was specifically designed to give students opportunities to critically analyze and identify principles of effective video communication. After viewing dozens of sample videos, students and I collaboratively created a Literacy Video rubric, aligning the assessment criteria with the ILA Standards for reading professionals related to the development of effective interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills.

Several of my students continued to build their literacy video libraries over the course of the year, posting their own students' reflections on their favorite books, parent discussion guides for particular texts, classroom snapshots, and how-to videos related to word games and phonemic awareness. Further, after becoming more familiar with video creation and editing technology, several students created video projects for their P-12 classrooms. I've also used the project with pre-service teachers with great success; in addition to honing 21st century video creation skills, students can include the videos within their teaching portfolios to provide prospective employers with a multimodal demonstration of how they would connect to parents and families.

Literacy Action Plan: Influencing School and District Policy

Among other South Carolina Read to Succeed initiatives, such as the Literacy Teacher and Literacy Requirement for both pre-service and in-service teachers, retention of 3rd grade students who fail to demonstrate reading proficiency, and the employment of a literacy coach in each elementary school, R2S requires all schools and districts to develop and enact Literacy Action Plans (Read to

Succeed Act, 2014). In early 2016, the South Carolina Department of Education released new guidelines for the school-based plans, which must be enacted before the 2017-2018 academic year.

During an in-class workshop, students examined the South Carolina guidelines as well as sample state, district, and school action plans. Together, we identified five elements that formed the underlying structure for the Literacy Action Plan: instruction, assessment, intervention, professional development, and parent/guardian/family involvements. For each area, students were asked to identify goals, key components, an implementation timeline, and an evaluation plan that aligned with credible literacy models and research-based practices. In preparing their action plans, many students examined school-adopted core curriculum materials, drew on student assessment data, conducted interviews with colleagues school administrators, administered teacher and parent surveys, and documented informal conversations with a variety of stakeholders. Students also reflected on roadblocks, thinking about the feasibility of each recommendation and the likelihood that the plan would be successful in improving both student and teacher learning within their particular contexts.

Students' Literacy Action Plans articulated a vision for enhancing P-12 student outcomes and improving teachers' literacy teaching skills. Some students prepared actionable plans that were shared with school administrators and/or colleagues, while others created idealized scenarios where personnel could be added and schedules can be rearranged in order to allow for more innovative teaching methods and professional learning models. Adaptations for novice teachers include evaluating and synthesizing existing literacy action plans, creating a classroom literacy action plan, or conducting interviews with teachers and administrators at various schools to get a sense of current literacy initiatives and policies.

Coaching Observation Reports

Research on effective professional development (Garet et al., 2001) has identified several practices that can support fundamental changes to teacher and P-12 student learning—activities need to be "linked to teachers' other experiences, aligned with other reform efforts, and encouraging of professional communication among teachers" (p. 936). Because peer observation is one of the most effective learning tools at a teacher's disposal, the Coaching Observation Report allowed students to enact an abbreviated coaching observation cycle: conducting a pre-observation conference, an observation, and a post-observation conference (Casey, 2006).

After examining several observational tools, reviewing video case studies, and engaging in simulated observations and conferences, my students and I collaboratively developed a set of observation guidelines: (a) allow the observed teacher to determine an observation focus; (b) provide feedback within 24 hours; (c) include concrete strategies and resources for each area of need. These guidelines drew upon students' experiences with observation and focused on the collaborative nature of a coaching relationship. After practicing observation and conferencing techniques using video recordings and in-class simulations, students held a

pre-observation conference with a school colleague. Students chose an observational tool (e.g., scripting, checklists, open-ended notes) based on the observation focus and lesson topic, conducted an observation, and held a post-conference.

As students examined observation practices from a new perspective, they began to challenge common perceptions and beliefs regarding observation and teacher evaluation. As one student said, "Taking a moment to switch roles and sit in the observer's seat was an enlightening experience. As a classroom teacher, several feelings go through your head when someone, anyone, comes in to observe. I know among the feelings that I experience are nervousness, fear, and stress. Before the observation, I sat with the teacher and went over the pre-observation form. I feel like this helped the teacher realize that I was coming in only to support, not to evaluate. I wish all observers would do this. It gives the teacher a chance to voice his or her concerns because as teachers we are always looking for ways to improve." In a discussion about best observation practices, students repeatedly mentioned professionalization and the value of creating a collaborative environment for continued learning, and nearly all students included pre-observation conferencing and collaborative peer observations on their Literacy Action Plans.

Although this assessment was designed to give in-service teachers an opportunity to work with a colleague within their school, it could easily be adapted or modified for pre-service teachers. For example, students in a literacy methods course could engage in conferencing and observation related to field experiences or model lessons, which would provide a valuable opportunity to give and receive feedback in a low-stakes environment. In-service graduate students could also work with teacher candidates to simulate the coaching cycle.

Valuing Diversity PD

The Valuing Diversity project required students to develop and implement a professional development session addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. In our initial conversations, students split into groups to develop a set of principles for designing engaging sessions that emerged from their positive and negative experiences with PD (unsurprisingly, the majority of experiences appeared to be negative). As a class, we developed five guiding principles for PD sessions: (a) a focused, clear, and precise purpose; (b) presenter(s) with detailed knowledge of the school and students; (c) relevant and concrete applications to classroom instruction; (d) interactive discussions and activities; and (e) choice. In an effort to reflect the recursive nature of the assessment process, I also incorporated these principles into the design of the rubric used for grading the PD session. Also, because several groups mentioned the provision of snacks as a prerequisite to an effective session, we included that as a bonus principle.

To better understand the PD needs within their schools, students created survey/interview tools and gathered data. Students then developed PD sessions based on that data and their own reflections; while some created instructional presentations describing culturally responsive pedagogies and research, others

engaged teachers in hands-on experiments with new pedagogical practices. Students shared their work in school-wide PD sessions, learning community meetings, and small-group discussions, which allowed them to reflect on how they might adapt their work for whole-school sessions or conference presentations.

Like the Coaching Observation Reports, the Valuing Diversity PD assessment gave students an opportunity to examine a common school-based practice—PD—from an alternative perspective. Several students also reported finding new strategies that they were able to use in their own classrooms. As one student said, "one of the greatest things about PDs is talking to other teachers and stealing their ideas, and through developing and sharing this PD with others, I had the opportunity to BOTH steal and share ideas." Although this assessment is designed specifically for in-service teachers, one of the adaptations for future implementations of the project asks students to share their Valuing Diversity PD presentations with pre-service teacher candidates. This creates new connections across pre-service and in-service courses, and provides a valuable opportunity for new conversations to emerge.

Teaching Tips

One of the first questions I ask of new students is where they get their ideas for `lessons and units. Two answers are repeated again and again—Pinterest and Teachers Pay Teachers. While some students are involved in professional organizations such as SCIRA, ILA, and NCTE, journals that are designed to connect to a practitioner audience, such as *Reading Matters* and other ILA journals such as *The Reading Teacher* and the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, are often missing from their radar. The Teaching Tip assessment, in which students created a framework for a practitioner research project or conference presentation, was designed around two particular goals—to expose students to the wealth of resources available in practitioner journals, and to spark thinking about new ways of sharing pedagogical innovations.

Students' Teaching Tips were filled with practical strategies, sophisticated connections to prior research, and thoughtful reflections on the complex work of teaching and learning. However, as I guided students' development of practitioner research projects and conference proposals based on their initial work, the assignment proved to be more of a personal challenge than I anticipated. I found myself explaining the legal for consent and assent forms, the reasons behind exorbitant journal subscription fees, and the typical literature review for conference proposals. My most difficult task was to explain why I was deleting beautifully written descriptions of classroom and school contexts in the name of blind peer review.

I'm currently in the process of redesigning the assessment for next year, and to be frank, I'm not exactly sure what form it will take. I've considered a variety of possibilities, such as creating a repertoire of TeacherTube videos or holding a virtual mini-conference in which participants would share ideas across time and space. Ultimately, if necessity is truly the forerunner of innovation, it follows that our most innovative practices come directly from the classroom—our teachers are the ones in the trenches, doing the impossible work

of nurturing creative young minds, and their work should be shared with as many of their colleagues as possible.

Starting the Conversation

Although much recent attention has been focused on summative assessments of pre-service teachers and the outcomes of teacher preparation programs, this article represents an attempt to spark new conversations about what's happening *within* literacy education courses for both pre-service and in-service teachers. All in all, I think my attempt to practice what I preach has gotten off to a pretty good start—students report more engagement with course activities and objectives, and more importantly, they're connecting theory with authentic problems of practice. For example, many of my students have successfully delivered their Valuing Diversity PDs in school and district sessions; several students have reported that their Literacy Action Plans are informing school-wide decision-making; the Multicultural Book Blog is still being edited and accessed months after the course ended; and in a particularly rewarding teaching moment, one student even sent over a link to her third grade students' multicultural literature blog.

In my quest to create assessments that are more responsive to the social and institutional contexts in which my students teach, I've also found myriad opportunities to open new communicative channels with schools and districts. In talking about the Literacy Action Plans with administrators and curriculum designers at my students' schools, for example, we've started a new dialogue about the collision of policy, research, theory, and practice. And ultimately, I think that's a worthy goal—to engage in the difficult work of allowing practice to inform research and theory, just as research and theory informs practice.

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Closing the Comprehension Gap in the Elementary Grades: Graphics in Persuasive Text

By Nicole M. Martin, Ball State University & Joy Myers, James Madison University

ABSTRACT — Elementary students' comprehension of persuasive text is an area of inequity that urgently needs to be addressed in today's schools. This article explains why many kindergarteners through fifth graders experience difficulty comprehending persuasive text and offers an instructional recommendation for addressing the area of inequity. Teaching elementary students to focus appropriately on the graphics in persuasive text may help them to increase their comprehension.

We just read was about water. And polluting is a very big part of our environment. Well, it ruins a big part of our environment. And it ruins a big part of us. Because we're mainly about water. You make a lot of stuff with water. We wouldn't be eating what we have today that we have to make with water, but if we use some other resources that we hardly have but we mainly cannot use salt water or else it will hurt us. It will hurt animals. It's about helping, well not helping, what we are doing to the environment by not recycling and what it's doing to our environment. Polluted water is not really good. We need water basically for everything in our body, like our systems.

