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Michigan Reading Journal

*A Journal of the
Michigan Reading Association*

Spring 2019
Volume 51, No. 3

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- Learning to See Color: Using Multicultural Literature to Build Critical Racial Consciousness in Elementary Classrooms
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- Motivation Matters: Factors that Affect Reading Motivation for English Learners
- Adopting and Adapting Michigan's Tenth Essential Literacy Practice: Collaboration with Families
- Being Child-Centered and Focusing on Children: A Longitudinal Case Study
- Writing Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Writers



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The *Michigan Reading Journal*, ISSN 0047-7125, is published by the Michigan Reading Association, an intermediate council of the International Reading Association. The *Journal*, dedicated to the dissemination of information to improve the teaching of reading, presents articles on a wide spectrum of topics and issues in reading, language arts, and literature, preschool through adult levels. The *Journal* incorporates articles that address both theory and practice.

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Because the *Michigan Reading Journal* represents an open forum, the viewpoints expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect or imply endorsement or advocacy by the Michigan Reading Association, its officers, or its members.

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From the Editors...

by **Kathryn L. Roberts, Ph.D.** and **Poonam Arya, Ph.D.**

Welcome to the spring issue of the *Michigan Reading Journal*! We were so excited to see and meet so many of you at the annual conference and have returned to the University and our students refreshed, inspired, and ready to double down on our efforts to support Michigan students and teachers in all things literacy. We hope that those of you who presented at the conference will continue your efforts to do the same by considering submitting your work to the journal—you can find information on how to do so near the end of this issue.



**Kathryn L.
Roberts, Ph.D.**



Poonam Arya, Ph.D.

As we are writing this, April has just barely begun. It's the time of year when we look outside and see bare branches and brown grass, but envision wildly blooming trees and flowers, green blades of grass pushing their way through. The first pointed leaves of tulips pushing through and the sounds of birds back from their winter vacations feed our imaginations and optimism in all the best ways. We know the wild beauty of a Michigan spring is on the way because the seeds and bulbs were planted long ago, and just beneath the surface, the roots are holding strong and doing the hard work of bringing us spring.

In this issue of the journal, we focus on a variety of ways in which educators can help students and families build literacy roots—the knowledge, habits, and practices that provide solid foundations and connections to literacy learning and make it possible for our students to bloom. We have included two *Bridging Research and Practice* articles. The first one is by Jamilee Baroud (doctoral student, University of Ottawa, Canada) about how educators can engage girls' diverse identities through critical video production activities in school; and the second is by Dr. Terry Husband (Illinois State University) on using multicultural literature to build critical racial consciousness in elementary classrooms. For the *Voices from the Region* section, we have an article detailing how reciprocal teaching can be used to support literacy development across content areas by Amy Niklasch (Reeths-Puffer Intermediate School, Muskegon), as well as a piece that uses examples to highlight how certain factors affect the reading motivation of English Language Learners by Dr. Selena Protacio (Western Michigan University). For the popular *Critical Issues* section, we have an article on how educators can collaborate with families in order to develop children's literacy skills in culturally and contextually relevant ways by Dr. Patricia Edwards (Michigan State University), Dr. Kristen White (Northern Michigan University), and Lori Bruner (doctoral student, Michigan State University). The other piece is by Dr. Catherine Compton-Lilly (University of South Carolina), in which she shares a case study that highlights the development of literacy and literate ways of being over time for an immigrant child as an example of the importance of educators seeing the whole child, well beyond scores and grades.

In this issue, we also provide reviews of three professional texts for teachers in a column titled, *Must Read Texts* by Dr. Meghan Block (Central Michigan University), Dr. Tanya Christ (Oakland University, MI), and Angela Harris (doctoral student, Wayne State University, MI). This section also includes reviews

of children's books that disrupt stereotypes and single stories, led by Dr. Kristin McIlhagga (Oakland University, MI), and reviews of books from the Great Lakes Great Books Award list, written by Lynette Suckow (Peter White Public Library in Marquette, MI).

We encourage our readers to keep up with the journal by liking the Michigan Reading Association page on Facebook, following @michiganreading on Twitter, and searching and following Michigan Reading Association on Pinterest. Also, we hope to see you at the Summer Literature Conference on July 30-31, 2019 at Shanty Creek Resort in Bellaire, Michigan. The conference theme is *Amplifying Student Voices*.

Our journal email address is mrj@wayne.edu. We invite you to join the conversation by contributing to MRJ. Please email article submissions that are appropriate for any of the sections in our journal to our email address. We look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to our Wayne State University editorial team of Angela Harris and Sarah Schrag, who have done a fantastic job of supporting the work for this issue. We would also like to thank LaShan Mabry and Charissa Elmer from the Michigan Reading Association office; our MRA president, Carol Paul; and the MRA board for all of their hard work.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of MRJ, and that you will continue to tell your friends and colleagues about us.

Happy Reading!

Kathryn L. Roberts and Poonam Arya

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Co-Editors, *Michigan Reading Journal*



President's Message...

by Carol Paul, MRA President 2018-2019

Dear Literacy Leaders,

John Dewey (1916) wrote, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself" (p. 239). This quote could not be more meaningful today! As sociocultural factors are shaped, a new story of education unfolds. Educators, I ask you, "What do you want that story to sound like, look like, and more importantly whom shall this story influence?" In the traditional classrooms of yesterday, students and teachers were bound by four walls. With so many technological advances, we are no longer obliged to teach within the walls of our classrooms. Let's begin changing traditional education by getting our students immersed in long-range problems that have yet to be solved. Global issues such as, malnutrition, inequality, gender parity, and climate change are just a few issues that need an audience of critical thinkers. Hutt (2016) reported that by 2050 the world must feed nine billion people. Educating our students on the impact of global food shortages now will increase our chances of finding sustainable solutions in the future. As John Dewey did in 1916, I implore you to use life experiences as educational tools, instead of education as preparation for life. Overall, it is through our acquaintance with the past that will build our future.



Carol Paul

Educationally yours,

Carol Paul

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Carol Paul is the 2018-2019 president of the Michigan Reading Association. As an MI Excel ELA coach, she primarily works with educational improvement teams to enhance instructional practices and provide professional development and instructional coaching to staff with the goal of raising student achievement. Mrs. Paul is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University (B.S.), University of Michigan-Dearborn (M.A.), and Wayne State University (Ed.S.). She is currently enrolled at Capella University seeking a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education, specializing in curriculum and instruction. She can be reached at capaul0813@gmail.com.

Bridging Girls' "Double Lives": Instructional Practices to Engage Critical Literacy in Elementary and Secondary School through Video Production

by Jamilee Baroud

Digital literacy education equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to navigate and succeed in the 21st century. Increasingly, teachers are being asked to make digital literacies learning relevant to students' lives by applying the pedagogical principles learned in recreational spaces to in-school contexts. It is not uncommon for female students to engage with, respond to, and create digital texts in their personal lives with extraordinary intellectual and technical ability (Curwood, Magnifico, & Lammers, 2013; Heineken, 2015; Keller, 2015; Maguire, 2015). These recreational practices, however, seldom transfer into school-based contexts, and much of girls' technological interests and abilities are invisible to teachers in schools (Elliot & Prescott, 2014; Itō et al., 2008). The in- and out-of-school literacy gap is so wide that the phenomenon is now referred to as girls living "double lives" (Williams, 2005; see also Brudvik, 2015; Hawisher, Selfe, Moraski, & Pearson, 2004).

What challenges must be overcome in our classrooms to bridge girls' double lives? What can educators do to improve and enhance digital literacies learning? In what follows, I synthesize tips on how to engage girls' diverse identities through critical video production activities in school. The following collection of tips from unique cultural and historical contexts and disciplines, in combination with the inclusion of multiple female identity categories, provides a rich starting point to understand the ways girls of multiple and diverse race, gender, class, sexuality, language, and religious backgrounds are educated in the field, and the factors that influence their success and participation.



Jamilee Baroud

The recommendations synthesized in this article were retrieved using a review of qualitative studies of digital video production and transferable skills of multi-media text production, and encompass studies conducted in Canada, United States, Australia, and Mexico. I developed and implemented activities, assignments, and lectures in my teaching practice that reflect the recommendations of these studies. In this article I reflect on what did and did not work, as well as how and why it worked (as applicable), so as to make specific instructional recommendations. In this way, each *tip* is designed and pedagogically informed by the scholars I cite within each section. However, the step-by-step model and the activities, assignments, and lectures therein are written from my experience implementing video production inside the classroom. Most of the assignments and activities I created alone, others I created in conversation with colleagues, and some I adapted from and are inspired by colleagues and mentors in the field.

Critical Video Production: The Five Tips for Instructional Practice

Tip 1: Forge a Community of Practice

Recent in-school literature stipulates that disengagement is caused by the intergenerational struggle over authority and control over learning in the classroom.

Teachers' lack of confidence and/or competence either leads to a lack of engagement with digital literacies inside the classroom (Sanford, 2005), or leads to interventions that limit students' authority and discourage active participation (Wohlwend, 2009). As Moje (2000) has long argued, we "can learn valuable lessons for extending literacy theory, practice, and research from the sophisticated—albeit marginalized and vilified—practices of these youth" (p. 653; also see Hasinoff, 2012). The aim is to discover the digital literacy practices that motivate students to learn.

