



The ORACLE

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Oregon Reading Association

Volume 27

Fall, 2010-2011

Number 1

ORA's Annual Conference Coming in February...

"A New Decade in Literacy"

By Barbara Low, Conference Co-Chair

With the ever increasing demands made on teachers in these times when money is tight in all areas of our society, it is important that we remember that we are professionals. As professionals it is necessary that we continue to keep current on effective instruction practices that will enable our students to be successful. A professional keeps up on current research, strategies, methodologies that are connected to improving our work in education.

The Oregon Reading Association's Annual conference this year will again be offering high quality professional development sessions. This is an excellent opportunity to rejuvenate yourself, to validate your teaching, and to learn new innovative strategies you can implement right away in your classroom.

Our dynamic keynote speakers are Virginia Lockwood and Maryann Manning. They are both experts in their fields. Virginia is an educational consultant and will speak on non-fiction reading and vocabulary instruction. Maryann's topic is assessment and its effect on instruction. Dr. Manning is a past president of the International Reading Association.

Authors scheduled as luncheon speakers are Nina Laden and Brad Herzog. Come and enjoy lunch with these very talented individuals to learn more about their creative writing process and the books they have written. Nina Laden illustrates her own books and many of them have received awards. She loves to play with

words and has written *The Night I Followed the Dog*, *Private I. Guana*, *Roberto the Insect Architect*, and many more. Brad has written the award-winning book *S is for Save the Planet*. His latest book is *Turn Left at the Trojan Horse: A Would-be Hero's American Odyssey*.

Featured Speakers are another important part of our conference. This year's featured speakers include Shane Templeton, Russ Walsh, Della Perez, Virginia Lockwood, and Maryann Manning. Finally, the ORA conference would not have the excellent reputation it does without the dedicated small group session presenters who offer a wide variety of topics.

So mark your calendars, register for the conference, make your hotel reservations, and check this website for current information concerning the conference.

I look forward to seeing you in February at the DoubleTree Hotel, Lloyd Center, Portland! 📖

Have a wonderful year.

Barbara Low
Conference Chair

Oregon Reading Association
2011 Annual State Conference
A New Decade In Literacy
February 4-5, 2011
 • DoubleTree Lloyd Center •
Portland, Oregon

(Access conference information and the registration form by clicking [HERE](#))

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The ORACLE**
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Books are not made for furniture, but there is nothing else that so beautifully furnishes a house.

—Henry Ward Beecher



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Editor Karen Antikajian
P.O. Box 259 • Cheshire, OR 97419

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The Oregon Reading Association is a non-profit professional organization for teachers, administrators, parents, specialists and others who are interested in reading instruction and promotion of lifetime reading habits.

It is the state affiliate of the International Reading Association (IRA).



Clip & Save

2010-2011 OREGON READING ASSOCIATION Executive Board

- President René Dernbach**
mdernbach@comcast.net
3215 NE Fremont
Portland, OR 97212
- President-Elect April Hoy**
aprilh@coos-bay.k12.or.us
840 N. Morrison
Coos Bay, OR 97420
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cfolk@charter.net
92376 Stoner Rd.
Astoria, OR 97103
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jkoivisto@cu-portland.edu
1949 SW 25th St.
Gresham, OR 97080
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millerk@dswebnet.com
34166 Goltra Road S.E.
Albany, OR 97321
- Past President Ann Marineau**
annm@coos-bay.k12.or.us
1780 Ocean Blvd.
Coos Bay, OR 97420
- Membership Director. Dennis Hickey**
dennish@swasco.net
P.O. Box 12 541-395-2225
Maupin, OR 97037 FAX 541-395-2679
- Membership Data Ryan Wraught**
Processor & Registrar
ryanw@swasco.net
P.O. Box 12 541-395-2225
Maupin, OR 97037 FAX 541-395-2679
- State Coordinator. Carol Brown**
carolb@peak.org
2321 NW Hazel Ave
Corvallis, OR 97148
- Conference Committee Chair Barbara Low**
barbaralow@msn.com
1037 Maple Park Drive
Medford, OR 97501
- Communications Chair Karen Antikajian**
kantikajian@cvcable.com
PO Box 259
Cheshire, OR 97419
- IRA Professional Sarah Womble**
Development Associate
15 Oneida
Sherwood, AR 72120

President's Message

October, 2010

The Voices of Fall

The roomful of teachers hushed as the speaker for the day entered. He approached the group slowly and spoke in an almost inaudible voice about his approach to teaching young children. As he paused and looked uncertain, so did his audience.

Then he abruptly left the room leaving the teachers to shake their heads and wonder out loud about just how long the day-long seminar would actually be with such a disturbing beginning.

As the crowd was reaching their peak of discomfort the speaker entered again but this time he entered brimming with an energy, expressed in movement and voice, that was contagious, and we were off for an endearing and memorable day with John Taylor, the Kinderman.

It was nearly thirty years ago that John Taylor taught me the importance of *selling my instruction*. He taught me to keep my instruction light and fresh and full of enthusiasm. Each fall I remember the Kinderman's advice to captivate my students' interest and take them on a joyful ride.

His message has melded well with the strongest voice that has guided my teaching, the voice of Brian Cambourne. Like John Taylor, Brian Cambourne believes that learning relies on engagement. To be engaged my students need to recognize that what I am teaching has import for them and that they are capable of success. Brian Cambourne's *Conditions for Learning* have guided me in my twenty-eight years of teaching whether I have been working with preschool children, elementary or middle school students, or adult learners in college programs.

Each fall he reminds me to immerse my capable students in our subject areas and demonstrate for them the desired outcomes. He reminds me to build responsible students through lots of valid choices that allow for increased practice that is strengthened by trial and error. He encourages me to walk ahead, behind, and beside my students as I guide them with relevant feedback.

The voices of Lev Vygotsky and Stephen Krashen speak to me in unison reinforcing their message that learners are to be greeted where they are and then taken a little bit further. Vygotsky and his *zone of proximal development* and Krashen's *comprehensible input theory* tell me to value all that my students already know and their learning styles, and to present vibrant, sheltered lessons through multiple modalities in a relaxed, caring and respectable environment that offers just the right amount of challenge for involvement and success.

These are the voices that greet me at the beginning of each school year, the voices that sustain me throughout the year, the voices that support me as my philosophy of learning and education meets the latest educational trends. I am confident that you too have your cadre of voices that beckon and guide you as you prepare for the new year.

Enjoy the 2010-2011 school year with your students and with your personal muses. 📖



René always enjoys spending time with a good book.

René

René Dernbach

ORA President, 2010-2011

René Dernbach is a veteran teacher who has taught preschool through eighth grade students, as well as adult learners. Throughout her twenty-eight year career she has striven to develop and present relevant curriculum to all of her learners. Throughout this journey she has been guided by the valuable presence of the Oregon Reading Association and the International Reading Association, both of which have provided her with the richest source of professional development. She is delighted to be serving as your ORA president during the 2010-2011 school year.

• Local Council News • Local Council News •

• CAPITAL READING COUNCIL

Capital's TAR group spent the summer reading the Newberry Honor books for this year, followed by a debate on whether we agreed with the selection of this year's winner. The books made for great relaxed reading as we were immersed in Chinese folktales, civil rights history, a humorous look at the Civil War, and the lives of two young girls. We're gearing up for our annual Gallagher Books kick off highlighted by a packet of activities to accompany our 12 sets of books available to members. Ongoing events this year will include professional conversations as we explore such topics as organizing classrooms for success, implementing Response to Intervention, and teaching writing. Our goal is to have a Capital Reading Council representative in every building. 📖

Submitted by Deborah White

• DRIFTWOOD READING COUNCIL

The Driftwood Reading Council has several big plans to kick off the new school year. Lucky for all, our events are now easily discovered on our new Facebook page!

Do you like to read books? Do you like to talk about books? Do you like to sip wine? So did those at our Literacy Happy Hour held September 28 at the OIMB Boathouse in Charleston. The discussions helped us decide which books to read for TAR groups this year. Equally enticing, this year we are able to offer college credit for TAR participation!

Our 5th Annual Literacy Conference, *Sharing by the Sea*, was held on October 8. Teacher, counselor, author and dynamic speaker Vicki Lein presented our keynote, "Do We Have to Go to Recess? Getting Kids to Love Writing." Several small-group sessions focusing on literature, art, writing and differentiation followed.

Be sure to check our Facebook page for more updates and details! 📖

Submitted by Beth Bennison

• EMERALD EMPIRE READING COUNCIL

More than 100 enthusiastic children (and their parents) participated in creative activities related to children's books at the B.E.A.R. (Be Excited About Reading) Faire in late April. EERC members and friends enjoyed helping children cut and color "Billy Goat Gruff" popsicle stick puppets, fold origami "talking dogs," make "flower garden" foam rubbings, create their own graphic



Choosing a free book.