Comprehension of Persuasive Text

Comprehension is a transactional meaning-making process in which readers use reading strategies to build mental representations of written text (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Persuasive text has the "primary purpose of convincing a particular audience to change their ideas or behavior" (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2011, p. 149) and includes characteristics such as those listed in Figure 1. Historically, persuasive text rarely has been included in K-5 reading instruction (e.g., Moss, 2008). Because writers advance a particular position by selectively using supportive evidence, sophisticated reading skills—such as identifying writers' main ideas and details, integrating information, evaluating trustworthiness and adequacy of evidence, and analyzing the merits of contrasting positions—are needed. Persuasive text is also particularly susceptible to variability. Factors such as the topic's complexity, audiences' anticipated skills and needs, and the availability of supporting evidence influence writers' decision-making. Simpler persuasive text and complex texts featuring atypical characteristics, sophisticated vocabulary and concepts, and complicated graphics may co-exist in the same classroom. Many students simply have not had enough experience with persuasive text and may be underprepared to comprehend the texts.

Two decades ago, Brassart (1996) analyzed 140 fourth through seventh graders' oral recalls and found that fifth through seventh graders recalled significantly more details, and sixth and seventh graders significantly more big ideas, than third and fourth graders. He speculated mastery may not occur "until relatively late, at least not before grade 7 (ages 12-13)" (p. 170). This, along with more recent research (e.g., McNeill, 2011; Osborne, 2010), suggests elementary students continue to need help comprehending persuasive text on their own.

Additionally, accumulating evidence that students' comprehension for different types of text is not the same suggests that comprehension of persuasive text may need to be addressed separately (e.g., Duke & Roberts, 2010). K-5 curricula and learning standards have already responded to the need by devoting more attention to persuasive text (e.g., National Governors Association & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Teachers can capitalize on the increased attention by focusing on comprehending persuasive text during K-5 lessons.

FIGURE 1. A Sampling of Persuasive Text Characteristics.

Characteristic	Definition	Example
Thesis	Writers' statement of position	"remember—it's a good thing there are insects" (Fowler, 1990, p. 29).
Warrant	Explanation of the connection between a claim and its supporting evidence	"In general, if something interferes with your health functioning, we say it's bad for you" (Author, 2011, p. 149).
Claim	A purportedly true statement designed to support the thesis	"Eating vegetables keeps us healthy" (McCormick, 2005, p.6).
Evidence	Examples, information, reasons, and other statements or graphical devices that substantiate the truth of the claim	"In the wild, a loud noise can mask the sounds that animals use to hunt for prey, escape from predators, and communicate with one another. Short blasts of noise—from fireworks, for example—can frighten or panic both wild animals and pets" (Blackaby, 2005, p. 19).
Counterargument	Reference to readers' potential objections to or reservations about a claim or thesis	"Some people might think that water is everywhere" (Stewart, 2005, p. 13).
Refutation	Clarification intended to disprove or nullify readers' potential objections or reservations	"Certainly, more than 70 percent of the Earth is covered with water. Yet most of that water is salty. People and animals can't drink salty water because it makes us sick" (Stewart, 2005, p. 13).
Qualification	Acknowledgement of boundaries, limitations, or validity of a claim or thesis	"However, [sound] is certainly not the only concern" (Blackaby, 2005, p. 19).
Appeal	Rhetorical devices that focus on authority, logic, or personal desire in order to influence readers' thinking	"Doctors say you should eat five servings a day" (McCormick, 2005, p.6).

Focusing on Comprehending Persuasive Text

Our work has helped us to see that graphics in persuasive text is an especially important focus for K-5 lessons. When students ignore graphics in persuasive text, they run the risk of missing out on key parts of writers' arguments. Persuasive text may not always include graphics, but, when it does, graphics most often supplement the written text by offering additional explanations or introducing new evidence. Also, graphics may include direct appeals, or "tools used to get a particular audience on your side" (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2011, p. 149), not featured in the written text. One of the books we used in our work, *Save Our Earth*, included a graphic of a large quantity of dead fish floating on the top of a lake, with the caption, "These fish died from pollution in Lake Trafford, Florida, United States" (Stewart, 2005, p. 15). The graphic was designed to supplement ideas in the written text, by showing a consequence of pollution and evoking horror at the high number of deaths. Ignoring the graphic undermines the writer's attempt to convince students that polluting fresh water may be harmful and needs to be avoided.

For the last five years, we have been striving to understand what elementary students remember when they read persuasive text on their own and how students' memory for persuasive text changes with increased reading experience. In our research, we have asked second through fifth graders who were identified as on-grade-level readers by their teachers to read aloud and orally recall stand-alone chapters in trade books. We were interested in their unassisted memory for persuasive text. Rather than asking specific questions about the chapter, we encouraged students to continue recalling ideas until they indicated they were finished. Michael's recall at the opening of this article is one example of what students remembered.

We have learned from Michael and his peers that attention to graphics is a surprising gap in elementary readers' comprehension of persuasive text (Martin & Myers, 2016). The students in our study devoted uneven attention to graphics when reading and recalling persuasive text. They seemed to pay progressively less attention to graphics from second to fifth grade. Also, those who recalled the fewest ideas attended disproportionately to texts' graphics. They tended to devote too little or too much attention to graphics. The second through fifth graders taught us that they need help learning to focus appropriately on graphics in persuasive text.

Teaching Students to Focus Appropriately on Graphics in Persuasive Text

Michael and his peers' uneven attention to graphics suggests that teaching elementary students about the role of graphics in persuasive text and how to integrate graphics with ideas in written text may hold promise for increasing their comprehension of persuasive text. Lessons which include authentic literacy activities, read alouds, discussions, and comprehension strategy instruction may help students learn to focus appropriately on the graphics in persuasive text (e.g., Duke & Martin, 2015; Duffy, 2014; Haria & Midgette, 2014; Romance & Vitale, 2012; Williams et al., 2005).

Authentic Literacy Activities

Authentic literacy activities involve "reading and writing of textual types, or genres, that occur outside of a learning-to-read-and-write context and purpose" and "for the purposes for which they are read or written outside of a learning-to-read-and-write context and purpose" (Purcell-Gates et al., 2007, p. 14). Authentic literacy activities support students' motivation and learning, by providing a need-to-know and clarifying when and how to use what is being learned to read texts on their own. Recently, we have been collaborating with local elementary teachers to include authentic literacy activities in lessons intended to help students to focus appropriately on graphics in persuasive text. We have found three categories of tasks to be especially useful:

Classroom or school infomercials and advertisements. Infomercials and advertisements are useful because they often communicate key reasons and evidence through graphics. Examples of tasks in this category include (a) advertising and applying for classroom jobs, (b) selling and buying items in the classroom or school store, (c) searching for and stocking the classroom with new supplies, and (d) convincing future students to enroll in favorite classes or classrooms.   Student-created infomercials and advertisements such as *Come and Teach at Our School* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O2b8Cj1RIU) and Kindergarten Round Up! (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3ojMPGmoP8) may be included in K-5 lessons.

Student reviews and editorials. Among the most common persuasive texts encountered outside of school, product reviews and editorials offer opportunities for students to share their experiences and opinions with peers. Examples of tasks in this category include (a) convincing peers to select books to read for pleasure, (b) helping classmates to decide whether to buy or bring lunch tomorrow, (c) encouraging administrators to buy (and students to choose) apps or games for use in the classroom, (d) sharing and learning about peer reactions to events, and (e) formulating opinions about "hot" issues. Persuasive texts which could be used in K-5 lessons might include newspaper editorials and columns and online texts such as *KidsVuz* (https://www.kidzvuz.com), *SlimeKids Book Reviews* (http://www.slimekids.com/book-reviews), or *Spaghetti Book Club Book Reviews for Kids* (http://www.spaghettibookclub.org).

Content area units of study: White papers, speeches, and public service announcements. White papers, speeches, and public service announcements [PSAs] frequently feature curricular topics, enabling students to simultaneously learn to focus appropriately on graphics and address content area standards. Examples of tasks in this category include (a) understanding and responding to current events and scientific issues (e.g., genetic engineering of food, immigration); (b) electing students to classroom offices; (c) resolving school issues (e.g., uniforms, bullying); and (d) making classroom decisions. Student-created persuasive texts

which can be used in lessons are widely available online, including *Anti-Bullying Elementary School Video (*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg8wxcepAxM), Children's Speeches (https://kidsessays.com/childrens-speeches/), *How Can You Help Save the Earth?* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWCPLUVCfg0), and *PSA By Kids For Kids (*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HP-0ixkz6A),

Read Alouds, Discussions, and Comprehension Strategy instruction

As elementary students engage in authentic literacy activities, read alouds, discussions, and comprehension strategy instruction can offer opportunities to (a) see how expert readers attend to graphics, (b) understand the role of graphics in persuasive text, and (c) collaborate with teachers and peers to integrate graphics with ideas in written text (e.g., Duke & Martin, 2015). Teachers can introduce the focus on graphics, model how graphics are integrated with ideas in written text, and provide feedback on students' attempts to focus appropriately on graphics.

Finding high-quality persuasive texts intended for elementary students is foundational to using read alouds, discussions, and comprehension strategy instruction to help students focus appropriately on graphics in persuasive text. Figure 2 lists published texts which are well-suited to a focus on

FIGURE 2. Examples of Persuasive Text Trade Books for Elementary Readers

Trade Book	Overview
Burnham, K. (2007). *Save energy*. St. Catharines, Ontario: Crabtree.	Explains why it is important to conserve energy and offers suggestions about ways to conserve energy.
Cleveland, M. (2005). *Try it!* Parsippany, NJ: Celebration Press.	Seeks to convince readers to be open to trying new things.
Fridell, R. (2008). *Protecting Earth's water supply*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Classroom.	Argues that fresh water is an important but limited resource and needs to be safeguarded.
Fowler, A. (1990). *It's a good thing there are insects*. New York, NY: Scholastic.	Showcases how insects help people.
Gordon, S. (2002). *Keeping clean*. New York, NY: Children's Press.	Explains why and how people can cleanse themselves.
Green, J. (2002). *Why should I recycle?* Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.	Showcases the recycling process and its importance.
McCormick, R. (2005). *Eat your vegetables!* Parsippany, NJ: Celebration Press.	Offers reasons for including vegetables in snacks and meals.
Parker, J. (2008). *Disappearing Forests*. New York, NY: Weigl Publishers.	Seeks to convince readers that trees are an important natural resource which needs to be protected.
Parr, T. (2001). *It's okay to be different*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.	Showcases that people are not the same and that these differences are good.
Rockwell, P. (2006). *Why are the ice caps melting?: The dangers of global warming*. New York, NY: Collins.	Argues that it is important to stop or slow global warming.
Stead, T. & Ballester, J. (2002). *Should there be zoos: A persuasive text*. New York, NY: Mondo.	Is a compilation of fourth graders' essays about whether and why zoos are or are not necessary.
Thomas, P. (2006). *My manners matter*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.	Seeks to convince readers that good manners are important.
Silver, D. M. (1993). *Why save the rain forest?* Herndon, VA: Silver Burdett.	Explains why the rain forest needs to be protected from destruction.

graphics. Also, student-created and community-based texts such as brochures, pamphlets, or advertisements may be inexpensive sources of graphics-rich texts for K-5 lessons.