To this end, do not permit your level of technical knowledge deter you from integrating video production in the classroom. Trial and error seem risky because from a student's perspective it is not seamless, but the risk is minor compared to the value of integration. To support this:

- Be transparent with your students and say, "I am a learner. We are all learners. And we all have something to learn from each other."
- Call upon your students to share their tech savvy competencies and skills. Privilege their knowledge, expertise, and autonomy. Acknowledge, name, and credit students' tech savvy innovations.

Tech trends shift quickly and the task to predict these future trends is futile. Envisage that your role is not to be an expert on trendy social media sites that constantly alter and change. Your role is to connect the literacy practices of your students (Instagram, YouTube, blogging) to the tools (video, photography, text) and skills (how to take the perfect selfie, writing concisely, managing self-representation online) that will remain relevant over time. To support this:

- Through discussion, assignments, and attentiveness, aim to investigate who your students are as literacy learners. Discover how their literate selves can be translated into a classroom context so that assignments are meaningful and students are engaged. One way to do this is through the "literacy autobiography" assignment (inspired by Dhamshi, 2018). Ask students: *What are you currently*

reading, writing, viewing, listening to, or creating? Are these activities for personal pleasure or a means to an end? What contributions have these activities made to your life? Are your experiences at home different from your experiences at school? In what ways?

- Investigate what students gain and/or lose when they represent themselves a particular way online. Start by asking: *What are the motivators to participating and producing content online? How important is it to receive external approval?* The aim is to uncover how, why, and with what purpose students are participating online.
- Together, discuss, debate, and determine the ethical know-how to navigate complex online practices that can keep students informed to make safe choices.

Tip 2: Be a Socializing Agent

Girls interested in the field of technology can be stigmatized for participating in what is often defined as a masculine domain (Itō et al., 2010) and must grapple with and negotiate how to authentically represent themselves while maintaining social status. Bridging girls' double lives then is about more than access to technology and development of skill—it is about the identity and peer status associated with certain technical skills and digital literacy practices. Although participation in the field of technology has value and potential in education, if these activities result in low social status, even technologically-savvy girls will experience lower self-efficacy and competence to accomplish tasks (Dill & Thill, 2007; King & Douai, 2014) which often results in opting out (Itō et al., 2008). Critical to girls' success is to have teachers who act as socializing agents (Ireland et al., 2018)—interpersonal influencers or supports who provide structure and guidance in the development of girls' confidence, identity, and achievement in the field of technology (Rice & Alfred, 2014).

Early exposure to technological learning opportunities is vital. When female students see examples of successful women and girls in related fields, whose identities, histories, behaviors, and characteristics are similar to theirs, they are more likely to participate. To support this:

- Expose students to prominent (or hidden) female figures in fields related to science, technology, video production, mathematics, playwright, drama, film, engineering, computer design, etcetera. Not sure where to start? Research Beatrice Worsley, the first Canadian female computer scientist, or Julia Grace Wales, a Canadian academic known for writing the Wisconsin Plan, a peace proposal to end the First World War.
- Include a range of current and historical female figures with diverse and intersectional identities. The world is diverse, and so, regardless of the demographics in your classroom, provide a range of female identities—not only majority and privileged identities, but the marginalized and silenced identities as well. Not sure where to start? Research Kenojuk Ashevak, a renowned artist and role model for Inuit women, or Mary Ann Shadd Cary, the first North American Black female newspaper editor.
- Examine and discuss the reality of gender, race, and class divisions within the technology industry. Critically assess whether, to what extent, and at what point stereotypes about academic (in)abilities are represented in mainstream media and how they may or may not be reflected in classroom culture. Be mindful of shifting and reframing these discourses (for a summary of current inequities in the technology industry see Wachter-Boettcher, 2017).
- Link being a socializing agent to curricula through activities such as the “heritage minute” assignment (inspired by Bergen, 2018). Ask students to select a historical figure, monument, statue, or issue that resonates with them. Next, ask students to research how their selected topic has been historically represented or misrepresented, and what the gaps in evidence, perspectives, and representation might be. Wondering how to incorporate technology into this assignment? See Tip 4: Pre-production and Production.

Tip 3: Enhance Critical Thinking Skills

A critical approach to video production requires an explicit engagement with social, environmental, cultural, and linguistic diversity. It enables debate between sociopolitical worldviews, discussions of relations of

power, critical engagement by learners with multi-media texts and discourses, and a space to challenge and address authors (Luke, 2012). Critical in this context also means that students’ creations and productions are infused with powerful insights from their lived experiences, perspectives, (de la Piedra, 2010; Rowsell & Burke, 2009; Wohlwend, 2009), and identities (Honeyford, 2014; Wargo, 2015). When students learn to use video to “make sense” of and express themselves (Burwell, 2013), they are able to rewrite their own stories differently than how they are (mis)perceived in mainstream media (Honeyford, 2014; Wargo, 2015). Additionally, it provides a space for students to investigate cultural interests to address issues relevant to their lives and communities (Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2004), advocate for social change, promote inclusivity and respect (Dahya & Jensen, 2015), and unite students of diverse backgrounds (Leard & Lashua, 2006).

It is important to encourage students to contemplate what factors may have informed their previous misconceptions of themselves and others (e.g., skills or confidence in a subject matter, age, grade, geographic location, gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, language and/or religion). To do this:

- Explicitly explain the distortions or misrepresentations in media messages that result from the use of particular media techniques and practices (lighting, sound, camera angle, emotive music, character traits, and roles). How? Try the, “What do you hear, what you do think, what do you see?” assignment. First, select a song that is rich with relevant, debatable, and conversational content. Second, ask students to close their eyes, actively listen to the song as it plays, and write down what they hear. Second, turn off the sound and ask students to watch the music video and write down what they see. Lastly, ask students to watch and listen to the music video and to write down what they think. This activity encourages students to reflect on their relationship with media and to experience the effect that particular media techniques and practices might have on their viewing and listening experiences.

- Cultivate, through discussion, the understanding that media are produced to inform, persuade, and entertain for a variety of positive and negative purposes. Highlight corporate strategy and marketing techniques to target audiences and impart the skills to critique and examine points of view.

It is equally important to provide opportunities for students to engage with, respond to, and become critical consumers of information. Critical in this context means developing the skills and tools to collect information from a variety of sources, to analyze language, content, and conditions of production to frame and solve prominent problems.

- Start by asking: Whose “truth” is being told in a text, how is it being represented, and in whose interest? Who has access to the text and for what purposes? Where can we acquire more information? Why is this of relevance? How can we add to or change the conversation?
- Encourage students to collect, question, interact, and contest knowledge. In this way, students become agents in their own learning and can practice searching for and retrieving information online, exchanging and discussing that information, and then critically evaluating it.

Tip 4: Pre-production and Production

Once a base for critical literacy has been developed, provide students with the opportunity to design and create their own videos. As Bigelow, Christensen, Karp, Miner, and Peterson (1994) write, “If we ask students to critique the world but then fail to encourage them to act, our classrooms can degenerate into factories for cynicism” (p. 4). When girls are given the task to design their own projects, they often resist and transform traditional gender stereotypes (Denner, Bean, & Werner, 2005; Harvey, 2011) creating alternative, counter-hegemonic digital media (Levine, 2008; Rheingold, 2008) that challenges the status quo (Scott et al., 2013), which ultimately increases their level of confidence (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2009). As Itō and colleagues (2010) assert, “[S]hifting youth identity from that of a media consumer to a media producer is an

important vehicle for developing youth voice, creativity, agency, and new forms of literacy in a media saturated era” (p. 247). To do this:

- Provide time and material to play with video production inside the classroom and accept trial and error as part of the process. Yes—frustration is fundamental. Yes—sometimes materials are scarce. Work with what you have, encourage students to BYOD (bring your own device), and improvise for materials that you do not have.
 - o Step one: Concept development and storyboarding are a vital part of the production process. Ensure that students take the time to map out their storyline and to include visuals, text, shots, frames, and/or transitions. Rigidity is not the goal. Encourage students to find a creative process that works for them.
 - o Step two: The content of each student’s video will differ. The key element is to ensure that the video content resists and transforms the social limitations they encounter in mainstream media texts. How? Ask students to investigate their own interests in relation to their multiple identities, perspectives, and lived experiences, or to address an issue that they deem relevant to their lives, schools, environments or communities. Create a mentor video or text as an example for students to model; or, ask students to create a one-minute “heritage minute” video that tells or re-tells a story about the subject (see Tip 2: Be a Socializing Agent for the first half of this assignment). Students can film with their tablets, phones, or laptops, or you can film them using your own device. Want to add fun and finesse to the video production process? Use a green screen. Cannot afford a professional green screen? Use an old or new green or blue tablecloth or bed sheet instead. Feeling overwhelmed and underprepared? Regardless of the editing platform you use (i.e., iMovie, WeVideo,

Adobe Premier Elements, etc.) there are plenty of easy-to-follow green screen and editing tutorials online. As mentioned, trial and error is part of the process, and students will learn through experimentation, but it is beneficial to have a grasp on the basics of the digital tools and methods beforehand.