"novels," and fashion "Cat in the Hat" hats, among other activities. "Mother Goose" (aka Gayla Clark) was on hand to read rhymes, give out black line books of poetry, and talk to parents about the importance of reading to children of all ages.

Every child attending chose a free book to take home and those in costume received two



Mother Goose Shares Rhymes.

books. EERC has been presenting this community service activity for 20 years, and children often ask "Will you be back next year, too?" The answer from our members is a resounding "Yes, we will!" because the B.E.A.R. Faire is as much fun for us as it is for the kids. 📖

Submitted by Sandy Coffin



Making a Cat-in-the-Hat face.

EERC Families & Books = Summer Reading

By Gayla Clark

The Families & Books Committee has again stayed busy talking to parents, reading to kids and giving away many excellent children's books. From February 2009 to April 2010 we read stories to 780 kids, encouraging their parents to have fun reading aloud to their babies and pre-schoolers. We gave a whopping 2303 books in English and 65 in Spanish to the families.

At the February IRA Regional Conference we heard Richard Allington present his research about the "Summer Slide", in which children from low income areas don't read because books aren't available to them. They can fall three years behind grade level by eighth grade. However, if the children are provided with 10 or 12 books ***of their choosing***, it is as effective as summer school in improving their reading skills.

Bolstered by these facts we headed for 14 of Springfield's Willamalane Parks where there are supervised playgrounds and free lunches. The Families & Books Committee rallied



Gayla Clark Reading to Children


and read mornings and afternoons during July and into August. We read to 253 kids between the

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ages of four and eleven and 551 books were given away. Kids chose from a fine assortment, most donated by our very generous literacy partners, the Emerald Empire Kiwanis.

A favorite read aloud was *Stanley's Wild Ride*, which perfectly foreshadowed the rides of the Families & Books committee members Carol Clemens (whose car was misplaced) and Sister Janet (who cheerfully helped me herd my four grandchildren who were visiting). Teachers Jan Brent and Mark Ripley patiently endured my getting lost in greater Springfield (although not quite as wild a ride as Stanley's). Mark later went to the parks near his Guy Lee school, read to 19 children and gave away 40 books. He was hooked and had fun. 

• MID-VALLEY READING COUNCIL


Professional Development. Inspiration. Camaraderie.

And that's just the beginning!

MID-VALLEY READING COUNCIL'S FULL SLATE OF FALL EVENTS:

- **September Kick-Off** featuring *The Best of the New Books* with Tiffany Jordan. It's no wonder this event has become a perennial favorite. Who doesn't enjoy a highlight of the latest in children's literature? We gathered at the Grass Roots Bookstore on 2nd Street in Corvallis, and previewed dozens of books. There's a cozy atmosphere and relaxed mood but the books always steal the show. This was a delightful way to begin the school year!
- **Fall Conference** - October 8th, Tangent Elementary in Albany. Personally, I credit this conference for saving my teaching career back in 2001! Discouraged and overwhelmed, I signed up for the conference after receiving a flyer in my mailbox. The ideas! The reassurance! The challenge to try something new! It was just what I needed and I've been attending ever since. This year, keynote speaker Mindy Larsen of Linfield College will share best literacy practices. Breakout sessions on a variety of topics will follow. Join us for this half day of professional development. Contact Kim Fairbanks for more information. kim.fairbanks@albany.k12.or.us
- **Teachers as Readers** - Mid Valley has a wonderful group that meets 4-5 times a year to discuss works of various authors. This is a great way to broaden your knowledge of children's literature. You'll get lots of ideas for read-alouds, class novels, literature circles, student recommendations, etc. Meetings start promptly at 4:00 and last just an


hour, with lots of ground traveled in between! Author studies this fall include Patricia Polacco and Kevin Henkes. Contact Nancy Chaney for more information. nancy.chaney@albany.k12.or.us

Did I mention this is just the beginning? Take an active role in your professional development and personal enjoyment. Join us for any or all of these events! 

Submitted by Stephanie Higgins

• MOUNT HOOD READING COUNCIL

Coming this fall...More Daily 5, TAR Groups and networking opportunities. We'll "Got into the Spirit" with our annual fall get together at the 4th Street Brewing Company in Gresham on Oct 1st. Daily 5 and the literacy workshop model continue to be areas of interest. In response, we had a locally-led institute on Daily 5, Café, and incorporating district curriculums on the Statewide Inservice Day on October 8th. Our very successful Daily 5 and CAFE support group will continue for a third year with the first meeting in Penny Held's classroom at Highland Elementary on October 28th. New TAR groups will start in November.

David Michael Slater headlined our Celebrate Literacy Awards last April. His personal stories about his journey to becoming published as an author were enlightening and entertaining. Honored for their work as Literacy Leaders in the Mt. Hood area were four outstanding educators whose leadership has been pivotal in improving literacy instruction in their schools and districts. Penny Held, a first grade teacher at Highland Elementary in Gresham and Linda Kerby who teaches Title 1 at Salish Ponds Elementary in Reynolds were honored for their work at both the building and district level. Laura Queen from Parkrose Middle School has been a long time literacy leader in her school and Debbie Johnson in Oregon Trail was honored for her focus and support of literacy at the district level. 

Submitted by Sarah Hagedstedt

• PORTLAND READING COUNCIL

Refuel and Revitalize! Portland Reading Council Charts New Course

As the Portland Reading Council came together for an August planning retreat, a vision emerged. Literacy educators need support, recognition, and quality professional development as they face increasing challenges with decreasing resources. PCIRA looks forward to recognizing its own literacy heroes throughout the year via a new initiative — taking electronic communication resources to the next level (hello Facebook!), and welcoming new community partners.

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The "Write Now!" October 8th professional development opportunity at Madison High provides members a chance to benefit from the expertise of Teresa Theriault, co-author with Linda Hoyt of *Mastering the Mechanics: Ready-*




Celebrate Literacy Award Winners



Richmond Elementary School Library Volunteers


To-Use Lessons for Modeled, Guided and Independent Editing (Scholastic) as well as NCTE award-winning teacher Tim Gillespie, former Co-Director of the Oregon Writing Project and author of Doing Literary Criticism: Cultivating Thinkers in

the Classroom (Stenhouse). The sizzling keynote consists of book wizard Barb Swanson Sanders "book battling" Kira Porton from *A Children's Place Bookstore* as they highlight the best new books of the year. 

Submitted by Nathan Traller

• ROGUE VALLEY READING COUNCIL

We had a great year last year! Our Literacy Dinner was an enjoyable time to chat with fellow educators and honor some people that have worked hard to promote literacy in our community. Those honored were Michelle Wisley, who works at Abraham Lincoln Elementary School in the media center; Jessica Hamlin, an instructional coach at North Medford High School; and Pam Zaklan, retired principal from Wilson Elementary School.

Our guest author was Robert Bluth who talked about his book *Muni Court: A View from the Other Side of the Bench*. Mr. Bluth shared his experiences as a municipal court judge in two rural communities. His presentation had us all in stitches as he shared unusual incidents. It was a wonderful evening and an outstanding way to end the school year 

Submitted by Barbara Low


• THREE SISTERS READING COUNCIL

Basket of Books

In February, the Three Sisters Reading Council organized baskets of books to be placed in a variety of locations as our community service project. The baskets were distributed to local businesses and agencies to provide adults with children the opportunity to

read a good book together while they wait. With books donated by local teachers, baskets collected from members and thrift stores, and bookmarks with "Tips for parents" included in each basket, we were ready! The baskets were then delivered to local restaurants, teen-parent programs, and a local birthing center. Next year, we hope to expand the program and the number of recipients in the communities of our Three Sisters Reading Council (Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties). This year, we'll be holding a work party at High Desert ESD on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, starting at 4:30 pm. Please feel free to join us and you are welcome to bring donations of books and/or baskets. Call Jill (541-419-7678) or Mary (541-325-3996).

Three Sisters Reading Council is looking for a team leader in each of our communities who would like to be a leader for the "Teachers as Readers", or TAR, professional development group. Call Mary (541-325-3996) or email marygeorgehawes@msn.com.

Three Sisters Reading Council's first meeting will be Wednesday, October 20, 2010, at 5:30 pm at Pappy's Pizza Parlor on the north end of Redmond. Come one, come all! We'd love to have you with us to kick off our new school year. 

Submitted by Jill Steelhammer

• UMPQUA READING COUNCIL

Four of our members, Sandra Wright, Katrina Scott, Luann Basque, and Joy Malone attended ORA leadership training in Albany and returned inspired and energized, reporting how valuable the training had been. We are excited about building our membership for both ORA and IRA this year. Sandra and Katrina are planning a professional development workshop where teachers will participate in a make-and-take event. Our first membership meeting was October 4th at our Professional Development Center in Roseburg.