Below, we describe two lessons from elementary classrooms in which we have been working. The lessons were designed to help students learn to focus appropriately on graphics in persuasive text.

Second-Grade Lesson. One of us (Nicole) attempted to help second graders learn to interpret graphics in persuasive text using the text, *We Need Insects! (Prokos, 2005) [*CCSS: RI.2.7, RI.2.8]. Nicole began by displaying copies of pages from different persuasive texts on a document camera and asking what readers can learn from reading the pages. Nicole introduced the key idea ("Sometimes writers put information in pictures not found in the words, and readers look for and learn from these pictures") and shared her thinking about selected graphics in the displayed pages. Then Nicole established the lesson purpose by saying, "Today, we are going to look for and learn from the pictures in persuasive text so that you can learn from the pictures in your books when you when you are doing research for your Safe Schools project."

To introduce the text, Nicole claimed some people think insects are annoying and asked for students' opinions about insects. Then Nicole read the title, told students that Anna (the writer) believes we need insects, and asked students to listen for her reasoning. After reading the first page aloud, Nicole modeled looking for and learning from a graphic on the first page: "In this picture, there are ants. They are working together to carry a grasshopper somewhere. Anna has been talking about how insects help nature. I think this is an example of when she said insects can be food. Maybe the ants are going to eat the grasshopper." As the read aloud continued, Nicole encouraged students to share their thinking using questions such as, "What new information can we learn from this picture?", "We just read about this. What is this example showing us?", and "What are these insects doing? How is that helpful to us?"

When the read aloud was finished, Nicole asked students to share Anna's reasons for believing insects are needed. Then Nicole reviewed the key idea, displayed chart paper that said "Safe schools are important!", and shared one reason in support of the thesis statement. Next, Nicole passed out sticky notes and asked students to draw their most important reason for needing safe schools and put it under the statement. When most of the students were finished, Nicole reread the statement and asked them to share their sticky notes. Nicole ended the lesson by reminding students of the key idea and inviting them to look for and learn from the pictures when reading persuasive texts during their project.

Fourth-Grade Lesson. During a teaching demonstration, one of us (Nicole) taught another lesson focused on graphics in persuasive text. The goal was to model how students could be taught to integrate graphics

and written text using the text, *Save Our Earth (Stewart, 2005)* [CCSS: RI.4.7, RI.4.8]. Nicole introduced the reading strategy by displaying a phone message which had been half-eaten by her dog on a document camera, explaining how she had tried to read it, and asking students to try to help her read it. Then Nicole explained that the half-eaten phone message and words in persuasive text both tell only half of the message. Nicole said, "Writers put the rest of the 'message' in the graphics. We need to 'read' the graphics and think about what else they can tell us about why writers believe what they believe." Nicole set the lesson purpose and explained the writer is going to share why he believes in recycling.

Nicole read aloud the first page and modeled her thinking about the meaning of the first graphic and its connection to the words on the page, by saying, "I see two girls in the graphic. That's a pump, and it looks like when they push on the handle, water comes out into the bucket. The written text just talked about how people need water. I think the graphic is showing us that some people get their water for drinking, cooking, and washing straight from the ground. It's easy for water from the ground to get polluted." As the read aloud continued, students shared their thinking about the graphics. Nicole supported students' attempts to integrate graphics and ideas in written text with questions such as, "The author already said something about this earlier. What was it?", "How is that similar to what the author just said? Different?", and "How does this idea connect to what we have already read?"

Once the chapter was finished, Nicole and the students compiled a list of the writer's reasons for believing in the importance of recycling on the whiteboard. Then Nicole passed out photocopied pages of other persuasive texts. Pairs of students collaborated to read graphics, articulate writers' reasons for supporting recycling, and add them to the class list. Nicole ended the lesson by reviewing the additional reasons, reminding students of the focal strategy, and inviting them to "read" the graphics and think about what else can be learned about the writer's reasoning when doing research for their "Let's Use Renewable Energy!" project.

Lessons such as these may support elementary students' understanding of the role of graphics in persuasive text and ability to integrate graphics with ideas from the written text. The lessons may lead to students' increased comprehension of persuasive text.

Conclusion

Teaching students to focus appropriately on graphics in persuasive text holds potential for addressing the surprising gap that Michael and his peers revealed to us when we asked them to read and recall persuasive text (Martin & Myers, 2016). Addressing students' uneven attention to graphics in persuasive text may strengthen public education, enabling K-5 teachers to increase students' comprehension by helping them to recall more ideas from the written text and graphics in persuasive text and use these ideas to make informed decisions in and out of school. We must all work together to close the gap in elementary students' comprehension of persuasive text.

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Media Multitasking and Social Media: Considerations for Technology Use Among Adolescents

By Laurie A. Sharp, West Texas A&M University

ABSTRACT — Technology use among adolescents has grown rapidly, thus necessitating different approaches towards literacy practices. Along with new technology devices, 21st century knowledge and skills have emerged, which have prompted teachers to adapt traditional literacy instruction to include digital literacy practices. The purpose of this article is to provide literacy teaching professionals at the middle and high school levels with information regarding two prevalent areas for technology use among adolescents: media multitasking and social media. This article also describes innovative instructional considerations for literacy teachers, such as allowing for personalization, recognizing academic and nonacademic languages, and adjusting literacy instruction to focus upon development of students' digital literacy practices.

There has been an explosive growth in recent years with the amount of technology use among adolescents, particularly with mobile digital media devices (Lenhart et al., 2015). Recent data has revealed that almost 90% of adolescents have or have access to each of the following digital media devices: mobile phone, desktop or laptop computer, and game console. Similarly, over 90% of adolescents use their mobile digital media devices to go online frequently. The availability, ease of access to technology, and online connectivity among this age group carries significant implications for teachers regarding digital literacy practices (Buckley, 2014; Crowley, 2014).

Adolescents recognize that technology usage is a fundamental aspect of their daily life experiences (Fitton, Ahmedani, Harold, & Shifflet, 2013). Increased access to personal digital media devices holds much promise for literacy teachers, particularly those in low socioeconomic communities where students' access to technology away from school was once limited (Li, Snow, Jiang, & Edwards, N., 2015). Literacy teachers are now able to capitalize upon students' current perspectives regarding technology usage and encourage literacy development at home by connecting them with meaningful literacy learning experiences through their digital media devices. With this in mind, it is equally important that literacy teachers create technology-enhanced learning environments that foster their students' abilities to use their digital media devices for educational purposes effectively, appropriately, and safely (Fitton et al., 2013).

Media Multitasking among Adolescents

Technology and digital media devices have significantly changed habits of literacy, such as reading and locating information, and multitasking has become "an expected skill" (Lin, 2013, p. 47). Moreover, the prevalence of digital media devices has engendered a new approach to multitasking, which has been dubbed "media multitasking" (Baumgartner, Weeda, van der Heijden, & Huizinga, 2014, p. 1121). Media multitasking involves either simultaneous use of (a) two or more digital media devices or (b) a digital media device and non-technological activity. Although the concept of multitasking is not a new phenomenon, the interactions with digital media devices during both types of media multitasking require different approaches with respect to how the user's attention is managed and distributed (Cotten, Shank, & Anderson, 2014).

Although digital media devices permit users to interact with multiple activities synchronously, multitasking between devices often presents challenges to the attention networks within the brain (Rothbart & Posner, 2015). Research on this topic among the adolescent population is limited, but Baumgartner et al. (2014) posited that constant exposure to media multitasking "may have consequences for adolescents' cognitive control processes" (p. 1122). Lower academic performance has also been reported among adolescents who multitask with digital media devices (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010), and Klorer (2009) speculated that the frequency of media multitasking throughout childhood has negatively affected the development of adolescents' interpersonal skills. In this same manner, Pea et al. (2012) presented findings that showed negative relationships between media multitasking and social well-being. Moreover, these findings and assertions are juxtaposed with a rising number of adolescents who have recently reported high incidences of media multitasking (Cardoso-Leite, Green, & Bavelier, 2015; Cotton et al., 2014; Courage, Bakhtiar, Fitzpatrick, Kenny, & Brandeau, 2015; Lin, 2013; Rideout et al., 2010; Székely, 2015; Voorveld & van der Goot, 2013).

Media multitasking among adolescents will most likely continue to flourish, particularly with the number of technology-related knowledge and skills with which students require "to learn effectively and live productively in an increasingly global and digital society" (International Society for Technology in Education, 2015). In order to prepare students to be "active, successful participants in this 21st century global society" (National Council of Teachers of English, 2013), literacy teachers are encouraged to supplant print-rich learning environments with opportunities to interact with digital media as both producers and consumers, particularly with adolescent learners (Buckley, 2014; O'Byrne, 2014).

With this in mind, literacy teachers must be mindful of the unique demands that media multitasking has among all adolescent learners. For example, media multitasking often presents

intensified challenges to students who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Therefore, literacy teachers must explore accommodations that support students as they navigate through encountered challenges (Ewen et al., 2012). Wieth and Burns (2014) cautioned that simply offering students incentives may not necessarily lead to increased academic performance and is likely to "encourage more superficial or habitual processing" (p. 69). Therefore, literacy teachers should seek accommodations that provide students with an appropriate amount of support during learning experiences that involve media multitasking, such as strategies that assist with self-monitoring of one's behavior or strategies that support task completion (Siklos & Kerns 2003).

Social Media among Adolescents

Adolescents are avid users of social media, and many have reported use of multiple platforms for social media (Lenhart et al., 2011; Lenhart et al., 2015). Current popular platforms for social media among adolescents include blogs, wikis, and podcasts, along with social networking websites, such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Social media platforms are social environments that allow users to create and share content with a multitude of other users worldwide.

The inclusion of social media during the process of learning has the potential to foster a sense of community among students and establish a space for collaboration, participation, and cooperation (Fewkes & McCabe, 2012). Fewkes and McCabe presented findings that showed some teachers were reluctant to incorporate social media in the classroom due to concerns related to distractibility. However, Fewkes and McCabe maintained that as teachers develop understandings regarding students' use of social media, they can "better target and implement strategies that use social media" to meet curricular requirements (p. 96). When using social media in the classroom, literacy teachers must also ensure they address students' online privacy practices due to their visibility and sharing of information, such as text, photographs, videos, and other content (Marwick & Boyd, 2014).