- Critical peer assessment is an invaluable step in the pre-production process. Once students complete their storyboards, ask them to share their ideas with their peers.
 - Encourage students to offer critical feedback and suggestions on each storyboard. How? The "Gallery Walk" activity (Baroud & Cloutier, 2018). Post each students' storyboard on the wall and have them individually explain their storyboard to the class. Then, ask students to write their suggestions, comments, and questions on a sticky note and post it on the wall around the storyboard. Remember, revisions are a necessary step in the pre-production and production process, and we welcome and expect last minute, unplanned, and spontaneous modifications to students' videos.
- Provide space for students to negotiate their roles in the video production process. Some students are gifted with writing scripts, some enjoy acting on camera, editing, filming, or directing. Negotiating tensions between author and actor, and sorting out meanings of texts is a vital part of the process.
 - Your role as an educator in the production process is to work with your students. How? Participate in the video production process as necessary—when asked to or expected to be helpful.

Tip 5: Share Digital Achievements

The process of sharing students' digital achievements has been found to motivate girls to be agents in their own learning and to make thoughtful choices about writing topics (Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2004) and meaning and vocabulary (Amicucci, 2014; Emert, 2014). It has also been found to increase girls' desire for

technology knowledge, expertise (Dezuanni, O'Mara, & Beavis, 2015), and design skills (Rowse & Burke, 2009), which also increases their confidence to share their know-how as tech-mentors to other students (Sanford, 2005). Perhaps most noteworthy, the process of dissemination eventually decreases girls' levels of anxiety about producing media (Emert, 2014).

- Whether student-created videos are screened in class, in front of parents, during a school assembly, or posted online, students are encouraged to share their digital achievements with an audience.
 - Connect the dissemination process to the peer assessment process by screening each video in class and asking students to provide comments, questions, suggestions, and constructive feedback to their peers.
 - What can teachers do when students become reluctant to share unfinished products? Remind your students that perfection is a difficult concept to detach from, but sophisticated video production is not the goal—although it may be the result—the goal is for students to actively, critically, and successfully produce critical content for the purpose of social justice.

Conclusion

When educators begin to teach video production from the multiple perspectives and worldviews of students, they privilege the experiences of learners' as curricular resources inside the classroom. As a teaching practice, critical video production entails untying from traditional knowledge and authority relations between students and teachers and instead, "learners become teachers of their understandings and experiences, and teachers become learners of these same contexts" (Luke, 2012, p.7). Equally important is shifting the central focus in our classrooms from learning to use technologies, to learning to critique multi-media texts and understand how they represent, manipulate, and frame relations of power. Integrating video production is, as Luke astutely notes, "not just a matter of designer careers and new technologies...it is about the possibility of using new literacies to change relations of power,

both peoples' everyday social relations and larger geopolitical and economic relations" (2012, p. 9). Technology integration models and social media platforms are multiple and ever changing. To successfully incorporate critical literacy through technology requires ingenuity, flexibility, and an understanding of our students' worldviews, struggles, and interests. The tips described in this paper provide a starting point for teachers, who are eager to engage with the complex structures of critical video production, to question, address, and change inequitable power relations related to gender, class, and racializations inside the classroom.

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Learning to See Color: Using Multicultural Literature to Build Critical Racial Consciousness in Elementary Classrooms

by Terry Husband, Ph.D.

Statistics from the United States Census Bureau (2015) indicate that the student population in U.S. classrooms continues to become increasingly racially diverse. Concurrently, race relations within the broader U.S. society remain problematic in nature (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Despite these two facts, many elementary teachers are hesitant to teach their students about race and racial justice (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Farago, Sanders, & Gaias, 2015). Many elementary teachers employ a colorblind approach to race in their classrooms (Husband, 2016). A colorblind approach to race deemphasizes racial differences, histories, and distinctions in the classroom and the curriculum (Boutte, Lopez-Robertson, & Powers-Costello, 2011). Some elementary teachers assume that young children do not have the cognitive capability to understand racism (Summer, 2014). Other elementary teachers believe their classrooms should be “neutral” places where seemingly controversial issues are not discussed with children (Ivey-Soto, 2013).

Since so many elementary teachers are reluctant to teach children about race and racism in their classrooms, the purposes of this article are three-fold. First, I argue that elementary teachers *should* teach children about race and racism in their classrooms as a means of helping children develop a more critical consciousness of race and racism. Second, I outline four different approaches that elementary teachers might use to teach young children about race through multicultural children’s literature. Finally, I discuss practical considerations elementary teachers should be mindful of as they engage in teaching young children about racism and racial justice.

In this article I draw from Freire’s (1970) notion of *critical consciousness*. Critical consciousness is defined as



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the process of developing an awareness of how various forms of social oppression operate in the world (Freire & Macedo, 2003). This process of developing critical consciousness begins by posing critical questions related to issues of power, marginalization, and racial injustice in the world. Students are encouraged to pose critical questions such as:

- How is power distributed in this policy/practice/process?
- Who benefits from this policy/practice/process?
- Who is marginalized by this policy/practice/process?
- Whose voices/perspectives are foregrounded in this policy/practice/process?
- Whose voices/perspectives are missing in this policy/practice/process?

Through ongoing critical dialogue and reflection about these issues of power and oppression, children are able to move from what Freire (1970) calls a “magical” and superficial consciousness of race and toward a “critical” consciousness of race that recognizes racial oppression as an ever-present problem in various facets of society. The subsequent goal of developing critical consciousness is to identify meaningful ways to resist, combat, and counteract injustice through what is defined as theory in action or “praxis” (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987). Ultimately this praxis helps

to make educational practices, policies, and processes more equitable, emancipatory, and humanizing for all students.

Young Children and Racism

Studies indicate that young children have implicit racial biases toward people who do not share the same in-group status (e.g., Apfelbaum, Pauker, Sommers, & Ambady, 2010; Castelli, Zogmaister, & Tomelleri, 2009; Dunham, Chen, & Banaji, 2013). Dunham, Chen, and Banaji (2013) found that children as young as three years of age have implicit racial biases toward people from different racial backgrounds. Their study involved 883 children (White, Asian, and Black) ranging in age from three to 14 years old. The children were shown a series of faces on a computer screen and asked to identify each face as being Black, White, or Asian. Some of the images depicted people with angry faces and other images depicted people with non-angry faces. The skin tone of each face was a neutral color. The White children who participated in the study categorized the angry faces more often as being Black than did the Black children in the study. The Asian children in the study characterized the angry faces more often as being Black than the non-angry faces. This study suggests that many young children are fostering implicit racial biases about particular groups in society that are frequently associated with negative character traits. Discussing issues of race and racism in the classroom through multicultural children's literature can create opportunities for teachers to counter these biases (Fain, 2008).

Young children are being saturated with racist stereotypes and messages through the television programs and advertising they consume on a regular basis (Hirschfeld, 2008; Hooven, Runkle, Strouse, Woods, & Frankenberg, 2018). Through a content analysis of 155 children's commercials, Maher, Herbst, Childs, and Finn (2008) found that African American and Latinx people were portrayed in these commercials in roles that had lower status than those of the Whites in the commercials. Racist stereotypes and messages like these

often go unchallenged by parents (Vittrup & Holden, 2011). The elementary classroom presents itself as an opportune time to engage children in discussions of racial injustice as a means of combating these racist stereotypes and messages (Summer, 2014). These ongoing discussions of race and racial oppression in the world can help children move from an apolitical and "magical" consciousness of race and racism toward a more critical consciousness of race and racial oppression in the world (Freire, 1970).

Most of the children's literature that is used in U.S. classrooms tends to foreground the experiences and perspectives of Whites in society (Kirkland, 2013). Through a content analysis of thousands of books commonly used to teach various reading skills (e.g., guided reading, phonological awareness, word study, etc.), Gangi (2008) found what she calls "the unbearable burden of whiteness" in literacy instruction. The characters and content in most of the books used to teach children how to become proficient readers neglect the experiences of people of color. Gangi further argues that this lack of representation makes it difficult for children of color to engage fully with many of the books made available for them to read at school. For this reason, using multicultural children's literature in the classroom to discuss issues of race and racism in contemporary and historical contexts can help students of color to engage more fully while learning various literacy skills and processes (Gangi, 2008).

Multicultural Children's Literature and Its Importance

Defining Multicultural Children's Literature

Multicultural children's literature can be defined as a genre of picture books and easy chapter books that are written in ways that emphasize and celebrate the experiences, histories, and cultures of diverse groups of people in society (McNair, 2016; Osorio, 2018; So Jung, 2016). Table 1 provides examples of multicultural children's books that elementary teachers might use to teach children about race and racial justice in particular.

Table 1

Examples of Multicultural Children's Books that Might be Used to Teach About Race

Title of Book	Author	Year	Contents
<i>Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers</i>	Sarah Warren	2012	This book tells the story of Dolores Huerta who works to combat unfair wages in her community.
<i>Half Spoon of Rice: A Survival Story of the Cambodian Genocide</i>	Icy Smith	2010	This book tells the story of a young Cambodian boy who is separated from his family and forced to work for little or no compensation.
<i>Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez</i>	Kathleen Krull	2003	This book tells the story of a civil rights leader who led a 340-mile peaceful protest for equal rights in California.
<i>If You Lived with the INDIANS OF THE NORTHWEST COAST</i>	Anne Kamma	2002	This book shares the experiences of Native Americans who lived along the Pacific coast from a child's point of view.
<i>Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters</i>	Andrea Davis Pinkney	2000	This book tells the narratives of several Black women (e.g., Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks) who fought against racial oppression in the past.
<i>Let the Children March</i>	Monica Clark-Robinson	2018	This book tells the story of children who participated in the Civil Rights protests.
<i>Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X</i>	Ilyasah Shabazz	2014	This biography tells the story of Malcolm X and his quest for racial justice.
<i>A Path of Stars</i>	Anne Sibley O'Brien	2012	This book tells the story of a young girl who lives in Cambodia prior to immigrating to the United States.
<i>Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving</i>	Joseph Bruchac	2007	This book tells the experiences of a Native American named Squanto who welcomed newcomers to his land in 1620.
<i>The Very First Americans</i>	Cara Ashrose	1993	This book shares the experiences of several Native American people groups who lived in America prior to Christopher Columbus.
<i>The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, A Young Civil Rights Activist</i>	Cynthia Levinson	2017	This book tells the story of a young child who was arrested in 1963 during the Civil Rights movement.