A TAR group is starting up and its first book was available in early October. Sandra also had the Patricia Gallagher books ready to be checked out, as we had purchased four sets at the ORA Leadership Meeting. Gail Jackson-Francis has created a revised Council brochure, updated with all of our meetings, events, and conference dates (along with board member information), ready to circulate to both new and current Council members.

We are very saddened that one of our active and wonderful board members of the past few years was in a car accident on the way to her new home in Portland recently. Lathena Weber is currently recovering in the hospital so we are all praying for her and her family and wish her a speedy recovery. She is one of the best and brightest young teachers that we know, so

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TAR Wants to Know... Are YOU Highly Qualified?


By Stephanie Higgins, TAR coordinator

To determine your eligibility for existing or newly-forming Teachers as Readers groups, kindly complete this short survey:

- I enjoy reading picture books, children's literature, young adult fiction, adult fiction, professional books AND/OR other genres not listed.
- I enjoy sharing and discussing books with other individuals.

If you checked one or both boxes, consider yourself highly-qualified and warmly welcomed to join (or create!) a Teachers as Readers group in your council!


Teachers as Readers, along with its many variations including Students as Readers (STAR) and People as Readers (PAR), provides members with a stimulating and enriching forum for discussing the books we read. The groups vary in size and reading material, but the constant among them is the powerful benefit of 'talking books' with other individuals. Some groups pore over picture books, others read food-related titles and concoct the dishes within. Some walk-and-talk, changing discussion partners along the route to a local restaurant. Some do author studies, others read *Battle of the Book* titles or young adult literature. Still others choose a professional book to study and discuss throughout the year. Some even participate in TAR for college credit!

Consider joining one of these engaging groups. Your council president can put you in touch with your council's TAR facilitator. And, as always, I am happy to help with any questions you have about joining or forming a group. Put your high qualifications to good use. Join a TAR group today! 

Happy reading,
Stephanie
shiggins67@comcast.net

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please think best wishes for Lathena. She attended our leadership training last summer and her mom, Martha Weber, is our current Vice President. We are excited about the year ahead of us and the opportunities to further literacy in Douglas County, Oregon. 


Submitted by Gail Jackson-Francis

• VINEYARD VALLEYS READING COUNCIL

Vineyard Valleys Reading Council ended the school year with a bang with two fantastic events. In April, Vineyard Valleys hosted a Poetry Open Mic Night at Chapters Books in Newberg. Over 25 people attended—reading and sharing their favorite poetry.

In May, Tara Romero and D.G. Coy, from Newby

Elementary in the McMinnville School District, gave a workshop on Comics in the K-5 Classroom. Tara, a fourth grade teacher, and DG, a kindergarten teacher, shared a multitude of the latest comics, graphic novels and manga with strategies to engage even the most reluctant readers.

This fall we will start the school year by hosting Teachers as Readers groups focusing on Boys as Readers and Writers in both Newberg and McMinnville. Join us! 

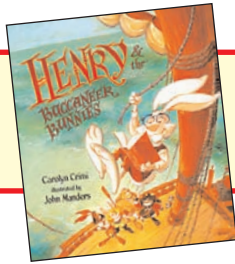
Submitted by Mindy Larson

**FOR MORE LOCAL COUNCIL NEWS, VISIT THE ORA WEBSITE AT
[HTTP://WWW.OREGONREAD.ORG](http://www.oregonread.org)
AND CLICK ON "LOCAL COUNCILS" TO SEE THEIR
INDIVIDUAL CALENDARS OF EVENTS.**

2010-2011 Patricia Gallagher Picture Book Nominees!

By Beverly Farris, Gallagher Award Committee Chair

Five books have been nominated for the Patricia Gallagher Picture Book Award for the 2010-2011 school year:



Henry and the Buccaneer Bunnies

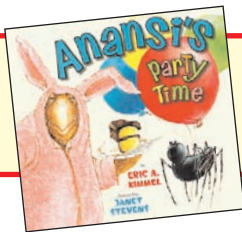
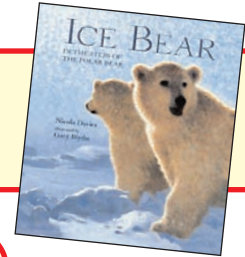
- Carolyn Crimi -

Illustrated by John Manders

Ice Bear: In the Steps of the Polar Bear

- Nicola Davies -

Illustrated by Gary Blythe



Anansi's Party Time

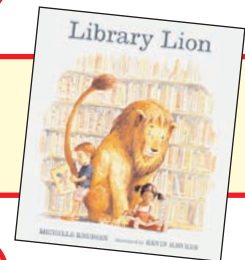
- Eric Kimmel -

Illustrated by Janet Stevens

Library Lion

- Michelle Knudsen -

Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes



The Perfect Pet

- Margie Palatini -

Illustrated by Bruce Whatley

The ORA Patricia Gallagher Picture Book Award is a children's choice award named in honor of Patricia Gallagher, a past president of ORA, and a retired professor of children's literature.

This will be the fourteenth year for the award. Books are selected using these criteria:

- Available in paperback
- Original copyright no more than eight years old
- Innate appeal to children
- Quality of text and illustration with consideration given to Oregon authors

Most local reading councils have purchased a number of Gallagher sets that will be routed throughout their local area. The local councils often have programs that highlight the Gallagher books and provide a variety of activities and related books that teachers may use with their classes. To find what is available in your area, check with your local reading council leadership or go to www.oregonread.org for program dates and locations. 

Votes need to be reported by May 1, 2011.

Either mail your ballot or report your tallies by email to:

Beverly Farris.
5046 Riley Ct. SE
Salem, OR 97306

503-371-1684

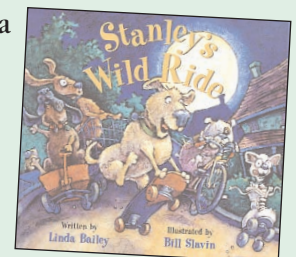
dbfarris62@msn.com

Patricia Gallagher Picture Book 2009-10 Winner Named!

The winner of the 2009-10 Gallagher Picture Book Award was *Stanley's Wild Ride* by Linda Bailey, illustrated by Bill Slavin. The total number of students voting statewide was 17,212. *Stanley's Wild Ride* received about half of those votes.

Good work children and teachers!

Our goal is to have even more children reading and enjoying the nominated books. **Every vote counts!**



Multi-Media In Education


By Sandy Duty, Chair

During the summer, I enrolled in a class at PSU titled *Documenting Children's Learning* with instructor Dr. William Parnell.

The class met at the Helen Gordon Children's Center on campus. Some of the tools and strategies in the class were a digital camera, art design, and use of an interactive white board. Several teachers created an iMovie with music from GarageBand. Teachers learned documentation strategies using multi-media techniques to share student interaction, learning, reflection, and communication with parents. On the last day of class, teachers shared documentation boards complete with digital pictures, color, and graphics.

Children who attend the center work on projects in the community and documentation boards are created to show student learning. Visual boards create communication for parents, teachers, and students. The documentation boards are displayed in community based partnerships. The visuals provide evidence of digital photos, graphic inserts, and computer design.

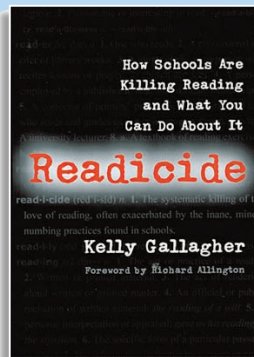
Communication with parents and students is important at the beginning of the school year, during the school year, and at the end of the year. One of the ways to communicate is to design a website. Students and parents are able to access the site together. Students in my classroom create pictures, poetry, stories and designs for the class website. Each morning students use technology to look up the weather and display it on the document camera. Multi-media projects are interactive and hands-on. Videos, Keynote presentations, musical raps, websites, DVD's, podcasts, brochures, posters, and photo essays are just some of the projects teachers at my school create with their students. One of our priorities is the need to teach our students in the 21st century. Dioramas, no matter how engaging, do not garner the type of response that the technology-infused projects do.

I teach 4th grade at Hogan Cedars in the Gresham-Barlow School District and I welcome educators to contact me. My contact information is sandy_duty@gsd.gresham.k12.or.us 

ORA Professional Lending Library

By Deborah White, ORA Librarian

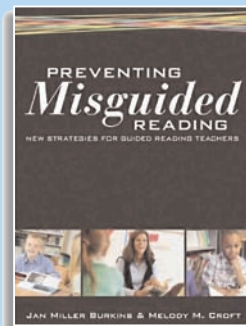
One of the exceptional benefits of being an ORA member is access to our wonderful professional lending library of books and videos. I'd like to highlight three of our newer books around the topic of teaching reading that might interest you.