Social media use encompasses a significant amount of adolescents' time mainly for reasons of leisure and social connectedness (Mao, 2014). With this in mind, many students are participating in "personal expression through multiple media" as they "negotiate and create new meanings through their online interactions" (White & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014, p. 645). When used in a pedagogically sound manner, social media has the potential to be an authentic and culturally relevant way to engage students with learning. However, in order for students to view social media as a tool for learning, literacy teachers must incorporate use of social media regularly, thoughtfully, and be active participants who provide students with meaningful feedback (Mao, 2014).

Instructional Considerations for Literacy Teachers

Restricting the use of technology during learning is not a realistic option and only leads to learning environments that are dull, boring, and discourages engagement (Rosen, Mark Carrier,

& Cheever, 2013). Likewise, literacy teachers cannot assume that adolescents' immersion in technology has honed their knowledge and skills related to digital literacy practices (Crowley, 2014). Rather, a shift in literacy practices is necessary, and literacy teachers must "understand the role and value of these literacies," as well as "how to infuse them into their curriculum in meaningful ways" (Buckley, 2014, p. 7). Literacy teachers who seek to promote the development of students' digital literacy skills through media multitasking and social media should keep the following evidence-based and practitioner-based instructional considerations in mind.

Allow for personalization. As adolescents assume an active role within a social media environment, it is important for literacy teachers to consider developmental stages related to adolescence. According to Erikson (1968), adolescents begin establishing a sense of identity, which entails the exploration of values, roles, goals, and purpose for one's life. With this in mind, literacy teachers might consider providing virtual spaces that students may personalize (Casey, 2013). Various social media platforms provide space for users with which they may create a blog, upload pictures, customize the theme, select an avatar, and/or produce a profile. As literacy teachers allow for personalization with social media, it is extremely important to attend to privacy and appropriateness with students.

With regard to privacy, literacy teachers should be the administrator for students' virtual spaces and consider restricting user access to only students enrolled in the class. Literacy teachers might also consider the use of pseudonyms to protect students' identity further. Concerning appropriateness, literacy teachers should facilitate numerous discussions regarding suitable portrayal of oneself within a social media environment before students personalize their virtual spaces. Once students have personalized their virtual spaces, literacy teachers should continuously monitor students' activity and address any inappropriate behavior or privacy concerns immediately.

Recognize academic and nonacademic languages. Language utilized within social media contexts carries its own unique nuances, particularly among adolescents (Amicucci, 2014; Rust, 2015). Although academic language is a significant part of the writing completed during the school day, much of the writing that adolescents complete outside of school employs nonacademic language. Literacy teachers should recognize the role that academic and nonacademic languages play in students' lives and provide opportunities for students to use each language during various learning experiences at school. In doing so, literacy teachers are enhancing students' skills with manipulating language, while also fostering a safe space for adolescents to explore and maintain their identities. Rust (2015) explained that attention to language requires "tactical teaching," where teachers "work alongside students to co-construct new learning spaces" (p. 500). Literacy teachers might also consider designing learning experiences during which students first analyze online comments from various media sources so that they may explore the different characteristics, styles, and features before composing their own writings (Chandler-Olcott, 2013).

Adjust instruction to focus upon development of digital literacy practices. Requisite literacy skills within the 21st century go well beyond reading and writing. In order to participate in a digital society, individuals must be able to:

• Develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology;

• Build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought;

• Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;

• Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;

• Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts;

• Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments. (NCTE, 2013)

Proficiency with these 21st century literacy skills necessitates adjustments with traditional approaches to literacy instruction. The following instructional approaches delineate several ways in which literacy teachers develop multiple skills through digital literacy practices that are authentic and relevant to adolescent learners.

Construct media texts. An excellent way to scaffold students' success with creating media texts is to explore existing forms of media related to a topic under study (Bruce, 2015). Literacy teachers may task students with locating various forms of media related to this topic, such as video clips, scenes from movies or television shows, audio clips, and/or printed text and visuals. As students view and analyze these artifacts during class, the literacy teacher facilitates a class discussion that explores how these forms of media relate to the topic. Then, students brainstorm ways to combine and categorize information generated from the discussion. After this interactive class activity, students work individually or in small groups to produce a reconstructed media text related to the topic under study.

Digital book talks. Book talks are a popular strategy used within classrooms so students may share the context of books that they have read (Gunter & Kenny, 2008). Similar to the traditional written book report, books talks are excellent ways to inspire reluctant readers to hear overviews of books that were read and enjoyed by others. Literacy teachers are now able to digitize book talks and engage students in the creation of book trailers using technology tools. In order to create an exemplary book trailer, students require a strong degree of familiarity with the book they read. Students must also negotiate how to reveal enough information from the book in a way that creates interest for a prospective reader without giving away too much information.

To prepare for creating digital book talks, students must first view and analyze several movie trailers. Through teacher-facilitated class discussions, students identify characteristics and elements of

movie trailers that inspired their interest. Students then become the director of their own digital book talk, which should:

• be approximately two-minutes in length,

• focus on the main points of the book,

• address the main characters, setting, and context, and

• communicate a purpose for others to read the book.

Once students' digital book talks are completed, they can be peer-reviewed and uploaded to a class or school website.

Digital conversations. Literacy teachers have utilized reader response learning experiences, such as written responses and literature circles, to deepen students' comprehension as they make meaning and connect with readings. With written responses, learning was limited to teacher-student interactions. On the other hand, literature circles expanded interactions into a small group format and included dialogue, collaboration, and cooperation as vital parts of the learning process. However, technology tools now enable small group conversations once held inside the classroom to broaden into digital conversations that extend beyond the classroom's walls (Myers, 2014).

Digital conversations take place on websites that host blogs (Myers, 2014), and literacy teachers have access to many free website providers that offer blogging features (Author, 2014). Digital conversations may stem from a teacher-posed: (a) question before reading, (b) self-reflective question, or (c) questions aimed to tap into students' higher order thinking during and after reading (Myers, 2014). Students may create original posts and reply to the postings of their peers. Digital conversations have been shown to increase students' confidence, expose students to multiple text interpretations, and provide students with the space to take a critical stance and assume ownership with their own learning.

Conclusion

Literature has suggested a correlation between adolescent development and social media use (e.g., Cingel & Krcmar, 2014), and some studies have articulated drawbacks associated with adolescents' personal technology use (e.g., Cyr, Berman, & Smith, 2014; Klorer, 2009). Through multitasking and social media, adolescent learners have the capability to stay aware of what others are thinking and doing at any given point in time, which contributes to their state of "continuous partial attention" (Stone, n.d., para. 1). According to Stone:

We pay continuous partial attention in an effort NOT TO MISS ANYTHING. It is an always-on, anywhere, anytime, any place behavior that involves an artificial sense of constant crisis. We are always in high alert when we pay continuous partial attention. (para. 3)

Although the effects of multitasking and social media on adolescents are not yet definitive, it is likely that this type of

technology usage among adolescents will continue to flourish as new technologies continue to develop (Cotton et al., 2014). Avoidance of technology is not a viable option for literacy teachers, and it is important that they familiarize themselves with the technology mediums, as well as how their students are using them (Adams, 2012; Rosen et al., 2013). Failing to do so may perpetuate "a heightened risk of digital exclusion" among students (Hynan, Murray, & Goldbart, 2014, p. 182).

From a literacy perspective, teachers should view media multitasking and social media as significant elements within a virtual "participatory culture" (Jocson & Rosa, 2015, p. 374) where students "identities, knowledges, and interests are deeply connected" (Omerbašić, 2015, p. 480). Through media multitasking and participation in social media outlets, adolescents stay engaged with constant social interactions, which play a significant role in shaping their own identity, as well as their need for associating with others (Pini, Musanti, & Pargman, 2014). With this in mind, literacy teachers must attend to the "language . . . , engagement, learning, and social connections" within these virtual spaces (Jocson & Rosa, 2015, p. 374) while also being sensitive to unique cultural considerations and practices (Pini et al., 2014).

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Using Digital Tools to Convey Multimodal Arguments

By Emily Howell, Iowa State University

ABSTRACT — This article describes the digital, multimodal tools used throughout the writing process to help students design multimodal arguments. The author discusses the need for integrating multimodal arguments in classrooms based upon the New London Group's multiliteracies perspective. Reflecting upon a formative experiment in high-school English classrooms, the author describes how students used these tools to argue for a chosen social cause, the implementation of these tools at each stage of the writing process, the purpose for using each tool, and the affordances and disadvantages of such tool use.

Multimodal composing is "the conscious manipulation of the interaction among various sensory experiences-visual, textual, verbal, tactile, and aural-used in the processes of producing and reading texts" (Bowen & Whithaus, 2013, p. 7). The New London Group (1996) highlighted the concept of multimodality in their perspective of multiliteracies. Although the New London Group (NLG) and others described the potential and necessity for students understanding the expanding concept of text and literacy that digital technologies afford to enact social change, some doubt whether or not adolescents will really achieve such change in these digital spaces (Gladwell, 2010). In a formative experiment in two high-school English III classrooms over an eight-week period, I worked with a teacher to enact an intervention using digital, multimodal tools with a process writing approach to help students write better arguments, both traditional and online. During this intervention we helped students design multimodal arguments for a cause important to them and publish this argument as a Public Service Announcement (PSA). I describe here the digital, multimodal tools used in this intervention with the hope of giving teachers practical classroom application of the multiliteracies framework.

Writing, Digital Tools, and Social Change

Writing is a technology that has long held the potential to impact social change. For example, Martin Luther revolutionized the church by using the printing press to disseminate his theses (Howard, 2010). Today, technology, such as social media, is a tool that writers deliberately utilize to publish their social arguments. For example, the United States government attempted to provoke an uprising of the Cuban people not through diplomacy or military action, but through the spread of social media (Butler, Gillum, & Arce, 2014). The United States Agency for International Development created a Cuban form of Twitter called ZunZuneo in what some considered an attempt to undermine the communist government in Cuba. Shirky (2008) claimed that changes in communication tools led to changes in how society functions and maintains itself. However, some doubt the power of social

action in online environments. Gladwell (2010) argued that Twitter and other social media technologies will not be the tools of the next generation as they lack the leadership, organization, and close personal ties that characterize successful social protests, such as those of the Civil Rights Movement. Regarding students' use of technological tools, research is beginning to debunk the term *digital native* introduced by Prensky (2001) as a myth and question whether or not students have the digital literacies necessary to support academic learning, such as argumentative writing (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008).