Benefits of Using Multicultural Literature to Teach About Race

Multicultural children's literature provides opportunities for students from racially diverse backgrounds to see themselves and their experiences represented and affirmed in the books they read (Koss, Martinez, & Johnson, 2016). Multicultural

children's literature also provides opportunities for children to learn about the histories and life experiences of people from different racial backgrounds. In this sense, multicultural children's literature serves as "windows" for students to learn more about people who are different from themselves (Sims-Bishop, 1990).

Multicultural children's literature can help children develop a sense of empathy toward individuals and groups of people who have been and are currently being marginalized in society (Nikolajeva, 2013). For instance, White children can develop a deeper sense of empathy for Native American people by reading authentic and accurate multicultural children's books that highlight the experiences of Native Americans. An elementary teacher might use a book like *Encounter* by Jane Yolen (1996) to open a dialogue about the multiple voices and perspectives involved when Christopher Columbus reached North America. After reading this book and discussing and reflecting on the content therein, children are likely to develop a deeper sense of empathy toward Native Americans in society.

Multicultural children's literature can also help children develop a deeper consciousness of race and racism in the world around them. Multicultural children's literature can create spaces in the classroom where young children and teachers can think critically and openly discuss issues of racial discrimination and racial justice (Husband, 2016; Kemple, Lee, & Harris, 2016). Through literature-based and sustained dialogue about issues of racial marginalization and oppression, children are likely to develop deeper awareness and understanding of how racial injustice works in the world around them (Husband, 2010; Kuby, 2011).

Approaches to Teaching Children About Race

In the following sections, I identify four approaches to teaching children about race and racism through multicultural children's literature. These approaches can be implemented collectively or independently. Elementary teachers can and should adapt each approach as necessary to best respond to the varied needs, interests, and strengths of the children in their respective classrooms. Furthermore, it is important to note that the multicultural texts that are incorporated in each approach will vary from classroom to classroom to respond to the background experiences, interests, and learning objectives of the learners involved.

Cultural Studies Approach

One common approach to teaching children about race and racism is known as the Cultural Studies approach (Sleeter, 2016). This approach entails using multicultural literature for in-depth explorations of the experiences of a particular non-White racial group in society. A kindergarten teacher who is implementing this approach might develop an 8-week literature-based instructional unit to teach their students about a particular group of Native Americans. This teacher will carefully select and include multicultural texts in the unit that provide multiple voices and perspectives on the historic and contemporary experiences of the specific group of Native Americans. The primary goal of this approach is for children to gain deep and nuanced understandings of a particular racial group in society.

Critical Inquiry Approach

A second approach to teaching children about race is known as a Critical Inquiry approach (Callison, 2015; Edelsky, Smith, & Faltis, 2008). This approach allows children's natural questions related to race to drive what is explored in the classroom. For instance, a first-grade teacher might start by reading and discussing a book related to the historical experiences of prominent African Americans in the book *Rosa* (Giovanni, 2007). The teacher might ask their students to identify questions they would like to explore and research further in small groups. After an appropriate period of time has passed, the students would share what they learned in small groups with the rest of the class. An example of a lesson plan based on this approach is found in Appendix A of this article.

Critical Literacy Approach

A third common approach to teaching children about race is known as the Critical Literacy approach (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008). This approach involves examining multicultural texts from a critical perspective while posing questions related to racial justice. The primary goal of this approach is to use multicultural texts, critical questions, and critical dialogue to reveal issues of racial injustice. A second-grade teacher who is applying this approach might read *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* (Krull, 2003) to teach their

students about the historical experiences of Latinx farm workers who worked for equitable pay and civil rights in the 1960s. While reading and discussing the contents of this story, the teacher might engage his/her students in a critical dialogue related to pay equity and discrimination. The teacher and the students might conclude this process by writing letters to their local government officials to demand equal pay for minorities and women.

Critical Reader's Response Approach

Elementary teachers can also use literature circles as opportunities for students to critically examine and discuss issues of race. This particular approach is known as a Critical Reader's Response (CRR) approach (Blake, 1998; Brooks & Browne, 2012; Enriquez, 2014). In keeping with this approach, students learn about issues of race and racial justice through reading, discussing, and responding to multicultural books in small literature-based and student-led discussion groups. A teacher who is implementing this approach in their second-grade classroom might begin by providing students with multiple copies of multicultural children's books related to issues of race and racial justice. The teacher might encourage his/her students to form "literature circle" groups based on similar reading interests. The students would then be encouraged to read the books, take notes, and prepare to discuss the key ideas in the

books at a specified later date. After the discussions come to an end, the members of the literature circle groups would decide on a means and mode of sharing their responses to and reflections on the book they read with the other students in the classroom.

Selecting Quality Multicultural Children's Books

There is a lack of diverse children's books on the market today (Koss, Martinez, & Johnson, 2016). According to a recent study conducted by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (2017), only 9% (N=340) of the total number of children's books that were published in 2017 (N=3,700) were about African Americans. Similarly, only 8% (N=310) of the children's books published in that year were about Asian American characters and only 6% (N=216) were about Latinx people. Moreover, only 2% (N=72) of the books published that year were about Native American people. Given the fact that such low percentages of books with characters from under-represented groups are published each year, teachers who are committed to teaching children about race and racism may need to use specialized lists and resources to identify multicultural children's books for use in their classrooms (e.g., blogs, foundations, book finders, etc.) (Campbell, 2017). Table 2 provides examples of 10 alternative places to locate or purchase multicultural children's literature related to race and racism.

Table 2

Alternative Places to Locate Multicultural Books for Children

Name of the Source	Mission/Focus	Website
American Indians in Children's Literature	This website is developed by Debbie Reese with the intent of providing critical perspectives and analysis of indigenous peoples in children's and young adult books, the school curriculum, popular culture, and society.	https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/
The Brown Bookshelf	This site highlights and celebrates books written by African American authors and illustrators.	https://thebrownbookshelf.com/

Cooperative Children's Book Center	The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at the School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison documents the number of books written by and about people of color since 1985.	https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/
Diverse Book Finder	This website provides a search engine to locate and explore books with racially and culturally diverse characters and themes.	https://diversebookfinder.org/
Ezra Jack Keats Foundation	This foundation is dedicated to bringing multicultural literature into the lives of children.	http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/
Latinxs in Kid Lit	This website highlights and engages young adult and children's books about, for, and/or by Latinx people.	https://latinosinkidlit.com/
Lee and Low Books	This is a minority and independently owned publisher that is committed to publishing diverse stories that all children can enjoy.	https://www.leeandlow.com
Multicultural Children's Book Day	This website is designed to raise awareness of children's books with diverse characters.	https://multiculturalchildrensbookday.com/
Social Justice Books	This organization is a product of Teaching for Change, an organization that is committed to providing teachers and parents with the tools to help children read, write, and change the world.	https://socialjusticebooks.org/
We Need Diverse Books	A digital campaign for making more books with diverse characters and themes available for children and young adults.	https://diversebooks.org

It is important to note that not all multicultural picture books are equal in terms of content, literary quality, and illustrations (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016). Teachers should carefully examine the content, messages, and images in multicultural literature when making decisions related to whether or not to incorporate specific books in their classrooms. To assist elementary teachers with evaluating whether or not they might use a particular multicultural book in the classroom, I recommend that elementary teachers consider the following 10 questions:

- **Has the book won a particular award/distinction?** While winning a particular award does not automatically ensure that the quality of a particular book is excellent, it does likely mean that this book has been reviewed rigorously by several professionals within the field of children's literature. Some common awards that are bestowed upon multicultural picture books are: Coretta Scott King Award; Carter G. Woodson Award; Pura Belpré Award; Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award; Jane Addams Children's Book Awards; American Indian Youth Literature Awards; Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature; Ezra Jack Keats Book Award; and the Walter Dean Myers Award.
- **How accurate are the facts in the book?** Elementary teachers should carefully consider the extent to which the facts and information being presented in the text are accurate.
- **How realistic is the content in the book?** It is important for children to engage with multicultural books that reflect realistic ways of being, seeing, and speaking shared by particular racial groups in society.
- **Does the book contain any racial stereotypes or racist messages?** Elementary teachers should carefully interrogate multicultural books to ensure that they are free from messages and images that are racist and/or stereotypical in nature.
- **Does the book reflect authentic language variations, dialects, and communication styles?** Elementary teachers should examine the language and communication styles being used in multicultural books to make sure they authentically reflect the language and communication styles and systems of particular racial/cultural groups in the world.
- **Whose perspectives/voices are presented in the book?** To ensure that students are able to understand racial content from multiple angles, teachers should select books that include multiple and diverse perspectives/voices on race.
- **Does the book have high quality images or illustrations?** Elementary teachers must carefully examine and assess the quality of the images/illustrations in a particular book they are considering using in their classrooms.
- **Does the book present a nuanced or complex narrative of a particular racial group/event?** In an effort to support children to develop more in-depth and specific understandings of different racial groups in society, it is important for them to read about racial groups and events that are less familiar and more nuanced.
- **To what degree does the book make connections between racism and other forms of oppression?** It is important, whenever feasible, to incorporate books that provide spaces for teachers to discuss multiple forms of oppression in tandem with each other. For example, *Grace for President* (DiPucchio, 2012) provides an opportunity for teachers to discuss how issues of racism and sexism operate in similar ways.
- **What curriculum value does the book have?** Multicultural literature can be used to advance children's awareness of race and racism, while simultaneously enhancing their repertoire of skills and knowledge in specific subject areas (e.g., social studies, language arts, math, etc.).