Kelly Gallagher's newest book, *Readicide: How Schools are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*, contends that reading is dying in our schools and standard instructional practices are to blame. Gallagher states that too much teaching to the test, mandating breadth over depth, and requiring students to read difficult texts without enough support are among the contributing factors. But it's not all


bad news. The book contains specific steps to help reverse the downward spiral, and will give you a lot to think about.

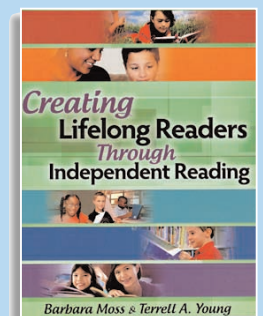
Many elementary classrooms include a guided reading component in their literacy time. Jan Miller Burkins and Melody M. Croft's *Preventing Misguided Reading: New Strategies for Guided Reading Teachers* clarifies what good guided reading instruction looks like. The authors include 27 strategies to help teachers plan and



focus instruction. Topics such as the teacher's role and the gradual release of responsibility, instructional reading level, balanced instruction and assessment are addressed. Numerous classroom vignettes help readers see the strategies in action. This is a must read for primary teachers.

Richard Allington made it clear at the IRA Regional Conference in Portland last year that massive amounts of independent reading of texts at an appropriate level is a key element in increasing reading ability. But just how do teachers set up an independent reading time in the classroom? *Creating Lifelong Readers Through Independent Reading* by Barbara Moss and Terrell A. Young has some answers. This text includes practical tools to help you fit independent reading into a jam-packed classroom schedule including ideas for creating an effective classroom library, guidelines for teaching students how to self-select appropriate reading materials, lesson ideas for incorporating strategy instruction into independent reading time, and reproducible materials for parents.

These three books, along with others, can be accessed by emailing Deborah at wwhite1@earthlink.net. If you're interested in a specific topic but aren't sure of a book title, let me know - I'll suggest a book or two. Books can be checked out for a month at a time, and returned to: Deborah White, 1691 James Howe Rd, Dallas, OR 97338. 





The Literature Connection

By Shari Furtwangler

I am really excited about some of the great books I discovered this summer—some with really exciting curriculum connections and some that are just plain fun to read. Two of these books would likely be considered young adult novels. I am anxious to see if the kids enjoy them as much as I have. *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda* by Tom Angleberger, published in 2010 by Amulet books had me laughing out loud! “The big question: Is Origami Yoda real?” How could you not love that opening line? Tommy is obsessed with this question and needs “scientific evidence” to determine whether or not he IS real. Tommy convinces everyone who got advice from Origami Yoda to tell their stories so he can put them together in this ‘case file.’ Dwight (the resident geeky kid) shows up at school one day sporting an Origami Yoda finger puppet that gives very “un-Dwight like” advice. Tommy tries to solve the ‘mystery’ of whether or not Origami Yoda is real while Harvey must comment on each chapter—to try to make it really scientific! I laughed out loud at some of the antics. It even comes with directions for making your very own Origami Yoda!

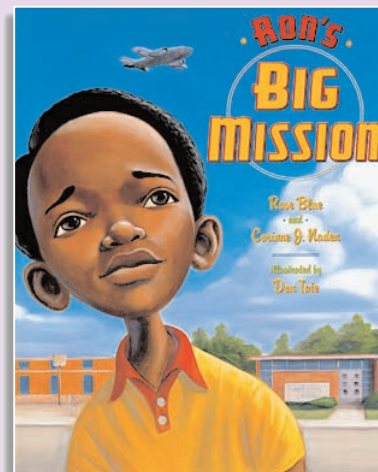
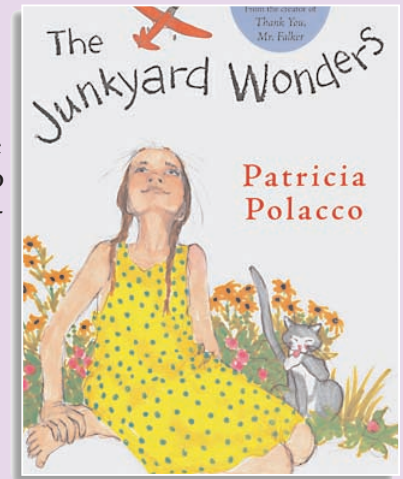
Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Berkley Breathed has now written his first illustrated novel, *Flawed Dogs: The Novel: The Shocking Raid on Westminster* published in 2009 by Philomel. Usually I’m not one to choose ‘funny’ novels as I am more drawn to dramatic stories, but *Flawed Dogs* won me over after the first pages. The main character, Sam the Lion, is a prized dachshund who comes to belong to Heidi through a set of unusual circumstances. Sam is betrayed by the beautiful but jealous and conniving Cassius who is a certain grand champion of the Westminster dog show. Sam finds himself having to survive on his own after being betrayed by Cassius. (So there IS a bit of drama!) The story is funny and heartwarming with a wonderful, if not unusual, hero!

This School Year Will be the Best by Kay Winters, published in 2010 by Dutton would be a great book to share at the beginning of the school year—even with staff! The teacher in the book asks the students “What do you hope will happen this year?” What a great line to share with kids to give them the opportunity to share their hopes and dreams for a wonderful year!

In Patricia Polacco’s new book, *Junkyard Wonders* published in 2010 by Philomel she recounts a year in her childhood in which she lived with her father and grandmother in Michigan. The narrative follows the year of “Mr. Falker” and ‘Trisha’ finds herself in Mrs.

Peterson’s class known as the Junkyard. Mrs. Peterson’s first act of the year is to read the definition of genius to her students and challenge them to memorize it because it described “every one of (them)”. Every child in the class has some kind of special challenge that they begin to overcome. It

is kind of a Kleenex book, but one that should be shared with all students and staff as an example of what happens when we have high expectations and compassion. *Brontorina* by James Howe (of *Bunnicula* fame), published in 2010 by Candlewick is the story of a dinosaur (an Apatosaurus) who had a dream of becoming a ballerina. Brontorina joins a ballet class and does quite well until she literally outgrows the dance studio. After receiving a special gift from one of the other students, Madame Lucille finds a new location for her studio. And it all began with a dream!



Ron McNair was a mission specialist on the Space Shuttle Challenger when it exploded in 1986. *Ron's Big Mission* by Rose Blue and Corinne J. Naden, published by Dutton in 2009 is the story of another mission Ron McNair had. As a child, Ron lived in racially prejudiced South Carolina. He

loved to read and would spend hours in the public library. At that time, only white people were allowed to check out books from the library. Frustrated with having to have white people check out books for him, Ron took a stand in order to be able to check out books himself. This well-written book is the story of an incident that really happened in Ron McNair’s young life.

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More about...



The Literature Connection

By Shari Furtwangler

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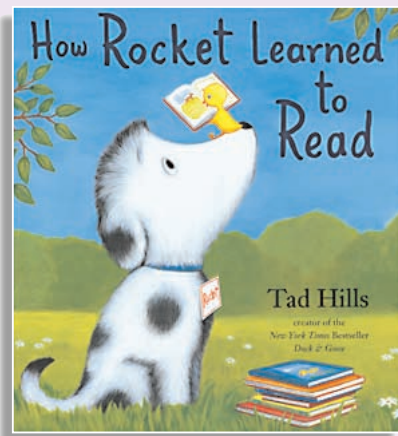
Do you like your children and your classrooms to be quiet? Did you realize that there are many kinds of Quiet? *The Quiet Book* by Deborah Underwood, published in 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt nicely describes the many kinds of quiet. I can imagine a myriad ways of working with youngsters in the different kinds of quiet that they know and are...

Karma Wilson has lately become one of my favorite picture book authors. She is creative and does some things I don't see other children's authors doing. Her new book, *The Cow Loves Cookies* published in 2010 by McElderry Books has a delightful rhythm and pattern with a very amusing surprise ending. I can't wait to share this with one of our first grade classes early this year!

I love Jon Agee's sense of humor. Usually a bit quirky, but it always makes me laugh. His new book, *Mr. Putney's Quacking Dog* published in 2010 by Scholastic is about Mr. Putney (of course) and many of his unusual friends. He has an 'alarmadillo' that wakes him up every morning and an 'antelope' that he likes to jump through. His 'giroof' keeps the rain out of the tool shed. My personal favorite is his 'duckshund'—his quacking dog.

Finally, three books about reading! In Louise Yates' *Dog Loves Books* published by Knopf in 2010, Dog loves everything about books. He loves the way they smell, the way they feel, and everything about them. Dog decides to open a bookstore but he has difficulty attracting customers who are interested in books. This makes him 'downhearted' so he begins to read the books in his store and forgets that he is alone.