Digital Tools, Multiliteracies, and Writing Instruction

Adolescents today live in a world in which they are surrounded by technology as they are exposed to media an average of 7.5 hours a day, seven days a week (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Their engagement in these activities and the need to integrate these activities meaningfully into schooling has been noted (Alvermann, 2008). Professional organizations for literacy have issued position statements on new literacies that call for teaching practices to include teaching students to assess information found online, create with multimedia, understand multimodality, and be given the strategies required to practice literacy online (International Reading Association [IRA], 2009; National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2005, 2008). However, in this digital era in which authorship is ubiquitous and reaches an immediate, vast audience (Yancey, 2009), how are students being instructed to use technology to develop writing that is not merely participatory as Gladwell (2010) implied, but is reflective and influential? The NLG (1996) saw the need to teach students in an increasingly technological and globalized world an expanded concept of literacy, which they coined *multiliteracies*. Whereas traditional schooling attempted to homogenize citizens to prepare them with the same skills and knowledge to be ready for the economic market, the intent of multiliteracies is to celebrate differences to teach students to use their particular skills and interests to be active, engaged citizens capable of designing "their social future" (NLG, 1996, pp. 60, 72). The NLG focused on designing an expanded concept of text across multiple modes of representation-linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal. Of these modes, the multimodal was considered the most significant (NLG, 1996), especially today as the Internet and other Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) demand integrating modes to convey and comprehend meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

However, the NLG created a perspective that still has limited classroom application (Graham & Benson, 2010; Sewell & Denton, 2011). In addition to a dearth of publications to help integrate multiliteracies in classrooms, teachers also face an accountability

culture that may not prioritize including multimodal lessons that are a central component of the multiliteracies perspective (Siegel, 2012). Instead, students are doing less designing, called for in the multiliteracies framework. Applebee and Langer (2013) found in a study of 20 middle and high schools in five states that only 19% of assignments represent writing of a paragraph or more. This limited writing was in response to tasks created for them-students were filling in blanks or copying notes. When students are using technology for their writing assignments, it is typically used to produce a "good copy" of their compositions, rather than as a part of the composing process (Peterson & McClay, 2012, p. 145).

Need for Multimodal Arguments

I define multimodal arguments as employing the modes established in the perspective of multiliteracies to make and support an argument. Of the modes the NLG (1996) discussed, the visual mode has gained prominence in the literature on the changing nature of literacy and argument. Kress (2003) emphasized the importance of the visual mode by explaining writing may be moving from recent emphasis on the "alphabetic" back to "its image origins" (p. 73). Specific to argument, researchers emphasize the need for students to realize and implement images for argumentative purposes (Birdsell & Groarke, 2004; Newell, Beach, Smith, & VanDerHeide, 2011). This broadening conception of argument may be essential for argumentative theory to integrate the visual nature of our lives, which is intrinsic to digital technologies (Andrews, 1997; Birdsell & Groarke, 2004; Hocks, 2003; Howard, 2010, 2011). To provide teachers practical applications of the concept of multiliteracies, I discuss the following digital tools that were integrated throughout the composing process to help high-school students construct multimodal arguments. The final project of these multimodal arguments was a PSA of each student's chosen cause. Thus, I hope that these tools will not only allow teachers to integrate multiliteracies in the classroom, but also help them challenge students to use the digital practices they may be familiar with outside of the classroom in an academic setting for an authentic social purpose (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008).

Pre-write with Evernote

Writing process. Hillocks (2010) argued that good argument writing begins not with writing a thesis statement, but with examining data that will eventually be used as evidence to support a claim. To choose and research their topics, students began this multimodal argument project with five class periods of research. First, they learned the terms of argument based upon Toulmin's model (Smith, Wilhelm, & Fredricksen, 2012; Toulmin, 1958/2003). Then, students analyzed other PSAs both for their use of argument and design. One of the principles of a multiliteracies pedagogy is "overt instruction" in which students are taught design principles of multiple modes (NLG, 1996, p. 65). Accordingly, we spent time reviewing different PSAs on multiple websites including the *Ad Council* ("Our Campaigns," 2014), the *American Heart Association* ("Public Service," 2014), and *The More You Know* (2014) website. Students were asked to review these sites for the content of their argument and for the modes employed to present this content using questions

based upon Selfe and Selfe's (2008) discussion of using PSAs for arguments. Students discussed the different modes used in these PSAs. For instance, some of the PSAs were print based, combining words and images whereas other PSAs were videos, combining gestures, words, images, and sounds. The third step of the research process was for students to research and choose their own topic for a PSA. Students researched human rights, local social issues, and youth websites for social issues to answer the following questions: (1) Is this topic personally interesting to you? (2) Will you be able to find enough information—including text, video, images, etc.—on this topic? (3) How will you take a stance on this topic? and (4) Is this topic appropriate for your audience?

Tool. During this process of research in pre-writing, the students used *Evernote* (evernote.com) to collect information about PSAs and their topic. *Evernote* is a free web-based application that works on computers and mobile devices. This application allows students to collect and comment upon information, similar to note taking, and stores this information on their account. This information is synced between devices and can be housed in notebooks made by the student. We chose *Evernote* because it is a free application and a multimodal tool; students can clip images, save whole web pages, type commentary, and record their own voice. Affordances of the tool include that any note taken in the application is easily shared with others by the click of a share button in which the student sends their note to another student's email address. The advantage of this sharing mechanism was that students could work in groups and easily share ideas with one another. A disadvantage of using *Evernote* included ensuring students remembered how to log onto their student accounts, and recent updates to the free account version of this software limits downloading and syncing notes between two devices per student account.

Brainstorm with Glogster EDU

Writing process. After students had chosen a topic and gathered evidence regarding that topic, they began the process of brainstorming an initial draft of their arguments. Students were still collecting information at this point, so this exercise catalyzed their thinking of how the parts of argument may work together and what modes might best convey these elements. We wanted this brainstorming to represent the design process of multiliteracies rather than a formulaic, linear process of writing to which students may be accustomed, according to research documenting the writing commonplace in schools (Applebee and Langer, 2013). Students gathered pieces of their argument—pictures, text, songs, and video—that may help them move toward the design and content of their argument. We asked that they think of the *Glogster EDU* online poster as a highly visual summary of their argument that included parts of the argument, such as claims, evidence, and warrants. To discuss a model for students' writing, we looked together at a poster PSA by the *American Heart Association* regarding those affected by stroke ("There are," 2014). We discussed as a class the modes used in the PSA-visuals, placement, color, and text. We also discussed the parts of argument presented in the poster, where they were positioned, and why they may have been presented this way. In addition to discussing design and concepts of argument, we also used this point of the writing process to

discuss how to cite modes other than text, such as images, which were prevalent in the students' posters. Part of this discussion led to introducing students to websites that would help them use images form the Internet without violating copyright law (Hicks, 2009), such as *morgueFile* (http://www.morguefile.com/). Students then worked over several class periods developing their own *Glogster EDU* posters of their chosen social cause, knowing this was serving both as a way to brainstorm their arguments and as a part of their eventual PSA website as this *Glogster EDU* poster would eventually be embedded in the students' websites.

Tool. In order for students to create online, multimodal posters of their arguments, we used *Glogster EDU* (edu.glogster.com). *Glogster EDU* is an online poster service that offers teachers student accounts that can be monitored through a closed platform. Teachers can create an account, establish student accounts, and monitor what students create and share on these accounts. We chose this site because it is free for teachers (though only on a limited, trial basis) and enables multimodality. Students can include text, graphics, images, audio clips, and/or video clips in their posters. They can also design the background, colors, and layout of their posters. Other affordances of *Glogster EDU* are that it allows students to easily share their posters with other students and can be embedded into websites. In addition, *Glogster EDU* has a Glogpedia ("Glogpedia," 2014) that allows teachers to provide students with multiple examples of others' work. Disadvantages of *Glogster EDU* include its functionality depending upon the Internet access of a school and students remembering their assigned login information. Students may also become frustrated trying to integrate video into their posters depending upon established school filters.

Draft with PowerPoint and Google Slides

Writing process. Toulmin developed his model of argument because we often do not write arguments with statements of absolute truth as in Aristotle's syllogism; instead, we deal with evidence that is often questioned and must be defended through a warrant (Hillocks, 2010; Toulmin, 1958/2003). To help students conceptualize these concepts of argument-claims, evidence, and warrants—and realize that these may be conveyed with text, but also with other modes, students created a photo-essay of their arguments. To help scaffold students' writing, we gave them a model of how they might structure each slide-using claim, evidence, and warrant. The claim served as the title for each slide, followed by one picture, which served as evidence. Below the picture, each slide could contain a warrant, explaining how the picture supported the claim described in the respective title. However, such scaffolding should be provided with the wariness that although such strategies can help students learn, such structure may also inhibit creativity (Bailey & Carroll, 2010).

Tool. We used *PowerPoint* as it is available on many school computers and was available on the laptops the students used for this project. The students were familiar with this technology though were less familiar with creating the simple layout of each slide and organizing the slides according to the elements of argument. We recommended that students use a plain black background to let their picture stand out against such a backdrop. In addition, once the students used these photo-essays in their final website, they changed their *PowerPoint* into a *Google Slides* presentation by uploading it to *Google Drive*. *Google Applications* is a free host of these Google applications, such as *Google Slides* and *Google Documents*, available with a Google email account (https://www.google.com/edu/products/productivity-tools/). In the school where we were implementing this intervention, each student had a Google email account associated with the school district through which *Google Drive* and the suite of Google applications were available. This was another advantage of choosing a Google Application, such as *Google Slides*, as each student already had an account prior to this project. Changing the *PowerPoint* to a *Google Slides* presentation allowed the students to easily embed their photo-essay into the site and choose how it would display once the viewer clicked on this particular aspect of their website. Although students' familiarity with *PowerPoint* was an advantage, the students were unfamiliar with uploading *PowerPoints* to *Google Drive* and converting them to *Google Slides*, and we learned that it was important to give students explicit instruction on these technical aspects, reaffirming discussion of the flawed concept of the digital native and digital immigrant (Prensky, 2001) and that students may not be familiar with using technology when that use is related to content creation and manipulation of multimedia (Bennett et al., 2008).

Publish with Google Sites

Writing process. The final step of this multimodal argument writing project was to publish a PSA using a website. We gave intentionally limited requirements for what students had to include on these sites. We taught each student how to embed in their website both their *Glogster EDU* poster and their photo-essay. Other than these two requirements, the students were encouraged to use the multiliteracies concept of design to think of how they could arrange their site to convey the message of their arguments. Students had to consider not only the content of their message and its intended audience, but they also had to reflect upon design concepts: background of the site, colors of fonts, amount of pages, links to include, and amount of text on each page. Because websites afford such freedom of design, students may need to be reminded to focus upon the purpose for their arguments rather than getting lost in the affordances of the technology-the tool should serve the content (Hicks, 2009).