Conclusion

Choosing to discuss issues of race and racism with young children is not without its own set of unique considerations, challenges, and commitments (Kuby, 2011). Elementary teachers who wish to engage in this form of anti-racist and transformative teaching must first be willing to make important critical commitments in order to successfully navigate this difficult professional terrain. The commitments are as follows:

1. **Commit to examining one's own perspectives and attitudes about race and racial justice.** Milner (2010) points out that teachers must be willing to critically reflect on how race and racism operates in the world around them and within their own lives. Without a willingness to acknowledge that racial privilege and marginalization are still very pervasive issues in the world today, it is difficult for teachers to discuss issues of race and racism with young children in open and honest ways.
2. **Commit to enduring the emotional discomfort that comes with race talk.** Elementary teachers must also be willing to endure the emotional and sometimes professional costs that often come with discussing issues of race and racism at school (Matias, 2016).
3. **Commit to exploring alternative and nontraditional sources of racial knowledge.** Many teachers have a limited knowledge base and limited experiences related to people who do not share their same racial backgrounds. In an effort to fully engage in critical racial dialogue with the students in their classrooms, teachers have to learn from and about race from alternative and uncommon sources such as: Teaching Tolerance (www.tolerance.org), The Southern Poverty Law Center (www.splcenter.org), and/or Rethinking Schools (www.rethinking-schools.org/) (Husband, 2016).
4. **Commit to collaborating with others.** Discussing race and racism can be an alienating and difficult task when approached alone. Consequently, elementary teachers should work toward developing teaching partnerships, alliances, and learning communities to assist them with facilitating this task (Woodrow, 2018).
5. **Commit to engaging in racial advocacy and activism.** Whenever feasible, teachers should seize the opportunity to connect the racial dialogue that occurs in the classroom to racial advocacy and activism in the local communities around them and within the larger society (Woodrow, 2018). For example a fourth-grade teacher might discuss the events associated with police brutality and racial profiling in Baltimore, Maryland and its connection to various forms of racial protest in the United

States. After reading, discussing and reflecting on these incidents, the teacher might then encourage his/her students to write letters to the key officials on the Baltimore Police Department that voice their positions on racial profiling and police brutality as a form of critical resistance.

Unfortunately, we still live in a social and political climate in the United States of America where racism remains a prevalent and pervasive problem. At the same time, many elementary teachers are unsure as to how to discuss issues of race and racial justice in their classrooms in meaningful and age-appropriate ways. As mentioned throughout this article, multicultural literature can and should be used as one tool to open up spaces and opportunities in the classroom in which teachers and students can openly discuss, critique, and reflect on individual and institutional forms of racial injustice in the world. Through this process of ongoing dialogue, critique, and reflection related to matters of racial injustice, children are likely to develop a deeper awareness of racial injustice in their everyday lives and the larger world around them. The development of this deeper and more critical consciousness of race and racism is a necessary first step toward equipping children with the tools and dispositions needed to make society a more racially equitable, just, and humane place now and for subsequent years to come.

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Appendix A

Sample Lesson Plan on Race and Racial Justice

Grade Level: 2nd

Subject Areas: Literacy

Lesson Title	Examining the Origins, Purposes, and Context of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM)
ELA Common Core Standards	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. • Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. • Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
Estimated Time	60 Minutes
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital vocabulary cards with supporting images • <i>If You Were a Kid During the Civil Rights Movement</i> by Gwendolyn Hooks • 5 text sets of books related to the CRM
Technology	SMART board
Student Objectives	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define key vocabulary associated with the CRM. • Discuss the social, historical, and political background contexts associated with the CRM. • Research various themes, events, and figures associated with the CRM based on student-centered inquiry questions. • Present their research findings in a multimodal format.
Introduction (15 minutes)	<p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that we will be learning about the CRM of the 1950s and 1960s. Briefly explain historical, social, and political context of the CRM of the 1960s. • Divide students into groups of three or four and have them brainstorm what they currently know about the term

	<p>“racism.” Have students record what they currently know and would like to know on a K-W-L chart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define the terms: civil rights movement, racism, and Jim Crow Laws on the SMART board with pictures images to support each definition. ● Read aloud <i>If You Were a Kid During the Civil Rights Movement</i> by Gwendolyn Hooks and discuss the background information associated with the CRM of the 1960s.
Guided Inquiry/Research (20 minutes)	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work in small inquiry groups, based on similar interests, to read grade level text sets related to various aspects of the CRM. ● Students will use a graphic organizer to take notes while reading and to document new questions that emerge. ● Students will work in small inquiry groups to design and create a product to present to the rest of the class based on their research findings. Students can select an activity from the Literacy Menu (see below) or a completely original activity that is negotiated between the teacher and the students in a particular inquiry group.
Presentation (20 minutes)	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will present their research products in small groups to the rest of the class. ● The audience members will be asked to pose questions during and after each presentation to promote discussion and dialogue.
Reflection/Assessment (5 minutes)	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be asked to self-reflect on their individualized learning throughout the inquiry process in their journal.

Literacy Activity Menu		
<p>Digital Poster</p> <p>Create a digital poster to present your research findings.</p>	<p>Comic Strip</p> <p>Create a digital comic strip to present your research findings.</p>	<p>Digital Storytelling</p> <p>Create a digital story to present your research findings.</p>
<p>Readers Theatre Script</p> <p>Write and perform an original theatrical script that presents your research findings.</p>	<p>Digital Collage</p> <p>Create a digital collage to represent the findings from your research.</p>	<p>eBook</p> <p>Create an electronic book with images that present the findings from your research.</p>
<p>Song</p> <p>Create a song or series of songs that present the finding from your research.</p>	<p>Poetry Collection</p> <p>Create a series of three to five original poems that present the findings from your research.</p>	<p>Game</p> <p>Create a board game or digital quiz to present the findings from your research.</p>
<p>Website/Blog</p> <p>Design and develop a website or blog that incorporates findings from your research and advocates for racial justice in the United States.</p>	<p>Infographic</p> <p>Create a digital infographic that presents the findings from your research.</p>	<p>Traditional Presentation</p> <p>Present your research findings using a traditional presentation tool.</p>



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What, Use Literacy in All Content Areas? Reciprocal Teaching to the Rescue!

by Amy Niklasch

Content-area teachers, embrace the literacy struggle! Many teachers are facing the reality of true implementation of the Common Core State Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, 2010), and many contemplate how they will embed the content-specific literacy skills described in the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013), which are reflected in Michigan's soon-to-be-adopted Social Studies State Standards (Michigan Department of Education, 2018) into their existing instruction. With the implementation of literacy instruction across all content areas, many skilled teachers are finding themselves overwhelmed and lacking pedagogical understanding. The need to educate all content-area teachers in the practices of literacy has never been more pressing and necessary, as content-area literacy is the foundation of disciplinary literacy.

Chauvin and Theodore state, "To graduate high school fully prepared for college and the workforce, students need more than basic literacy skills. They need to master the distinct approaches to literacy that are used in academic disciplines such as science, mathematics, and history—as well as Career Technical Education courses" (2015, p. 1). If literacy does not become a significant pillar of students' content-area instruction, their abilities to read and write as historians or scientists may be stifled. However, the shift in standards means that many 21st century educators are thinking about how to integrate these literacy skills into the classroom for the first time.

Because this shift in standards is relatively new, some seasoned teachers may have missed the opportunity within their teacher preparation programs to gain a foundational understanding of literacy that supports instruction outside of the English Language Arts classroom. As the standards have changed, many in-service



Amy Niklasch



teachers have not been supported to adapt their instruction. As stated in the U.S. Department of Education's Statistics in Brief, "the most prevalent topic of teacher professional development in 2011 was the content of the subject(s) taught (85 percent), followed by the use of computers for instruction (67 percent) and reading instruction (57 percent)" (Rotermund, DeRoche, & Ottem, 2017, p. 5). With limited professional development time and a primary focus on content (as opposed to skills), time to learn about the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts and the literacy standards that will be in the new social studies standards is hard to come by for many teachers. The standards can be challenging to implement and difficult to decipher for teachers outside of English or Language Arts subjects.

However, learning to implement effective literacy instruction in all content areas is crucial. As stated in *Reciprocal Teaching at Work*, "in recent years, an alarming 64 percent of 4th graders and 66 percent of 8th graders read below the proficient reading level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress" (Oczkus, 2018, p. 1). As proficiency levels in literacy falter,

educators need professional development opportunities to help support content literacy instruction and help to reduce the widening gap that literacy creates every day in the classroom.