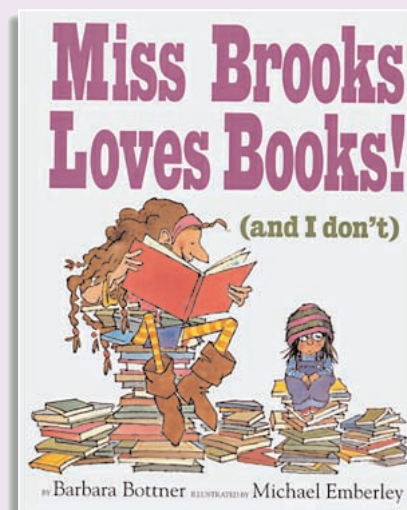
Tad Hills (of *Duck and Goose* fame) has given us *How Rocket Learned to Read*, published by Random



House in 2010. Rocket loves to play, and one day, when minding his own business (resting under a tree after a VERY busy morning) he is confronted by a little yellow bird who insists that Rocket is her first student. Rocket is disinterested, but the little

bird is persistent. Little bird leaves for the winter and Rocket finds that he misses her and her reading lessons. The ending is very sweet!

Barbara Bottner (who incidentally wrote one of my very favorite books, *Be Brown!*) gives us *Miss Brooks Loves Books! (and I don't)* this year, published by Knopf. Maybe I love this book because I identify with Miss Brooks who is the school librarian, who does love books. The book is written in first person and apparently the author (narrator)



doesn't like books as much as Miss Brooks. I don't think she has found a book that she can really identify with. (I even love the statement by the mom in the book when she is asked to do the child's assignment and replies "I have already been in first grade".) Fortunately, eventually she does find a book she loves! "Shrek has hairs on his nose. And he snorts. I love that!" What a wonderful book to share with kids who do have difficulty finding a book that speaks to them.

Apparently I don't have the problem of finding a book that speaks to me. Alas, again, so many books, too little time! I could go on and on, but will save some of the rest for the next edition. 📖

Happy Reading!

Shari

shari.furtwangler@sps.lane.edu

Shari Furtwangler is a former K-5 classroom, special education and Title I teacher. Currently principal of Thurston Elementary in Springfield, she is an adjunct instructor at Pacific University in Eugene and a past president of Mid-Valley Reading Council. She has taught classes and workshops on children's literature for the past 20 years.

What to do on Monday: A practical guide for helping gifted readers succeed in the regular classroom

By Kathy Austin

PhD Candidate, Oregon State University

To begin, what is a gifted reader? Bonds and Bonds (1983) define gifted readers as “children who, upon entering first grade, are reading substantially above grade level or who possess the ability to make rapid progress in reading when given proper instruction” (p. 4).

Gifted readers typically have “acquired and exhibit an extensive vocabulary” and “use words easily and creatively” (Bonds & Bonds, 1983, p. 4). They do not need many repetitions to learn new words or word concepts, thus instruction for them can be accelerated. They benefit from individualized, differentiated instruction (Bonds & Bonds, 1983; Brown & Rogan, 1983). They read widely from a variety of genres and should be taught to read creatively and critically (Brown & Rogan, 1983). Gifted readers tend to learn to read on their own, having discovered phonics elements and are able to use context and picture cues to derive meaning from what is read (Witty, 1971).

Gifted readers are voracious readers who develop an emotional connection with the text. They aren’t just reading words on a page, they are fully engaging in the ambiance of the story (Wood, 2008). Gifted readers read differently for different purposes, they express keen insights and understanding, they are able to retain large quantities of information, they use an extensive vocabulary, and they fully understand the complexities of language (Wood, 2008).

What Does a Reading Program for Gifted Readers Entail?

Requiring a gifted student who is already reading well above one’s peers to submit to repetitious basal reading activities is not only boring for the student, but can be detrimental to the student’s reading progress (Brown & Rogan, 1983; Mangieri & Isaacs, 1983; Reis, et al., 2004; Savage, 1983; Wood, 2008). One might argue that repetitious reading activities are not pleasant for any child, but they can be destructive to gifted readers. Reis, et al (2004) found that gifted readers do not make the same gains in reading skills acquisition as do typically achieving children. For example, if a child enters the first grade reading independently with comprehension and fluency at the fourth grade level, it is reasonable to expect that this same child will be reading at the fifth grade level at the beginning of second grade. Reis, et al. (2004) found that such children may still be reading at the fourth grade level or will have dropped back a grade level without proper, deliberate reading instruction.

Teaching Strategies for Gifted Readers

Though gifted readers benefit from intentional, deliberate instruction, it is necessary to understand what intentional, deliberate instruction is. “There is a difference between assigning challenging literature and teaching students to read challenging literature” (Wood, 2008, p. 20).

Wood (2008) offers nine key components of a successful reading program for gifted students: assessment, grouping, acceleration, discussion, challenging literature, critical reading, creative reading, inquiry reading and enrichment.

- **Assessment.** Assess students’ reading levels before beginning instruction. Once reading level is determined, use one-on-one instruction when possible until mastery is achieved. Determine what mastery is. Once children reach mastery level, move to the next level (Parker, 1989).
- **Acceleration.** Once it is determined that a student is reading well above grade level, it is beneficial to allow that student to advance at her/his own rate of learning rather than keeping him/her at the same level as her/his age mates. One issue confronting gifted readers who read well above their age mates is finding appropriate reading material that isn’t too emotionally mature for them. Halsted (2009) lists age appropriate books by topic suitable for gifted readers.
- **Flexible Grouping.** Wood (2008) suggests placing students of like ability in reading groups to give them the opportunity to discuss their books in depth. It may be necessary to group students from different grades together who are reading at the same level rather than lumping gifted readers in with their chronological peers.
- **Enrichment.** Enrichment activities are as unlimited as the student’s imagination. Allow students to choose their own books. Encourage them to explore the book deeper by offering ideas that will guide them in their exploration or allow them to choose their own going-deeper ideas.
- **Discussion opportunities.** Allow students the opportunity to discuss the books they’re reading. Discussions may be formal or informal.
- **Challenging literature.** If we keep in mind that gifted readers are sophisticated users of language, it stands to reason that they need to read books that contain complex themes, literary allusions such as metaphoric language, appropriately challenging vocabulary and complex character development.

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Need a Good Book to Read with Your Students?

Once again, book maven Barbara Swanson Sanders shared her thoughts about a wealth of great books with a rapt audience at the ORA Leadership meeting.

And, yes, many of us have since visited a bookstore!

For Barbara's list of books as well as a list of books read by last year's TAR groups,

[click here.](#) 

Calendar of Events:

Check your Local Council web pages to see what is scheduled so far for the year. Important dates are also listed on the ORA website Calendar page.

October 23, 2010 Washington Organization for Reading Development (WORD) Annual Conference, Redmond, WA

November 15, 2010 Literacy Grant Applications Due


November 18-21, 2010 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Convention, Orlando, FL

December 10, 2010 Deadline for submissions, Letters About Literature Contest

February 4-5, 2011 ORA Annual Conference in Portland, OR

May 1, 2011 Votes due for the Patricia Gallagher Award

May 8-11, 2011 56th IRA Annual Convention in Orlando, FL

Many councils are having programs to introduce the new Patricia Gallagher nominated books. Check the Patricia Gallagher Picture Book Award page on the ORA website to find out where and when they are scheduled. 

More About...


What to do on Monday...

(continued from previous page)

- **Critical reading.** Gifted readers don't need many repetitions in reading skill development and can move quickly toward reading for deeper meanings in a book. Students can be taught to look for various types of bias such as gender or race, to look for inferences, to synthesize reading material from different sources on the same topic and for literary elements such as plot, characterization, setting and voice (Wood, 2008).
Students should be deliberately taught the skills of recognizing the main idea, using context clues, inferential and literal comprehension, reading with speed, distinguishing fact from fiction, following directions, using a variety of resources, and using all parts of a book (Parker, 1989).
- **Creative reading.** "For creative readers, the text becomes the impetus for research discoveries, divergent responses, and invention" (Wood, 2008, p.23). Readers are encouraged to use their imaginations to create plays or radio programs from the text, rewrite a story from a different perspective, continue the plot of the story as they would like to see a favorite character developed or research an idea mentioned in a book.
- **Inquiry reading.** This allows gifted readers the opportunity to choose and work on independent research projects in an area of interest to the student (Wood, 2008).

Conclusion

Gifted readers need deliberate, intentional reading instruction in order to progress in their reading develop-

ment. What a marvelous opportunity we have as teachers to nurture those children who will be the innovators, inventors, scientists and artists of the next generation. 