Tool. The tool we chose for the students' publication of their arguments was *Google Sites* (http://www.google.com/sites/overview.html). When we were designing this project, we wanted a platform that could house multimedia as we knew the students would be using multimodal, digital tools at each stage of their argumentative writing process. Thus, we chose a website for this affordance. In deciding upon which website platform to use, we chose *Google Sites* for several reasons. The most compelling reason was that the students already had Google email accounts established through their school district, and *Google Sites* is designed to integrate other Google Applications. In addition, *Google Sites* is a free technology, has multiple templates, does not require knowledge of coding,

and has privacy control settings-students can choose whether to make their website public, private, or limit access to those given the web link for the Site. As with other digital writing, we faced a paradox in publishing these sites. We wanted to allow students to publish their writing for an authentic audience; however, we also had to ensure student safety (Hicks, 2009).

We chose to post a link to each student's website on their English teacher's page of the school website to give students a chance to display their website for an audience other than their classmates; however, this page was also password protected. The students knew this password and could share it with those who they wanted to view their sites, yet this password protected them from having unintentional viewers stumble upon their websites. Whatever the decision regarding publication of students' writing, it is important that students and teachers discuss and understand how student work will be published and the audience it may potentially influence (Hicks, 2009). Particularly in this case of students designing an argument for a cause important to them, it was important that they felt their argument had the potential to sway opinion. However, this authentic audience must be negotiated safely within parameters agreeable to parties such as students, parents, teachers, and school administrators.

Making Arguments Multimodal

Jacobs (2012) reasoned why it may be becoming more essential to teach multimodality: "As the world grows increasingly multimodal, instruction needs to move beyond traditional texts and include opportunities for engagement in multimodal academic literacies wherein students not only 'read' multimodal texts, but also create multimodal texts" (p. 249). In describing the digital, multimodal tools used in high-school classrooms, teachers may gain means to instantiate the perspective of multiliteracies. By having students create a multimodal argument for a PSA of their chosen cause, teachers can follow the concept germane to the NLG (1996) of helping students become engaged citizens capable of designing arguments for the benefit of future communities. The description of the tools we used during the writing process as well as their purpose, affordances, and disadvantages may provide teachers means to move beyond using technology merely for direct instruction or for students recopying what they have already written by more conventional means (Peterson & McClay, 2012). Instead, in using these tools for academic purposes, students will build the digital skills and multiliteracies necessary to affect change for their future in an increasingly globalized and technological world (NLG, 1996).

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From Children's Books to Google Hits: Honing Reading Skills Using Informational Texts

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ABSTRACT — With the increasing amount of time that adults spend reading informational materials, it is no wonder that national and state-level standards require K-12 educators to spend more classroom time teaching and talking about informational texts. One method to employ for elementary and secondary grades alike is to focus on activating prior knowledge of skimming and scanning to help students identify textual features and develop a strong research vocabulary. Harnessing these already developed abilities will encourage students to effectively utilize close reading and research skills. What follows, then, is a description of how to bridge reading skills developed in early grades to the skills secondary students should use to read digital texts. Also included is a table of practical examples of each skill for early and secondary grades.

While adult reading material comprises 85-95% of informational material (Smith, 2000), primary students spend an estimated 3.6 minutes each day reading nonfiction text (Duke, 2000; Goodwin & Miller, 2012). Narrowing this gap has been a goal of educators on a national and state level for some time (Goodwin & Miller, 2012; Young, Moss, & Cronwell, 2007). Both the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers/NGACBPC/CCSSO, 2010) and South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards (South Carolina Department of Education, 2015) highlight the need to incorporate more nonfiction texts into curriculum. In addition to reading nonfiction texts, the 21st–century student and worker need to be prepared to read texts in a variety of formats and modalities (Kress, 2005;Rueda, 2013). To further complicate the matter, K-12 educators are not only helping students become digitally literate, but they themselves are also learning how to read and synthesize information across multiple formats from overwhelming numbers of sources (Gee, 2007; Miners & Pascopella, 2007).

Sifting through millions of hits provided by Google is expected—so much so that we often do not think about how many results are handed to us when we type in Whitney Houston (47,100,000) or Houston, Texas (115,000,000). Obviously, reading the millions of items Google delivers is not feasable, but which site is the best to start with? Can we be sure we are reading enough information to make informed, educated decisions about which guitar to buy or whether or not we should get the flu vaccine this year? We teach fundamental skills in primary grades that students internalize, such as finding the main idea and determining evidence; high school teachers should work to activate the prior knowledge that students honed as they read picture books, informational texts, and participated in read alouds toward the task of evaluating search engine results.

Teaching students to be discriminative, critical readers

differs from the skills they learned in early grades because the technologies have changed such that students are often learning via screen instead of page (Gee 2007; Kress 2005; Miner & Pascopella, 2007). The amount of information available and topics we read may have changed significantly, but a return to some of the skills educators still teach in elementary school could help all students become more digitally literate. Perhaps, the critical literacy skills high school students should employ mirror those skills taught in primary grades through the use of informational books. What follows, then, is a comparison of primary-grade reading skills to the higher-level critical reading and researching skills more-advanced students need, specific descriptions of how they mirror one another, as well as grade-level examples of texts and sites teachers can employ to facilitate the skills.

Skimming's Not a Scam!

Skimming and scanning have become second nature to anyone who regularly uses a search engine. Starting as early as kindergarten, students begin to skim and scan texts. Students begin by using illustrations to help them find information they need. When reading an informational text about the farm, students may use visual cues from images to search for pages that help them answer the questions about what animals can be found on the farm. As they begin to learn to read independently, students are required to skim and scan texts using key words and text features. Teachers assume that older students know not only how to employ these skills, but also when to do so. Skim a chapter from a chemistry text. Scan for important words in a test question to understand what exactly is being asked. The skills needed for skimming and scanning are often used online as well. When doing a web or database search for a specific term or group of terms, students must be able to quickly discern whether or not a hit or source will be useful. When millions of hits are returned from a search, students need to know that the first items may be those that paid for top billing, and they should read with a critical eye. Too often we click the first website a search engine delivers, when we should consider its creditability and relevance. Since web searches and websites present so much information, students have to learn how to scan a website to find the information they need. Often, as in the primary grades, students will use visual cues to select which areas of a page to read.

We employ skimming and scanning almost automatically, but in order to effectively skim or scan, readers need to have a plan. When given 47 million hits about Whitney Houston, it is not practical to read every page, so readers need to figure out strategies to search for more specific information. Readers can focus their searches by looking for key text features or web page orientation and developing content and search

vocabulary. By developing these skills, students will be able to transition between print and online texts, while being able to think through complex questions and search vocabulary, all certain requirements for the 21st century worker.

Ending Up Where We Need to Be: Text Features and Webpage Navigation

Our knowledge about text features helps us understand how to read and navigate websites, a fact we do not often consider when reading or perhaps when helping students read online. Much of web design focuses on navigation and making it simple, and 'simple' typically means minimal scrolling for navigational tools and clear, consistent design (Gaffney, 2005). Readers are conditioned to look for a search bar at the top left corner of a web page, and we recognize a magnifying glass icon to mean search. Often in secondary classes, teachers expect students to know this, but there are not clear objectives in the standards that state when or how students should have learned how to navigate websites (NGACBP/CCSSO, 2010). In early elementary grades, students are explicitly taught how to use text features such as table of contents, headings, captions, and photos. Students use these text features to navigate informational texts. Primary students become accustomed to looking for bolded or italicized words, which typically indicate important vocabulary.

Similarly, online readers should look for underlined words as hyperlinked to another part of a website or another website altogether. Students should also be able to locate a website navigation bar to understand the layout of the website. By the secondary grades, these skills are likely automated, but explicitly modeling for students how to use the text features of websites and making comparisons of sites will help students become stronger and more effective researchers.

Finding the Right Words: Vocabulary Development and Web Searches

Starting in the early grades when students are reading informational texts, they develop an intentional vocabulary about a myriad of topics: weather, planets, and books. Once students have background knowledge to tap into, they are able to converse with people using appropriate vocabulary that continues to build. Moving on to secondary content classes, students learn higher-level vocabulary: meteorology, astronomy, and literature. A strong vocabulary helps students in many scenarios, but especially in those wherein they have to draw upon their background knowledge to answer new questions. Educators need to find ways to help students activate their current knowledge in order think about how to answer complex questions. What information does someone have to know or do to be able to answer a specific question or solve a problem? These problem solving skills will be invaluable in the 21st century workplace where workers will be employed in multiple potential fields and solving multi-faceted problems.

There are moments in the classroom where searching for information is authentic: during a lesson about Houston, Texas, students may ask about the population. A simple search for population in Houston will reveal its population, but we want to teach students to ask complex questions, like how has the population in Houston been affected by the weather patterns? Answering this question means that students will need to find information about several concepts, which mirrors the layered questions we want 21st century learners to be thinking about and asking. Getting students to the point where they are able to ask discriminating questions takes much practice.

Conclusion

Acquiring the reading skills needed in a multimodal world can prove to be a daunting task for students. Since students have to read and learn from printed text and online text, educators can help make stronger connections between the skills needed to read effectively off and online. Understanding that the foundational skills needed for what Rueda (2013) deems the 21st century worker are developed in the primary grades, can help educators continue to build upon the knowledge students bring to upper and secondary grades. Modeling reading strategies to readers in multiple formats and for multiple purposes is one approach to help students hone their reading skills and create lifelong learners off and online.