These levels of literacy proficiency should concern all who are committed to educating all students to high levels. According to Vacca, "Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives" (as cited in Alber, 2014, Literacy is an Every-Century Skill section, para. 2). This is a powerful and valid argument supporting the assertion that all content-area teachers need to possess a diverse set of literacy instructional skills that will support students as they develop, use, and master their own set of literacy skills. In response to this, content-area teachers are often left to wonder, what strategies or practices are both best practices and easy to implement?

Reciprocal Teaching to the Rescue!

It has been my experience that one might find push back or refusal from students to engage and use literacy as a gateway to learning in the content areas. While this may be attributed to many things, one reason is that reading levels have been the focus in schools over the past decades, which constrain what students are "allowed" to read, and many content-area texts lie outside of their prescribed reading levels. However, many educators challenge the notion that students should only read at their prescribed level (e.g., Porter-Magee, 2014). In content-area classrooms, students often have opportunities to interact with text above their prescribed level of achievement, and it is the role of teachers to help them successfully gain meaning from these texts.

Reciprocal Teaching is a collaborative, scaffolded approach to improving reading comprehension in which each member of a group of four students is assigned an active role in the reading process, as either a predictor, a questioner, a clarifier, or the summarizer (Oczkus, 2018, p. 22). Each role within the strategy

requires metacognition and supports students in their quest to construct the meaning from the text. "The application of the metacognitive strategy during reading and comprehension lessons is also believed to help students to think methodically in all three levels of reading processes, namely before reading, during reading, and after reading" (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhall, & Joshi, 2007). Engagement and thinking about the text is imperative, as it allows and supports students to flex their cognitive muscles to ensure they are able to carry out their assigned role as they progress from the beginning to the end of the text. This process both supports creating meaning from particular texts and provides them with structured ways to think about other texts. In addition, engaging in each of the roles supports unique standards (for roles, descriptions, and the standards they support, see Table 1).

The Research

As educators of the 21st century struggle to immerse students in literacy, Reciprocal Teaching can be a conduit to content and disciplinary learning. The efficacy of Reciprocal Teaching has proven its worth within content-area instruction and content-area curriculum, and has "led to sizable gains on criterion tests of comprehension, reliable maintenance over time, generalization to classroom comprehension tests, transfer to novel tasks that tapped the trained skills of summarizing, questioning, and clarifying, and improvement in standardized comprehension scores" (Palinscar & Brown, 1984, p. 117). As students use their skills of comprehension, prediction, clarification, and summarizing in new contexts, the educator and students are likely to see evidence of improved reading comprehension and content learning. Oczkus views Reciprocal Teaching as "a bridge to engagement in literacy, while meeting the needs of all learners, regardless of ability levels" (2018, p. 4). Diverse ability levels populate our classrooms, and educators are held accountable for ensuring all students have access to the curriculum. Reciprocal Teaching supports this by expanding access to texts that may be above a student's reading level. For example, the predictor may scaffold students to use imagery and text features to make predictions that are valuable to the group and make the text more accessible. In addition,

Table 1

Reciprocal Teaching Roles and Common Core State Standard Correlations

Role	Description	Standard Correlation ¹
Predictor	Uses explicit and implicit evidence from the text and prior knowledge to make predictions before, after, and during the reading, while locating textual evidence to prove predictions true.	RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Clarifier	Identifies unknown words and phrases for the group, to support comprehension and clarify meaning within the text.	RI.6.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
Questioner	Uses clues from the text to ask implicit and explicit questions and seek answers to questions that supports the group’s ability to construct meaning of the text.	RI.6.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
Summarizer	Uses knowledge learned from the other roles within the strategy to identify the overarching themes and big ideas of the text.	RI.6.2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

¹ Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, 2010).

the summarizer and clarifier can help the group focus on big ideas and key vocabulary, supporting them to attend to the most important information and understand the textual descriptions. Finally, the questioner can make the text more accessible by posing questions that the group can answer together to build stronger understanding. As students become more comfortable and confident with the strategy, they can and should switch roles to ensure they have supported practice in

each role that will help them to later engage in them independently.

Reciprocal Teaching can also produce up to two years of growth in comprehension per year, which indicates that this teaching method is extremely effective in improving student achievement (Hattie, 2008, as cited in Oczkus, 2018, p. 2). Hattie’s (2008) research “ranks Reciprocal Teaching as one of the 10 most effective

teaching techniques out of 138 practices” (Oczkus, 2018, p. 2). Even more convincing, Brown and Campione (1992) claim that reciprocal teaching can improve students’ performances on high-stakes achievement tests, as “research on reciprocal teaching has shown that there are improved comprehension results and transfer of skills to other curriculum areas” (McAllum, 2014, p. 26). According to a study by Palincsar and Brown (1986), “the creators of reciprocal teaching, found that when the strategies were used with a group of students for just 15-20 days, assessment of students’ reading comprehension increased from 30 percent to 70-80 percent” (Oczkus, 2018, p. 16). Palincsar and Klenk (1992) also found that “students not only improved their comprehension skills almost immediately, but also maintained their improved comprehension skills when tested a year later” (as cited in Oczkus, 2018, p. 16).

In addition, for students that may struggle with comprehension or lack the foundational literacy skills, Reciprocal Teaching can provide an opportunity to build these necessary skills. Carter (1997) found that, “Reciprocal Teaching techniques are especially effective when incorporated into intervention programs for struggling readers and when used with low-performing students in urban settings” (Oczkus, 2018, p. 6). In addition, as concluded by Sollars and Pumfrey, “English Language Learners also benefit and grow as a result of Reciprocal Teaching, as studies have found positive growth in reading comprehension for English Language Learners who often experience problems with comprehension due to vocabulary load and a mismatch in background experiences” (Oczkus, 2018, p. 6). Reciprocal Teaching has the potential to meet the instructional needs of a variety of students in a variety of contexts.

Steps to Implementation in All Content Area Classrooms

Learning how to use Reciprocal Teaching in the classroom is a gradual process in which teachers learn with their students. Breaking the strategy into parts and teaching each skill or role and then later teaching students to use them more flexibly is one way to embed

this instructional tool into your weekly practice. Consider the following tips as you plan for implementation:

1. Teach students how to summarize fiction and nonfiction text before beginning the Reciprocal Teaching process.
2. Model the strategy in its entirety using a video or with four teachers who understand it well so that students can envision what they are trying to do.
3. Pre-teach each role separately using less complex picture books or a well-known story, which will allow students to focus on the process, not understanding of difficult content.
4. Use strategy cards that define the roles and give possible sentence starters they might use while fulfilling the role to guide the students as they work through the process and requirement of each role.
5. Provide each group with a large poster on which all group members can post the work produced as they played their roles. This allows groups to organize the learning embedded in each role in a visible way, this can also serve as a formative assessment check.
6. As much as possible, group students in mixed-ability groups, including high achieving readers, average readers, and struggling readers. When first starting out, you may want to have more confident readers take on the role of summarizer, which is quite demanding, while less confident readers may be more comfortable beginning as the predictor. However, eventually, all students should enact all roles.
7. Assign one student to also act as a “teacher” student to monitor their small group to stay on task and ensure each member gets to enact their role.
8. As students learn their roles, they should, in time, switch roles within their group.

Content Crossover

Reciprocal Teaching teaches students how to determine important ideas from a text while discussing vocabulary, developing ideas and questions, and summarizing information (Oczkus, 2018, p. 3). All content teachers can rest assured that this strategy can be effectively used with textbooks, nonfiction text, articles, and book

clubs (Oczkus, 2018, p. 3). In addition, when a bird's eye perspective is applied to English language arts and social studies standards, one will discover that the strategy addresses parallel skills in each. Therefore, the strategy of Reciprocal Teaching, when implemented in a social studies classroom, can also address English language arts standards. To understand this binding relationship, consider the following scenario: A sixth-grade social studies teacher has decided to read articles that support and oppose gun control to help students understand the idea of varying perspectives, which targets the Language arts standard "CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text" (Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, 2010), as well as the proposed Michigan Social Studies State Standard "6 – G4.4.2 Evaluate examples of cooperation and conflict within the region under study" (Michigan Department of Education, 2018). The teacher supports the students to use Reciprocal Teaching as they read the article, putting students in groups of four and assigning each student a role. Some groups read an article that is in favor of gun control, and other groups read an article that takes a position against gun control. Each group previews their text before and during reading, as the questioner generates questions. The clarifier uses technology and context clues to identify unknown words and phrases before, during, and after the reading, as the members of each group can choose to independently silent read or share the task of reading aloud the text to the group. If the text proves difficult, the summarizer reads it out loud to the group to support any comprehension or decoding difficulties. After reading, the questioner poses questions in response to the full text.

After the reading is completed, each group participates in a discussion, in which they discuss and evaluate their predictions, questions, meanings of unknown words and phrases, and the main idea of the text. This discussion supports efforts to write a summary of the text. The summarizer writes the summary with the group's support and guidance. Upon completion of this task, each group meets with a group with an opposing position text, and the two groups discuss the differences

in predictions, questions, unknown words and phrases, and summaries. After students have been exposed to each position, through the Reciprocal Teaching process, they identify which perspective they support by using evidence from the relevant article.