Contact: kdaustin@aol.com 503-931-9919

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English Language Learners

by Tonya Rosling, Chair

"Mommy, come listen to me read," commanded my four-year-old from his bedroom. Needless to say, as an educator it was a command I was all too happy to comply with. He then proceeded to read along with a book on compact disc that we had checked out from the library

I was impressed with his memory as he read along to the words in the story. He was equally impressed with himself and his reading ability. As my son was beaming with pride I could not help but think of our students in the classroom. What better way to reach out to our emergent and struggling readers!

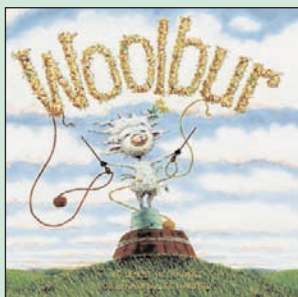
Books on compact disc are also a good tool to use with ELL students, especially newcomers who are learning the rhythms and vocabulary of another language. Books on compact disc provide an enjoyable, non-threatening experience with literature that can motivate our students and give them the confidence they need to begin reading on their own.

I realize that using books on tape (and now compact disc) is nothing new to the teaching profession, but the experience I had with my son made me revisit the importance of this valuable tool.

Here are three of my favorite books on compact disc:

Woolbur

by Leslie Helakoski

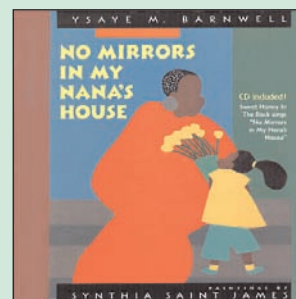


This book celebrates individuality with a sweet little sheep named Woolbur. It is sure to speak to the heart of our students, make them laugh in the process and teach them a thing or two about sheep! My son listened to this story over and over again and I enjoyed it just as much as he did. This book follows a predictable pattern which is perfect for the emerging reader. Woolbur worries his parents when he does not conform to the flock. He dyes his wool blue, weaves his forelock, and rides the spinning wheel. The illustrations are just as delightful as the storyline.

No Mirrors in My Nana's House

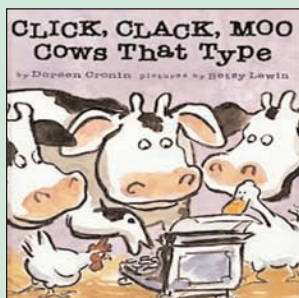
by Ysaye M. Barnwell

Ysaye Barnwell is one of the members of the musical group, Sweet Honey in the Rock. She composed this song, which has been recreated as a picture book. You might see children bopping around with their headphones on if you choose this book for a reading station. This special compact disc includes the group singing this original composition in addition to an eloquent reading. The story reflects the love a granddaughter has for her grandmother who teaches her where beauty is truly to be found.



Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin



Randy Travis narrates this popular read aloud. His deep voice and twang lend themselves well to the voices of Farmer Brown and his animals as they try to improve their working conditions through the written word. We followed this picture book up with *Giggle, Giggle, Quack*, which is also narrated by Randy Travis. Both books are sure to be a hit with the elementary crowd.

These books are just a sampling of the gems you may find in your own local library.

Happy reading and listening! 📖

Books For Boys

by Nina Kramer, Youth Librarian, Albina Library (Multnomah County Library)

Librarians are supposed to read broadly, but I have a confession: I read for boys. As the youth librarian in a small but busy public library, I have discovered that girls can often fend quite well for themselves in choosing books to read. Girls are far more likely to talk with their friends about what they're reading than boys so they have a readily available network of recommendations.

More books are published with girl appeal, or with a crossover appeal, than books written primarily with boys in mind. And how often have you come across or been, a well-meaning parent, usually a mom, who is trying to talk her son out of a book he's just picked out that seems too violent/scary/potty-humored/comic-y for her. There are review sources out there, but think about this: how many men show up as reviewers writing about books for guys? What's out there to offer to boys?

Here is a short list of my recommendations for books released in 2010 that do click with teen boys, including some that may also appeal to girls:

The Cardturner: A Novel about a King, a Queen, and a Joker by Louis Sachar (grades 8+) Alton becomes his blind, bridge-playing great-uncle's card turner. It's a great story with lots of geeky bridge talk, crazy relatives and machinations.

Finnikin of the Rock by Melina Marchetta (grades 8+) Finnikin once made a vow that he would safeguard Lumatere. That was before the five days of the unspeakable. Since then, Finnikin has spent ten years searching for Lumaterans in exile. Led to the novice Evanjalin, who can walk the sleep of others, the search takes on a new direction and level of urgency.

Mockingjay by Suzanne Collins (middle school) I've just started the third book in the Hunger Games trilogy and it was worth waiting for. Katniss agrees to become the figurehead for the rebellion against the capitol.

Monsters of Men by Patrick Ness (high school) This is the book I've been waiting for (Sept 28 release date). Another dystopian series, the Chaos Walking books are more intense, thought-provoking and gutwrenching than the Hunger Games. Todd's grown up in a world of men: there are no women. Every man can hear the thoughts, all of them, all of the time, of everyone else. Todd doesn't know anything different until one day he comes across a patch of silence. He cannot hear the thoughts of the girl he's just found and because of the noise, he also cannot protect her. Noise. Silence. Loyalty. And two of the most infuriatingly good cliff-hangers I've read in a long time (*The Knife of Never*

Letting Go and *The Ask and the Answer* are the first two books in the series).

Revolver by Marcus Sedgwick (middle school) Sig is trying to figure out how his father froze to death on the lake when his cabin is invaded by an armed man who claims Sig's father owed him money. There's an old Colt revolver in the cabin. Will Sig be able to get to it, or use it?

Ship Breaker by Paolo Bacigalupi (middle school) Nailer works as a light crew scavenger dismantling ships. A big storm blows in a clipper ship onto a rock and he must choose to hit it lucky by stripping the ship or to save the one survivor of the wreck.

Vampire Rising by Jason Henderson (middle school) - for anyone who's had just a little too much of vampires as swoon objects and would like some good covert action against them instead. Alex van Helsing doesn't know much about his family's background, but comes into his own when two of his friends are kidnapped by vampires. Not perhaps great literature, but Mary Shelly's Frankenstein does have an important role in the story and the vampires as baddies do get theirs in the end.

The War to End all Wars: World War I by Russell Freedman (middle school, non-fiction) A simple, without being simplistic, explanation of World War I, its causes, players, and what it ultimately did not accomplish and why.

Woods Runner by Gary Paulsen (middle school) Put the story of a boy in the woods in the hands of Gary Paulsen and you have a winner. Set it during the Revolutionary War and insert facts about the war between chapters and you have a powerful portrait of the destructive power of war.

Young Samurai: Way of the Sword by Chris Bradford (middle school) The series begins with Jack surviving a Ninja attack on his father's ship. Adopted by the local samurai lord, Jack sets out to prove himself and to immerse himself in a totally foreign culture. The series is filled with action, Japanese history and culture.

Since there are always more books and book reviews than is possible to read, I use GuysLitWire (<http://guyslitwire.blogspot.com>) as one of my primary sources for books for guys. It's a multi-contributor blog focusing on books for teen boys and it reviews old books, new books, all fiction genres, non-fiction, and graphic novels. 

You may contact me at: ninak@multcolib.org

Fluency: Definitions and Assessments Matter

A review of research by Carol Lauritzen

Tim Rasinski, a leading researcher in the field of fluency, and Pamela Hamman published an article in the latest *Reading Today* (August/September 2010) warning teachers that fluency is not all about speed. They cited research that shows that in the five-year period between 2004 and 2009 the norms for reading rate have increased. However, during this same period, the overall reading achievement of students has shown very little change. These data seem to indicate that there has been an instructional emphasis on speed that has not resulted in gains in overall reading. This brief article led me to seek out additional resources regarding fluency.

A review of research on fluency was published in the *Reading Research Quarterly*, IRA's premiere research journal. The authors, Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, and Meisinger (2010), synthesized the theoretical underpinnings of automaticity and prosody, examined definitions of fluency, surveyed the assessments that currently dominate fluency testing and offer implications for instruction.

An important aspect of fluency is automaticity, a theory originally presented by La Berge and Samuels in 1974. Samuels (2006, 2007) has continued to explain automaticity and its relationship to fluency in more recent publications. There are four qualities of automaticity that influence fluency: speed, effortlessness, autonomy and lack of conscious awareness. "As automaticity develops...the learner's performance not only becomes accurate, it gets faster. However, this increase in speed is not limitless" (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel & Meisinger, 2010, p. 231). The greatest increases are found at the earliest level of development and ultimately reach a maximum level.