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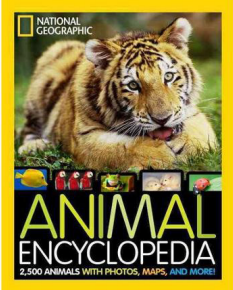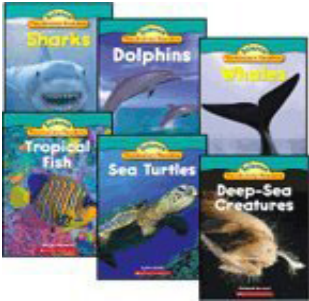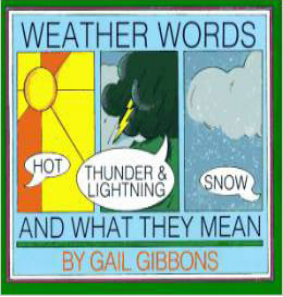
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SKILL	INFORMATIONAL TEXT EXAMPLE	WEB SKILL AND EXAMPLE
Skimming and scanning	*National Geographic Animal Encyclopedia* • Students can scan for animals based on characteristics such as habitat or classification. • Students can skim for information on animals of interest. • Great for use in grades 1-5. image retrieved from http://shop.nationalgeographic.com	Reading initial search results and getting oriented with web pages • Do searches that return a high number of hits (one million or more) and have students note the differences on the results from the first, middle, and last listings. • Scan for webpage endings (i.e. .org, .edu, and .net) to determine likely author and level of credibility.
Understand text features	*Scholastic Vocabulary Readers – Science* • Students can use text features such as table of contents, chapter headings, diagrams, captions, glossary, and comprehension questions. • Great for use in grades 1-2. image retrieved from http://store.scholastic.com/	Website Navigation • Ask students to locate key parts of the page to determine site effectiveness when first arriving. • Compare and contrast two websites about the same topic. Determine which one is more effective based only on layout and navigation.
Vocabulary development	*Weather Words and What They Mean by Gail Gibbons* • Gail Gibbons offers a host of nonfiction texts that focus on vocabulary development. • Readers can utilize the attractive illustrations to understand key terms. • Great for use in grades K-3. image retrieved from http://www.gailgibbons.com/	Determining and Selecting Search Words • Develop with authentic scenarios wherein students will need to research (large purchases, venues, restaurants, class projects, college choices), and model searches with them. • Create lists of search terms to remember and post them around the room. • Conduct searches for the same items using different search terms, and compare/contrast the results.

The Wonderful World of Books: A Review of Children's Literature for Teachers

Jonda C. McNair, Clemson University Students, and Katie Thomas

One of my favorite titles in this column, *What a Wonderful World*, is a picturebook adaptation of the classic song made famous by Louis Armstrong. While this song focuses on some of the many wonderful things in our world that we should pay attention to (e.g., skies of blue, clouds of white, colors of the rainbow, etc.), it makes me think about the wonderful world of books. Every year I find myself excited about books that engage me as a reader and educator for myriad reasons. Sometimes I learn about people that I have never heard of before like Millo Castro Zaldarriaga and José Guadalupe Posada. Other times, I am happy to come across literary gems such as *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse* simply because I see the need for books that represent (and are written by) Native Americans in contemporary settings.

This column features a selection of books across several genres and sub-genres (e.g., biography, informational text, historical and contemporary realistic fiction, free verse, and wordless) about a range of topics such as typhoid fever, drumming, the Day of the Dead, and the weather. I am pleased to have written this column with several Clemson University students who participated in a Creative Inquiry project with me. Creative Inquiry is a program sponsored by the university that allows students and faculty to engage in activities and discovery across a range of disciplines. I welcome any feedback from readers about this column: jmcnair@clemson.edu. I hope that after browsing this column, you too will take pleasure in the wonderful world of books.

Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America
Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. (2015). 229 pages. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-31367-5 $17.99 (Young Adult)
    -- by Laura Dekle

Many people may not know or recognize the name "Mary Mallon," but most people have heard of "Typhoid Mary," the infamous cook who spread typhoid fever in the food she served. But Mary Mallon herself was not terrible. She was just trying to make a living. Those who have heard the story of Typhoid Mary before or those for whom her name is new will learn something they did not already know. In a systematic and thoughtful way, Susan Campbell Bartoletti walks readers through Mary's story, showing them the perspectives of all those involved in Mary's case and how their opinions evolved over the years that Mary's case was a "case." She does this by sharing the facts and details of what happened to Mary and each person involved in her story. Bartoletti writes in a way that gives readers the freedom to think, thus guiding
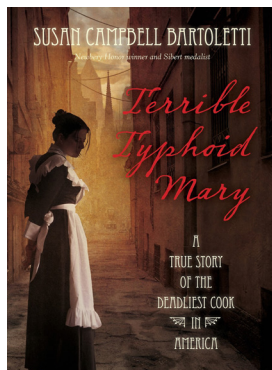
them to make an educated speculation as to the thoughts, motivations, and perspectives of each person in the story.

Bartoletti's work also shows thorough research, as evidenced by her citation of newspapers that were current in Mary's time as well as obscure articles to round out her points. Following the content of the book is a collection of pictures of the figures mentioned in the book, in addition to newspaper illustrations concerning Mary's story. Also in this section is a timeline of what events happened when. Throughout the book, Bartoletti uses footnotes, with a section in the back of the book with more information on each of these topics. *Terrible Typhoid Mary* introduces to students ethical issues – would it be better to quarantine Mary and not allow her to make her living, or should she continue to cook but run the risk of infecting others? This book explores human rights while also teaching about this historical event in an objective, helpful, and informative way. Readers looking for another recent book on the subject might enjoy *Fatal Fever: Tracking Down Typhoid Mary* by Gail Jarrow (Calkins Creek, 2015).

Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music
Engle, Margarita (2015). Illus. by Rafael López. Unpaged. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-10229-3 $16.99 (Primary/ Intermediate)

    – by Taylor Gerland

Have you ever had a dream bigger than you? Well, sometimes you have to ignore what others say and pursue it with full force! This is an inspiring true story for dreamers based on a Chinese-African-Cuban girl, Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, who broke Cuba's traditional taboo against female drummers. Her courage to break tradition has helped make drumming possible for girls on the island. The vibrant illustrations, created with acrylic paint on a wooden board, help guide the poetic text to show the journey the girl went through to achieve her dreams. The drum dream girl in the book is described as living on an island of music in a city of drumbeats where she dreamed of pounding tall conga drums and tapping small bongó drums. This rhythmic pattern of words is found throughout and helps correspond to the rhythm in music. Despite being discouraged throughout the story, Millo continues to dream alone until finally her father sees how great she truly is. Her father gets her a music teacher and even he is amazed by her talent. With the help of her family, her music teacher, and her never ending faith in her dream she plays at a small bongó café where the audience realizes that girls should always be allowed to play drums. This story helps show that no matter how big a dream is and who stands in your way, you should never give up on it.
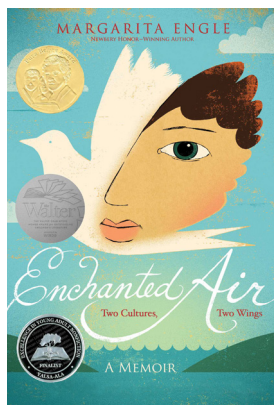
Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir

Engle, Margarita. (2015). 224 pages. Atheneum. 978-1-481-43523-9 $17.99 (Intermediate/Young Adult)

–Amy Bray

Have you ever wished your body could be in two places at once? Maybe that your body was physically present, but your mind and heart where somewhere else? This feeling of incompleteness is exactly how Margarita Engle felt growing up as a Cuban American in the big city of Los Angeles. Through a series of free verse poems, the reader is taken through Engle's childhood and the lacking sense of belonging she feels while not being in her mother's country of Cuba. She goes on to describe how others treated her and how her family was deeply affected during the Cold War. One poem, "Revolutionary" reads, "I remember the island as a quiet place/ of peaceful horses and cows, but now/ all I see are crowds of bearded soldiers/ in dull green uniforms,/ with dark machine guns/ balanced/ on rough shoulders" (p. 70).

Through the lyrical words, readers feel her sorrow about her two worlds being in turmoil. When Margarita feels alone and different from the friends and people around her, she finds comfort in words and the hope of returning to Cuba during the summer after the war passes. The memoir concludes with Margarita looking into what she hopes for her future. She writes in "Hope," "All I know about the future/ is that it will be beautiful./ An almost-war/ can't last/ forever./ Someday, surely I'll be free/ to return to the island of all my childhood/ dreams" (p. 185). For those in the upper elementary grades, this is an incredibly written book that will get readers thinking about the variety of cultures surrounding our lives.

Listen, Slowly

Lải, Thanhhà (2015). 260 pages. HarperCollins. 978-0-06222-918-2. $16.99 (Intermediate)

– Laura Dekle

Mai has grown up hearing just enough about wartime Vietnam to know that it was bad – enough to make her parents and family leave – but no one ever tells her what about it was so awful. Mai grows up in California, privileged, with hardworking parents and her Vietnamese grandmother, Bà. Because Mai doesn't know much about Vietnam, she does not appreciate her parents pushing her to learn SAT word after SAT word, nor is she aware of the value and history of her Vietnamese heritage. Then, when Mai's father tells her that someone needs to go to Vietnam with Bà to investigate the location of Bà's long-lost husband, Ông, Mai learns more about Vietnam than she had ever wanted to.
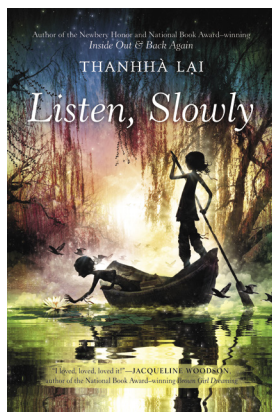
Mai would rather be at the beach with her best friend Montana. She would rather spend her summer obsessing over "him." She would rather be in California. But spending the summer in Vietnam with limited access to her cell phone and the constant presence of family members and villagers, Mai is part of the classic tale of realizing that there is more to the world than herself. She is awakened to new perspectives and new ways of life. *Listen, Slowly* is written in witty voice, it is chock-full of SAT words (thanks to Mai's mother), and it educates readers about Vietnamese culture and trying new things.
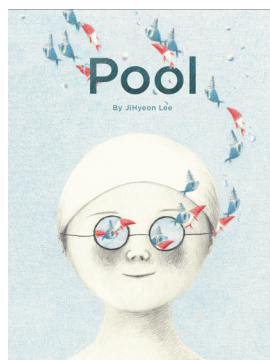
Pool

Lee, JiHyeon. (2015). Unpaged. Chronicle. 978-1-452--14294-4 $16.99. (Primary/Intermediate)

– Valerie Samani

Have you ever wondered what you could find if you opened your imagination to all the possibilities the world has to offer? In this picturebook, a young boy dives into an unseen world that others do not dare to explore. Because the book is wordless, it offers open interpretations for readers. All of the pictures throughout the book move horizontally, having the pictures on the left side flow into the right page, showing continuous movement throughout. As the pictures flow into one another, the soft texture of the pencil sketching's represent a strong sensual feeling to the artwork, making the reader feel connected with the story. In some pictures, there are sparks of different colors, such as the girl's red swimsuit, and the different colored fish. This variation in colors throughout the story draws the reader's eye to specific objects the author feels are important without having to directly tell the reader to look for them. The variation in color also highlights the idea of escaping the ordinary, a main theme throughout the story. The two children are the only characters that hold color, identifying them from the other, ordinary people in the pool. The colors and scenes found throughout this book tell a story of being brave enough to exploring the unexplored, something that children must be able to do in order to gain experience and knowledge of the world around them.