Conclusion

Reciprocal Teaching is an efficient and effective way for content-teachers to embed literacy into their instructional methods and weekly routines. When using this strategy, all learners have a purpose, are included in a group, and can feel success as the strategy supports students with diverse levels of ability through collaborative practice. Further, reciprocal teaching also assists with student engagement, something that all teachers strive for.

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Motivation matters: Factors that affect the reading motivation of English learners

by Dr. Selena Protacio

Nabila came to Michigan from Afghanistan as a refugee and entered second grade not knowing any English. Fortunately for Nabila, her teachers not only worked with her on her English language skills, but also inspired her to have a love of reading. I first met Nabila when she was a sixth grader who was a very motivated reader. When I revisited Nabila again in the eighth grade, she was still motivated, but her reasons for reading had changed.

Nabila's story is a success in that she came to this country as a newcomer and emerged as both a proficient reader and motivated reader. However, not all English learners (ELs) have this experience, and teachers understand the challenge of teaching ELs to be both proficient and motivated readers. Unfortunately, there is a limited amount of research on ELs' reading motivation as most motivation research has focused on native-English speakers. However, we cannot assume that what motivates native-English speakers to read in English will also be the same for ELs, especially since they come to school with a variety of experiences in terms of their culture, language, and formal schooling. We need to think about how to increase and maintain the reading motivation of the estimated 4.8 million ELs in U.S. public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Previous research indicates a relationship between reading motivation and reading achievement (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007). This relationship is especially pertinent to ELs, as they continue to score lower than their native-English speaking peers on the reading portions of standardized assessments, according to the 2017 *Nation's Report Card*. For instance, ELs and native English speakers scored 189 and 226 respectively at the fourth-grade level while eighth graders scored 226 and 269 respectively, and these differences are statistically significant. These results are unsurprising considering



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the "double burden" (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007) that ELs have. While they are learning the English language or learning academic English, ELs must learn the same content as their native English-speaking peers (Goldenberg, 2008). It is crucial that we focus on ELs' reading motivation as a potential avenue to improve their reading achievement. In this article, I will discuss factors that matter in order to cultivate and maintain the reading motivation of English learners. All of the examples presented in this article are based on my various case studies with ELs in Michigan schools (e.g., Protacio, 2012, 2017).

Home Matters

Practitioners must consider that home literacy practices of ELs may be vastly different from those of the mainstream. While English-speaking, mainstream families may engage in practices such as reading bedtime stories or regular trips to the public library, ELs coming

from non-mainstream homes may not engage in such practices, although certainly some do. In reality, for some ELs, it is the school setting where they are first immersed in a print-rich environment.

Schools can encourage the participation of ELs and their families in more non-traditional ways. For instance, upon moving to the U.S., one Chinese family required their son to read in English 30 to 45 minutes a day. This boy, who was initially an unmotivated reader, found his niche while complying with his parents' demand that he read every day. Others have also found that while immigrant parents themselves may not read, they are likely to encourage their children to read and pass on the value of the importance of education (Loera, Rueda, & Nakamoto, 2011).

Some immigrant parents may not be fluent in English; however, they may be avid readers in their native language. A fifth grader whose family was originally from Iraq recalled in an interview that he saw his father reading in Arabic every night. Immigrant parents do not necessarily have to be reading in English to have an impact on their children's reading motivation. Schools can encourage immigrant parents to continue to be reading role models to their children, regardless of the language in which they read.

Parental involvement in U.S. mainstream society may be thought of as "reading to your child." Yet, we have to think of different ways in which we could partner with immigrant families to work hand in hand with the goal of increasing ELs' reading motivation.

Interactions Matter

Social motivation can be very important in helping ELs become more motivated to read in English. Reading in English could be a way for ELs to establish connections and interact with their peers. Moving to a new school is intimidating enough, but imagine moving to a new school in a new country! Reading the same texts as their native-English speaking peers can give ELs a common experience to which they could bond with their new peers. One student recalled how he read the same books

as his peers, and he liked to start conversations with someone reading the same book or series.

Conversely, students' social groups could also dissuade them from reading. One student who had moved to Michigan from Japan was an avid reader in her native country. She and her friends loved to talk about the Japanese texts they were reading. However, when she moved to Michigan, none of her new friends loved to read. Thus, she did not want to read English texts since she had no American peers with whom to discuss them. Another EL from Afghanistan admitted that he and his friends did not read. They would rather spend their time watching movies or shopping at the mall.

Social motivation is extremely important to reading motivation because it fosters connections with peers who validate and help make meaning from reading. However, for ELs, finding opportunities to engage in social interactions around text may be difficult. For instance, in one of my research studies, a Muslim student was an avid reader, yet she was ostracized by her mainstream peers (Protacio, 2017). Even though she wanted to participate in social interactions around reading, her pool of peers with whom she could engage in book discussions was quite limited. Therefore, teachers need to create those social organizations and communities in which ELs can talk and share what they like about reading (e.g., book clubs, book talks).

Self-Efficacy Matters

ELs face many challenges such as having to learn the English language while concurrently learning the academic content in their classrooms (Goldenberg, 2008). An EL originally from Lebanon recalled that when he first started learning how to read in English in the first grade, he felt stupid because the letters looked like a bunch of squiggles to him. Fortunately, his school had an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who worked diligently with him on both his oral language and literacy abilities. By fifth grade, he was at the top of his class. While this represents a success story, it certainly does not reflect the reality of all ELs who come to the U.S. with limited English skills. Schools have an

obligation to provide ELs with the necessary services to help them become more proficient in all aspects of English—speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

There are one too many stories of ELs being put in special education because some schools think that is where ELs can get the most help, especially for schools that only have a few ELs and no ESL teacher. But schools must understand this is doing ELs a great disservice since the needs of ELs are vastly different from those of special education students. As another example, a teacher in one of my graduate classes teaches in a rural school district with primarily Caucasian students. However, after winter break, a new student enrolled in their district—a boy from China who had limited English skills. As the reading specialist at the school, she was trying to help the classroom teacher figure out ways to help this student. But most of the day he sat in the teacher's classroom with an electronic translator. Let us take a minute to put ourselves in this student's shoes. How would this affect our self-efficacy as a learner? It would be like watching a foreign movie all day without subtitles. How motivated would you be if you were this student?

It is clear that in order to address ELs' reading motivation, we must help them become readers of English texts. ELs need to feel they can be successful readers of English texts and members of English-speaking learning communities. A caveat to consider is the types of texts we have ELs read. Cho, Xu, and Rhodes (2010) found that fourth grade ELs in their study who scored below the 25th percentile on a standardized test were more likely to be motivated to read texts when they were given ones that were moderately challenging. In other words, these ELs, who scored fairly low on a standardized test, wanted to be exposed to interesting, albeit challenging texts rather than texts that were too simple. Providing ELs with moderately challenging texts on topics of interest would not only benefit their motivation, but it would also help in possibly improving their reading proficiency. In addition, ELs need exposure to more authentic, meaningful reading (Li & Zhang, 2004) rather than rote, boring reading activities.

Choice Matters

We know that students are more likely to be motivated to read when they are given choices. As Guthrie and Klauda (2012) explain, students do not have to be given complete free rein in choosing what to read. Students could be asked to choose a section of a text to read, or they could choose a text they would prefer to read from a list of supplementary materials.

All students, not just ELs, need time to read something of their own choosing (Allington & Gabriel, 2012). Thus, students need access to texts in their classrooms that they want to read. We also need to consider that ELs may want to read books that cover diverse perspectives. Teachers should examine their classroom libraries. Will ELs be able to see themselves represented in the book or text options in the library? Are they able to find “mirrors” (Sims Bishop, 1990) in the texts available to them in schools? On a related note, are they exposed to “windows” so they can learn about diverse perspectives and expand their world views (Sims Bishop, 1990)? In addition, teachers can consider adding dual-language texts as another choice for ELs so they can read both in English and their native language.

Providing students choices is not centered only around reading materials. ELs should also have choices in how they demonstrate understanding of their learning. For instance, ELs who are still developing as writers may not be able to express their comprehension through a traditional essay. Having options such as making a visual representation (e.g., poster) could be an alternative assignment for ELs to express their ideas as they are continuing to hone their English writing skills. They may also be more motivated to create such projects rather than being required to write traditional papers. Teachers who are uncomfortable with giving complete freedom of choice in the classroom can provide a limited set of choices to students for final products on a unit. One teacher shared that she creates tic-tac-toe boards wherein students are given nine choices, and they need to choose three of those tasks for a given curricular unit.

Value Matters

ELs must be clear in their understanding that learning how to read in English and actually reading in English are going to help them become more successful in U.S. schools. It is crucial that ELs realize that the more they read, the more they understand. In a previous article (Protacio, 2012), I describe how ELs who are motivated to read understand the value of reading. For instance, one student explicitly mentioned that as she read more, she was able to find out how to improve her writing abilities. Another student recognized his vocabulary increased from reading. As a counter example, a middle school EL from Afghanistan declared he did not read because it was not relevant to his career aspirations of becoming an actor. When he was told that he would actually have to read a lot of scripts if he wanted to land acting jobs, he began to participate in classroom discussions about reading.

In short, ELs have to understand why reading is important and how it could help them with their academics or their future careers. Having to learn to read in another language may be a challenging, tedious process for many ELs in U.S. schools, particularly for those who arrive with limited literacy abilities in their first language. It is important for ELs to know why reading in English is beneficial so they can be motivated to work harder at overcoming the initial challenges.