Automaticity is developed through practice. One option is for repeated reading of the same text. Repetition allows for the "deepening of traces" and the "freeing of attention" (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel & Meisinger, 2010, p. 233). Research shows that the gains from repeated reading come between the third and fifth repetition, indicating that teachers need to consider carefully the number of times students are asked to repeat the reading of any text. However, wide reading is also important to develop automaticity. Wide reading offers exposure to a large number of words and the reader can develop extensive vocabulary and gain more conceptual exposure. Those who read widely have an advantage over their peers who read in a limited way (Stanovich, 1986). Kuhn, Schwanenflugel & Meisinger (2010, p. 233) warn that "continued practice on the same words, or same texts...may have the perverse effect of fixing students' attentional focus on the lower level aspects of text rather than shifting their focus toward practicing the integration of higher level skills."

A second important aspect of fluency is prosody, defined as the ability to read "with appropriate expression or intonation coupled with phrasing that allows for the maintenance of meaning" (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel & Meisinger, 2010, p. 233). The article points out that children learning to read are still acquiring elements of prosody in their first language so expecting prosody in reading may be beyond students' developmental ability. Of course, prosody would be even more challenging for a student reading in a second language. The authors also warn that students can not read both rapidly and with proper prosody so requiring rapid reading will result in less expressive reading.

Prosody is usually assessed using a rating scale. The most well-known is the NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Scale. Another rating scale is the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Rasinski, Rikli & Johnston, 2009). With training, these types of scales can be applied with reliability. It is important to assess prosody as it is related to fluency. It also seems to be related to reading comprehension, though the direction of the relationship hasn't been determined. That is, prosody may cause comprehension to improve or comprehension may increase prosody or the relationship may be reciprocal. More research is needed to determine the exact nature of this relationship.

After examining four prevalent definitions of fluency, the authors offer a definition that they believe is the best synthesis of research:

Fluency combines accuracy, automaticity, and oral reading prosody, which, taken together, facilitate the reader's construction of meaning. It is demonstrated during oral reading through ease of word recognition, appropriate pacing, phrasing and intonation. It is a factor in both oral and silent reading that limit or support comprehension. (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel & Meisinger, 2010, p. 240).

The choice of words such as pacing and intonation are deliberate in order to try to indicate the concepts that are important to fluency and to avoid some of the misconceptions that seem to be influencing current practices.


Based on the research review and their definition, the authors examined current assessments of fluency. Reading First focused on five areas of reading but two of them, vocabulary and comprehension, are complex aspects that are difficult to assess so much of the current assessment has been directed toward the more simple aspects of phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle and fluency. Another reason for the emphasis on these three aspects is that some researchers believe that they are indicators of later reading

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More About...**Fluency: Definitions and Assessments Matter***(continued from previous page)*

achievement. They believe that monitoring them closely allows for intervention. Regular monitoring comes from a field of assessment known as curriculum-based measurement (CBM). CBMs are meant to provide the teacher with immediate, quick information that can lead to improvements in reading achievement. The DIBELS comes out of the line of CBM research and is probably the most used assessment in the country (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel & Meisinger, 2010). The DIBELS' definition of fluency differs considerably from that of Kuhn, Schwanenflugel & Meisinger and, according to them, "This results in the DIBELS actually narrowing, rather than expanding, the understanding of fluency" (p. 242). Tests such as DIBELS privilege speed. An excessive emphasis on speed, rather than on appropriate pacing, can interfere with comprehension (Samuels, 2007). Most researchers support assessing both rate and prosody when determining a reader's fluency because it is important that readers become flexible in rate depending on the purpose and difficulty of the task.

The article concludes by reminding us that comprehension of text rather than rapid decoding is the goal of reading. Students need to read a great volume of extended text, both through repeated reading and wide reading. Finally, it does matter how we define and assess fluency because these concepts affect our instructional practices.


It is important to realize, also, that it is possible to achieve the ultimate goal of reading, comprehension of text, without fluency. We have all known children who surprise us with their ability to retell and their deep understanding of the text even when their reading is not fluent. Walczyk & Griffith-Ross (2007) explain that it is possible for readers to overcome weak decoding skills in order to comprehend. According to compensatory-encoding theory, readers can employ compensations to "take actions to help their skills succeed (e.g., slowing reading rate, pausing, reading aloud) or can take other actions (e.g., sounding out, rereading) when automatic processes cannot provide readers with the information needed to understand text" (p. 561). A large-scale study of compensatory-encoding theory concluded that there are two paths to comprehension: "(a) Fluent skills, infrequent compensation or (b) nonfluent skills, high motivation, frequent compensation" (p. 563). The article offers instructional suggestions for helping nonfluent word readers and word callers to comprehend better. While we would hope all our students could become fluent readers through appropriate practice and instruction, we also need to provide appropriate instruction and practice for those who can achieve the goal of reading if they learn to compensate for their lack of fluency. 

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The Question is: To Blog or Not To Blog?

At the ORA Leadership meeting in August there was quite a bit of interest in blogs—specifically classroom blogs. There are two articles on blogging with students that have been published in *The Reading Teacher*. One, entitled "Collaborative Literacy: Blogs and Internet Projects" published in March 2008, includes information about Eugene teacher Julia Siporin's classroom blog. The other, entitled "HOT Blogging," published in May 2009 addresses using a blog to promote Higher Order Thinking with elementary students.

IRA members with a subscription to *The Reading Teacher* can access both articles on the IRA website by clicking on publications, clicking *The Reading Teacher*, and searching for the title. 

Legislative Action and Advocacy - *This is How I see It*

by Ann Marineau, Legislative Action Chair

Federal:

- The House passed the *Edujobs* bill that will funnel \$117 million to Oregon, saving over 1500 teaching jobs. These funds are still only one-half of what Oregon needed after \$243 million was cut from the State School Fund in June.
- The *Blueprint for Reform*, which is an outline for the new ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), rewards schools testing well and is highly prescriptive to failing schools. It addresses *Race to the Top* (RTTT) and teacher incentive funding.
- The Senate is working on the reauthorization of the ESEA. The Committee will likely keep language regarding school improvement and school turnaround even as they acknowledge there is little research supporting it.
- Core standards have been adopted by 35 states, with the knowledge that states can add/change 15% of those standards to better align with that state's current standards. \$350 million is being distributed for the development of new assessments.
- Nine states and the District of Columbia were awarded \$3.4 billion in the second round of RTTT. Several states are frustrated with not winning after they actively changed state educational policies to meet the federal criteria such as compromising with the unions regarding merit pay, heavily linking teacher evaluations to student test scores, turning around low performing schools, and adopting Core Standards. US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said that the competition has spurred states to make changes whether they win or not. "This is about a national movement," he said.
- The International Reading Association web page (www.reading.org) has an Advocacy page with articles and involvement ideas. You can also sign up to have monthly LAT (Legislative Action) updates sent to you.

What To Do: Get Involved and Stay informed

But I don't have time! I'm an educator, not a politician. The kids need to be picked up, my mother-in-law is in the hospital, book club is tonight and grades are due next week . . . but, if you don't speak out—who will?

Why get involved? Your elected, public officials work for you! You will feel empowered knowing you have an effect on the legislative and funding process in education. Elected officials want and need to hear what you know. Effectively communicating with elected officials is worth a bit of your time.

Speak Out! Nothing beats personal networking and encouraging others, with the same goals, to write a letter or make a phone call to their legislators. Network your issues outside your own group. You need general voters to see the value of your position. You have credibility with people you know. At lunch gatherings, soccer fields, family gatherings, clubs, church groups—share your personal stories on current education issues and how they affect you and your listener.

State of Oregon:

- Oregon has changed its *Reading First* team into its *State Literacy Team*. This team will help oversee the implementation of Oregon's K-12 *Literacy Framework*.
- The *Framework* is part of a requirement to have a comprehensive state literacy plan in place—with hopes of winning federal RTTT money.
- The *Framework* has been adopted and training is available through ESDs.

Please contact me if you would like information about a particular topic regarding Legislative Action and Advocacy:
anm@coos-bay.k12.or.us

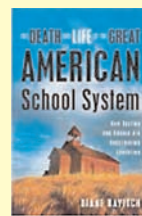
SOME PLACES TO LOOK FOR EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

www.latadvisory.blogspot.com – This blog, sponsored by IRA, regularly has updates from IRA lobbyist Rich Long, his staff, and members of the national Legislative Action Team. It is an excellent source.

www.edweek.org – You can view lead articles in *Ed Week* free online (two per week without subscribing to the paper).

www.trelease-on-reading.com – This is Jim Trelease's website and he has lots of interesting articles—plus a compilation of articles related to NCLB on his link "NCLB Potpourri".

Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education and historian, has an insightful new book. She critiques today's most popular ideas for restructuring schools and states her views for improving American schools. She includes research and paints a clear picture—showing both sides of the issues.