### Ling & Ting: Together In All Weather

Lin, Grace. (2015). 48 pages. Little, Brown. 978-0-316-33549-2 $16.00 (Primary)

– Mary Vilcheck

Ling and Ting are twins who are never apart. In this fourth book of the series, the six chapters take the twins on an adventure through all the seasons. The stories in this book are simple, yet relatable to young readers. This book is the perfect opportunity to teach young children about winter, fall, spring, and summer. Ling and Ting go from selling

lemonade to only each other, to losing their hats in their freshly raked pile of leaves, and even battling a winter cold. Ling and Ting can have fun in rain or shine, as long as they are together. Ling and Ting's personalities shine not only through the text, but also through the illustrations. Ting is even differentiated by her jagged bangs. The illustrations show the twins' humor and their true feelings towards events throughout the story. In chapter 1, Ling and Ting claim to be just surprised from the storm, but you can tell by the way they are hiding under the covers that they are actually terrified. These illustrations can help students infer the characters' emotions through illustrations. The twins in this series know how to make the most out of every day of the year, and make reading double the fun.
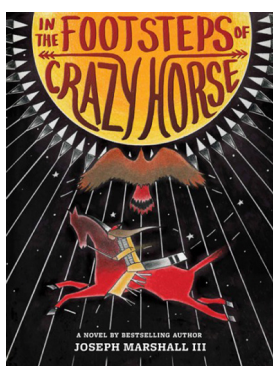
In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse

Marshall, Joseph III. (2015) Illus. by Jim Yellowhawk. 166 pages. Abrams. 978-1-41970-785-8 $16.95 (Intermediate)

– Hannah Kate Christopher

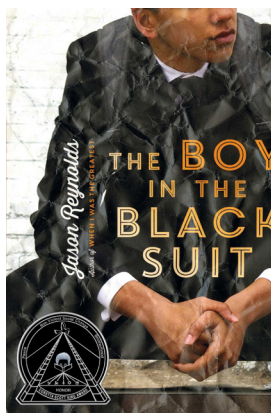Knowing the ancestry of one's family is important so that children can understand who they are and where they come from. In *the Footsteps of Crazy Horse* Jimmy learns just that. He is concerned with the children at school teasing him because he claims to be a Native American though he has "blue eyes and light-brown hair" (p. 2). Nyles High Eagle, or Grandpa Nyles, uses that summer vacation to teach Jimmy about his Lakota background and the Native American Hero, Crazy Horse, who fought for his people's land and freedom--and like Jimmy had light skin and brown hair. They visit Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota, places Jimmy has never been to see battle fields, old Indian Reserves, and trails used during westward explanation so that Grandpa Nyles can teach him all there is to know about his history. This novel teaches children important historical facts about Native Americans from a Native American perspective. It shows the important relationship between family and identity and teaches a lesson about the significance in knowing where you come from. *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse* may lead children to explore aspects of Native American history while compelling them to search for and understand their own individual family histories.

The Boy in the Black Suit

Reynolds, Jason. (2015). 255 pages. Atheneum. 978-1-44245-950-2 $17.99 (Young Adult)

– Katie Thomas, guest reviewer from the University of Tennessee

Jason Reynolds brings us a great piece of realistic fiction dealing with the complex process of adolescent grief. *The Boy in the Black Suit* tells the story of seventeen-year- old Matt Miller, who, feeling the need to contribute financially to the family, seeks a job at the local greasy spoon, The Cluck Bucket. While there, the town's funeral director, Mr. Ray, offers him a job working at the funeral home instead. As resistant as Matt is, this ends up being an opportunity for him to daily confront the grief of losing his mother, just months earlier, to breast cancer. Each day is a different, new challenge; even his friends treat him differently and he is separated from the life he knew before his mother's passing. Through his job at the funeral home, where he puts on his black suit to act as armor, Matt seeks out solace in the grief he shares with others and he experiences a catharsis by observing their outward expressions of grief.

Reynolds writes about Matt's community with a familial presence, where each member teaches Matt about his mother, his world, and himself. Through his boss, Mr. Ray, Matt learns life lessons such as how to play the cards that life deals you and appreciate the important things in life. Matt also discovers his own strength and independence when his father (who begins to drink in order to deal with his grief) is seriously injured and forced to rehabilitate in a medical facility. Through a beautiful new crush, Love, Matt learns how to care for others and how to let the negative snapshots of your life develop into a beautiful picture. Love also teaches Matt how to be tough. She has seen her share of troublesome times too, although she never cries. Matt's mother, Daisy, also teaches him life lessons through a cookbook they began writing together before she died. *The Boy in the Black Suit* provides strong male role models and illustrates authentic portrayals of meaningful relationships. Each supporting character is complex and rich with emotional layers of their own. When Matt forges relationships with these people, he learns about their life mosaic, which helps him create his own.

What a Wonderful World (as sung by Louis Armstrong)

Thiele, Bob & Weiss, George David. (2014). Illus. by Tim Hopgood. Unpaged. Henry Holt. 978-1-622779-254-7 $17.99 (Primary)

– Jaclyn Bruton

This classic song was first recorded by Louis Armstrong in 1967 and has since sold more than one million copies and been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. Tim Hopgood takes readers on an adventure with a young boy who experiences the beautiful world in which we live. Each page presents a line (e.g., "I see trees of green") from "What a Wonderful World" with illustrations, created "using pencil, calligraphy ink, wax crayon, and chalk pastel," that truly bring this song to life. The illustrations are filled with images such as hearts, butterflies, and birds that capture the essence of the lyrics. No matter the age of the reader, this book can bring warmth to people's hearts and a smile to their face. The book concludes with the complete lyrics and a note from the author about his feelings related to this song. Don't miss the chance to travel on this vivacious journey that will leave a person more and more appreciative of our "Wonderful World"!

Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead *Calaveras*
Tonatiuh, Duncan. (2015). 40 pages. Abrams. 978-1-4197-1647-8 $18.95 (Intermediate)

– by Amy Bray
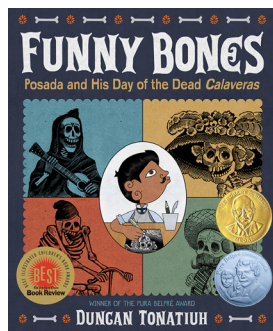
Calaveras ("skeletons performing all sorts of activities, both everyday and festive") are a staple image in Mexican culture. This biography, winner of the 2016 Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award, explores the life of an artist named José Guadalupe Posada (called Don Lupe) and how his love for art developed into these images that are still seen today in Mexico and around the world. Don Lupe used lithography to create many beautiful images, but he was most famous for his images of calaveras. One double-paged spread demonstrates the step-by-step process involved in lithography. During the time around the Día de Muertos, Don Lupe and his friend Don Antonio created literary calaveras, "short rhyming poems that featured a skeleton and made jokes about him or her" (p. 16), for people to buy on the street. Numerous illustrations incorporated throughout the book feature literary calaveras.

The illustrations complement the storyline by depicting the life of Don Lupe as well as cultural and historical events taking place in Mexico. The book concludes with an explanation of the Day of the Dead followed by a glossary of both Spanish and English words, a bibliography, art credits for the art that was not done by Duncan Tonatiuh himself, an index, and information about where Don Lupe's work is located in the United States. From beginning to end, this book keeps the reader informed and intrigued through both the artwork and text.
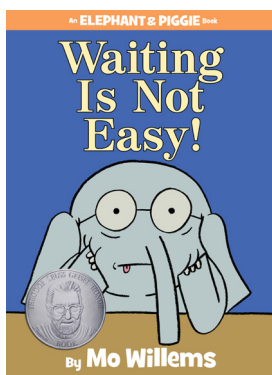
Waiting Is Not Easy
Willems, Mo. (2014). 57 pages. Hyperion. 978-1-42319-957-1 $9.99 (Primary)

– Sydney Fossing

Have you ever heard the expression, "It was worth the wait?" Well, in Mo Willems's book, *Waiting Is Not Easy*, this saying is put to use in the most amusing way. The story begins by Piggie telling his best friend, Gerald, that he has a BIG surprise for him. Gerald, being the worrier that he is, absolutely cannot wait for this surprise and must find out what it is right away. However, Piggie puts Gerald's patience to the test and makes him wait, wait, and wait some more for this supposedly incredible surprise. Gerald groans and pleads for Piggie to just tell him right away, but Piggie simply tells him that "It will be worth it" (p. 37). After pages and pages of Gerald's impatient behavior, the surprise is finally revealed to be the most spectacular night sky.

In the end, Gerald learns that some things are truly worth waiting for. Mo Willems adds comic elements to this cartoon book allowing the reader to see the distress Gerald feels throughout the story. His choice of a plain background throughout the book gives readers a chance to really focus on the characters' words and facial expressions rather than an elaborate background. This trend continues until Piggie finally reveals his big surprise and then the page is taken over by an abundance of stars. This transition from a simple background to an extravagant one makes Piggie's surprise that much better, truly emphasizing the theme of the story. This book is sure to remind children that while sometimes waiting may not be easy, in the end it may be worth it.

Gone Crazy in Alabama
Williams-Garcia, Rita. (2015). 293 pages. Amistad/HarperCollins. 978-0-06221-587-1 $16.99 (Intermediate)

– Brittany McCollum
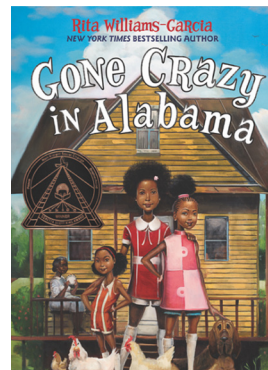
Cultural differences play a huge role in *Gone Crazy in Alabama* as the Gaither sisters, Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern, leave their Brooklyn home to visit the very southern state of Alabama. There they learn that not everyone fights against oppression in the way northerners in Brooklyn do. What seems to be just a visiting vacation turns into a time to come together as a family, despite past events, when disaster strikes them in Alabama. On this summer trip, the girls discover their hidden family history through over-the-creek conversations. While visiting their grandmother, Big Ma, and their great-grandmother, Ma Charles Trotter, they learn they aren't the only set of sisters with differences in this family. The feuding Trotter sisters, Ma Charles and her sister Miss Trotter, who lives over-the-creek, have many disagreements and a hurtful past that leads to an estranged relationship. It isn't until a tragedy strikes this family that they finally decide to come together and put their differences aside. This novel with a serious topic, lightened by a comical edge with the three sisters, should be read by all. It is sure to spark conversations about cultural differences and the importance of family. *Gone Crazy in Alabama* serves as an engaging read for those of all ages that only gets better when paired with the other two novels (*One Crazy Summer*, 2010 and *P.S. Be Eleven*, 2013) in this award-winning trilogy.