She believes we need to:

- Leave decisions about schools to educators, not politicians and businessmen.
- Devise a truly national curriculum setting out what children in each grade should be learning.
- Expect charter schools to educate kids who need help the most, not to compete with public schools.
- Pay teachers a fair wage for their work; not "merit" pay based on deeply flawed and unreliable test scores.
- Encourage family involvement in education from

Reflections on School Reforms and Cultural Change in China

Language & Literacy Delegation – November 2-14, 2009

*A presentation by Julia Siporin
with support from Alan Siporin and Jefferson “Hero of the People” Bear*

Third grade teacher Julia Siporin and 29 other education professionals traveled with the *People to People Ambassador Program* organized by IRA 2010-11 President Patricia Edwards. Shown are some excerpts from Julia's presentation created upon her return. To read her complete article with lots of wonderful photos, click here: [*China Ambassador Program Presentation.*](#)



Julia, Alan, & Jefferson in front of the “Birds Nest” in Beijing.

swells as I look down; a three-year old girl in a pink fur-trimmed jacket is hugging my kneecaps.

We cherish our children, whether they are our own or someone else's. China's One Child Policy, which is still in effect, has had the fortuitous consequence of deepening love and pride for their most precious treasure—their own flesh and blood. Their future. Yet

I ponder the effects of a country of “only” children raising the next generation of “only” children. Youngsters are taught Confucian poems embedded with codes of social behavior. Not a bad idea when I think about how western children grow up memorizing sordid nursery rhymes about evil stepmothers and a myriad of forest tricksters. While they get the rhythm of language, consider the content of these nursery rhymes. Perhaps there is greater merit in memorizing Confucian poetry.

Environment. Economy. Education.

... The black pearl signifies China's greatest treasure. What is their greatest treasure? My ten day experience led me to believe that China's treasure is embodied in the heart of its children and cultivated by a growing number of enlightened teachers.

Forays into “experimental” education are emerging at all levels from preschool to elementary to high school to university levels. A small number of thoughtful, passionate educators is being granted permission to explore new styles of education with opportunities

for more guided student-to-student discussion, problem-solving, and divergent thinking. By contrast, “normal” schools tend to place a heavier emphasis on rote memorization and recitation in order to pass rigorous exams where there is only one correct answer to a given question. Regardless of approach, both types of schools are expected to produce excellent results on the state exams. For me, the most encouraging signs of edu-

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Getting an Education in China



Young Shanghai student.

I wonder...when was the last time someone flashed a camera in my face and I gave them the peace sign? Or even had that thought in my mind to wish them peace? Yet a four-year old boy from Shanghai's Jiangqu Primary school, interrupted from his wood blocks construction project, turned around to find a

human who looked very different than himself, and did just that. He flashed the peace sign along with a jubilant toothy smile. Not “Who are you? What are you doing here? Why are you bothering me?” but rather an expression of friendship. I wonder, where does this sense come from? How has this been nurtured, for surely it has been nurtured.

This young boy was just one of many smiling Chinese preschoolers, teenagers and young adults who showed me the peace sign... a genuine and deliberate effort to communicate some deep heartfelt intention to this Westerner sporting a “People to People Citizen Ambassador” badge: Peace, Peace to you. Peace between us. There is something striking about this simple gesture. **We are two under the same sky.** As if it is their first thought when our eyes meet. **Peace.** Regardless of age. The next image in my mind is that of students, young and old, eager to try out their English on native speakers, “Hello! Welcome! It's nice to meet you!” My heart suddenly

“Using laptop computers, Julia Siporin's third-grade students eagerly write blog responses to their buddy, Jefferson Bear. Jefferson, a light brown teddy bear who is the host of Ms. Siporin's class blog, regularly writes to students and asks them to share their thoughts and opinions about various class topics.”

– From *“Collaborative Literacy: Blogs and Internet Projects”* by Boling, Castek, Zawilinski, Barton, and Nierlich in the March 2008 issue of **The Reading Teacher** (an IRA Journal).

More about...

Reflections on School Reforms and Cultural Change in China

(continued from previous page)

cational reform were the Jiangquo Preschool and Kindergarten schools in Shanghai. These two schools provided many constructivist learning opportunities and would rival any of the best Reggio or Montessori



Julia and middle school teacher/administrator in Xi'an.

schools. AND they focused learning on “green” (environmental) education. There were rooms for art, strategy games, wood block construction, and science experiments. The hallways were filled with science models demonstrating various physics principles. Stairwells showcased student recycled art projects. Everywhere, children were happily engaged in important learning. One of our delegates expressed to the administrator of the primary school that her students (in this Chinese school) might be achieving even higher rates of success than some of our own American schools.

Granted, we were observing a very unique school for a very select population. What if all students had such rich learning environments? . . .

Hope for the Future:

The people of China deeply respect their teachers. One delegate shared an experience of a young girl whose father told his daughter that the woman in front of her was a teacher. The young girl's eyes opened wide as saucers with awe and she put her two hands together and bowed before the teacher. China has its problems, but my sense is that their new educational reforms over the last 15 years are headed in a positive direction and will serve the world community well if allowed to flourish.



Primary student shares what he knows about this sea creature. Note that this class has TWO teachers - one to lead, one to operate the projection system.

I would love to continue the initial dialogues we began with the teachers in Beijing, Xi'an, and Shanghai. A few hours of exchange around a table, a few minutes to chat one-on-one in a corner. Professional speed-dat-

ing. We all wanted more time to learn and share with our counterparts. Although important groundwork was laid, there is much more to be exchanged. Much more.

The sense of pride is palpable when you're on the streets of China. It's heartfelt. I was expecting a cookie-cutter sense of national pride. Nothing could be further from the truth. Truly, they have many good reasons to be proud. You see it in the eyes of parents, grandparents, teachers, food servers, street sweepers, and seemingly anyone you stop to ask for help on the street. “You want to go to nice restaurant? Let me walk you there; I show you!” one Beijing local offered to a few delegates unsure of where to get a good meal. She took them right to the door 3 blocks away. People feigning courtesy would not go to such lengths. We all had similar interactions with the locals. They want you to see how their country is growing and changing. They want you to see their passion, kindness, and genuine friendship.

. . . We all reap the fruits of seeds planted in the young minds of our children. Education is paramount. Praise be to the dragon who protects and nurtures the great black pearl. China and America. . . we are two under the same sky. 📖

Peace out,

Julia Siporin

Editor's note: Julia is a member of IRA, ORA, and the Emerald Empire Reading Council. She teaches third grade at Gilham Elementary School in Eugene, OR.



Shanghai guide "Tina", IRA Pres.-elect Dr. Patricia Edwards, and China guide, Riley.

Letters About Literature

This program challenges young readers to write a personal letter of reflection to an author whose work somehow inspired them or changed their view of the world or themselves.

The deadline to submit letters is December 10th, 2010.

To learn more or to read the winning letters from last year, visit their website:

www.lettersaboutliterature.org 📖

BOOKMARK ARTWORK FOR YOUR USE:

Reading with Your Kids

- ❖ Spend at least 10 minutes every day reading aloud, even to a child who can read independently.
- ❖ Read with expression - let your child know you're enjoying yourself.
- ❖ Explain words your child may not know.
- ❖ Ask your child to summarize or explain parts of the story, especially events that may be confusing.
- ❖ Ask, "What do you think will happen next?"
- ❖ Talk about how events in the story relate to events in yours or your child's own life.
- ❖ At the close of the story, invite your child to re-tell the story: beginning, middle, and end
- ❖ Ask, "What was your favorite part of the story?"
- ❖ Ask, "What do you think would have happened if...?"
- ❖ Let your child know you have enjoyed your time together!



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Lectura con Sus Niños

- ❖ Pase a los menos 10 minutos cada día leyendo en voz alta, incluso a un(a) niño(a) que puede leer de forma independiente.
- ❖ Lea con expresión- deje saber a su niño(a) que se está divirtiendo.
- ❖ Explique las palabras que su niño(a) no sepa.
- ❖ Pregúntale a su niño(a) a resumir o explicar las partes de la historia, especialmente los eventos que puedan inducir confusión.
- ❖ Pregunte, "¿Qué crees que pasará después?"
- ❖ Hable acerca de cómo los eventos en la historia se refieren a hechos en su propia vida o en la vida de su niño(a).
- ❖ Al final de la historia, pregúntale a su hijo(a) a volver a contar la historia: el principio, el medio y el fin.
- ❖ Pregunte, "¿Cuál fue tu parte favorita de la historia?"
- ❖ Pregunte: "¿Qué crees que hubiera pasado si ...?"
- ❖ ¡Hágale saber a su niño (a) que usted haya disfrutado su tiempo juntos!



Oregon Reading Association

You might also want to consider a little 'cutting and pasting' to replace the ORA logo with your local council's logo or your school mascot ...or students can decorate the back and/or illustrate a favorite book or reading fun before taking the bookmarks home to parents.

HAVE FUN!