Teachers Matter

Earlier in the article, I described the experiences of a Lebanese student who had made great strides in terms of his English proficiency and literacy abilities thanks to the commitment of his ESL teacher. Undoubtedly, teachers can have an impact on ELs' development as readers, but I want to emphasize how teachers have an impact on ELs' development as motivated readers.

At the beginning of this article, I introduced readers to Nabila. She recalled that her teachers were the ones who initially motivated her to read. They first gave her picture books, and then as her literacy skills improved, helped her find texts that were at her independent reading level. She shared that aside from her friends,

her teachers and the school librarian were able to recommend books that she enjoyed reading. Another EL shared that he initially did not know how to choose good books. His teacher modeled for him how to look over the book's blurb, skim the first few pages, and use the catalog through the library's website. His teacher's scaffolding strategies allowed this EL to become more adept at choosing books that he would most likely enjoy, rather than picking up the first book he came upon, which is what he was initially doing.

Teachers can also inspire ELs to become motivated readers. One way to do so would be to determine ELs' reading interests through an interest inventory (e.g., McKenna & Stahl, 2009). An interest inventory is a list of topics from which ELs can indicate what they would like to read. For ELs with limited English proficiency, teachers can adapt the interest survey by using pictures so students could better indicate which ones are topics of interest. By examining the interest inventory, teachers can recommend books or texts that ELs would likely enjoy reading.

Conclusion: ELs Matter

This article provided several areas which "matter" when motivating ELs to read in English. However, it is equally important that schools, their policies, teachers, and administrators understand that "ELs Matter." Each EL brings a wealth of experiences and linguistic knowledge that can be tapped and used to address their reading motivation. What I hope this article underscores is the importance of thinking of ways to specifically address and increase ELs' motivation to read in English.

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Adopting and Adapting Michigan's Tenth Essential Literacy Practice: Collaboration with Families

by Patricia A. Edwards, Ph.D., Kristen L. White, Ph.D., and Lori E. Bruner



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Every home is a university and the parents are the teachers.
—Mahatma Gandhi

As Mrs. Hill made her 25-minute drive to school, she mentally composed her grocery list for her trip to the store at the end of the day. Over summer break, she had learned about the Family Dinner Project, a movement out of Harvard University whose goal was to encourage families to eat meals together and support their efforts to increase conversations around the dinner table. Like many families, Mrs. Hill lived in a very busy household with two working parents and children who were involved in activities. Despite their schedules, she was committed to eating dinner together this school year at least four days per week.

As she drove, Mrs. Hill began to think about how the Family Dinner Project could relate to her classroom. She had spent the past 15 years teaching first grade in the same rural school district, attended by mostly White, middle-class students. Her building was located in a small centrally-located town, but many of her families spent as much as 45 minutes in the car just to get to school each day. As she made her own commute, Mrs. Hill had the



perfect idea: knowing the importance of adult conversations for children's language and literacy development, she decided to create "conversation starters" for her students' commutes in the same way that the Family Dinner Project created conversation starters for mealtimes.

By early November, Mrs. Hill's idea had come to fruition. Each week, she sent home note cards with three different conversation starters printed on labels that a parent volunteer assembled. During conferences, many families raved about the enjoyment their entire household was getting out of these cards, which included funny topics (e.g., "What is

your favorite silly face?”), thought-provoking topics (e.g., “If you could create a new tradition for our family, what would it be?”), and reflections (e.g., “Talk about something nice someone did for you this week.”). As the year progressed, some children began sharing their own ideas for conversation starters, and several families reported creating a “filing” system to save the cards to revisit throughout the year.

It may be that while reading the vignette above you identified with the classroom teacher, Mrs. Hill. We did, too. Therefore, we invite educators within and outside the state to join us in (re)conceptualizing a new, or perhaps a familiar topic, “collaboration with families,” in order to promote literacy. In so doing, we adopt and adapt a culturally relevant teaching lens to also include collaboration with families around their children’s literacy. This important endeavor is included as one of the 10 Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c) that schools and districts may embrace, we hope, as a focus for professional development throughout the state.

In this article, we discuss and provide examples of how schools across grades, Pre-K through fifth, can engage parents in developing their children’s literacy skills through *information*, *awareness*, and *outreach* in ways that are culturally relevant to students and their families in particular contexts. We use the term “parents” for consistency with the Michigan Early Literacy Essentials. However, each school will want to consider who, among its population, cares for children. “Care-givers” is more inclusive of the range of people who care for children regardless of context (e.g., grandparents, elders, aunts, uncles, neighbors, foster families). We first provide background information on the origin of the *Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy and Early Literacy*. Next, we highlight the benefits of family engagement and its effects on student achievement, as well as the shared benefits for parents, teachers, and schools. Finally, we discuss how a culturally relevant curriculum can be used as a framework that schools can adopt and adapt for engaging the diverse language

and literacy practices of the families in their contexts to promote literacy. We argue that collaborating with families to ensure childhood literacy is a matter of social equity. The recommendations in this article move family engagement from high rhetoric to high practice (Epstein, 2011).

Background of the Michigan Essential Instructional Practices

On March 1, 2015, Governor Snyder appointed the Third-Grade Reading Workgroup to analyze the third-grade students’ reading proficiency in Michigan and to suggest policy for improving students’ reading for future academic and career success. For the past 12 years, the reading proficiency rates for Michigan’s third-grade students has steadily declined. National test results indicate that more than two-thirds of Michigan students fail to demonstrate third-grade proficiency in reading on standardized reading tests (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2017). Conversely, the reading proficiency of third-grade students has improved in almost every other state. To better understand this issue and to address it effectively, the workgroup reviewed similar data and programs from various states. For example, the workgroup interviewed teachers, reading interventionists, principals, superintendents, early childhood literacy researchers, and policy experts who have all had positive impacts on reading proficiency despite the challenges associated with childhood poverty. These schools, districts, and states are achieving early literacy using similar diagnostic-driven instruction and intervention methods individualized for each student.

Recognizing the need for improvement, the state developed Michigan’s Top 10 in 10 Strategic Plan, publicly making transparent its commitment to becoming a national leader in early literacy by 2025. Recommendations from the Third-Grade Reading Workgroup suggest that the early literacy work at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) must focus on:

- Supporting educators with training to use diagnostic-driven methods with knowledge and fidelity;

- Engaging and collaborating with parents in developing their children's early literacy skills through information, awareness, and outreach;
- Providing Michigan teachers and leaders with data that compares students' status and growth over time when compared with other states; and,
- Using research-supported diagnostic and screening instruments, instruction, and interventions necessary for academic success.

As a state, Michigan is focusing on increasing students' early literacy skills. The Early Literacy Initiative is a major undertaking that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will work on in the coming years. This work is crucial because research suggests that if students are not proficient in reading by third grade, their chances of educational attainment are nominal (Hernandez, 2011). The MDE advocates that, to ensure proficient early literacy skills for all of Michigan's students, the state must develop and deliver an educational system that provides high-quality instruction to

all students, provide regular information on student progress, and strategically implement research-based strategies, particularly when students are not meeting grade-level expectations. The MDE also advocates that prior to children becoming students (i.e., at kindergarten entry), engaging and supporting parents and other family members in supporting language and early literacy development will provide the foundation for later academic success as well as increase the engagement of families in their children's schooling.

The following table illustrates the framework developed by MDE that serves as a guide for educators and professional development efforts along the realm of parent involvement. The tenth Essential Practice, Collaboration with Families in Promoting Literacy, is dedicated to supporting educators across three early-grade bands (pre-kindergarten, kindergarten through third grade, and fourth and fifth grades) as they partner with parents and other family members to support children's reading and writing development at home.

Table 1

Michigan Department of Education Framework for Professional Development Related to Parent Involvement

Pre-K	K-3	4-5
Incorporate literacy-promoting strategies into everyday activities such as cooking, communicating with friends and family, and traveling in the bus or car.	Prompt children during reading and writing and demonstrate ways to incorporate literacy-promoting strategies into everyday activities, such as cooking, communicating with friends and family, and traveling in the bus or car.	Support families to continue to provide reading and academic learning opportunities at home and during the summer months (i.e., book lending programs).
Read aloud to children and discuss the text.	Promote children's independent reading.	Build on students' family and cultural resources and knowledge in reading and writing instruction.

Encourage literacy milestones (i.e., pretend reading).	Support children in doing their homework and in academic learning over summer months.	Promote children’s independent reading outside of school.
Speak with children in their home/most comfortable language, whether or not that language is English.	Speak with children in their home/most comfortable language, whether or not that language is English.	Speak with children in their home/most comfortable language, whether or not that language is English.
Provide literacy-supporting resources such as books from the classroom that children can borrow or keep, children’s magazines, information about adult-supported use of educational television and digital applications, announcements about local events, and passes to local museums.	Provide literacy-supporting resources such as books from the classroom that children can borrow or keep, children’s magazines, information about adult-supported use of educational television and digital applications, announcements about local events, and passes to local museums.	Provide literacy-supporting resources such as books from the classroom that children can borrow or keep, children’s magazines, information about adult-supported use of educational television and digital applications, and passes to local museums.

The Early Literacy Initiative is a core component of supporting the implementation of College- and Career-Ready standards in Michigan, particularly in the earliest grades. The MDE is making a concerted effort to consistently focus on the foundations described above and build the capacity to support districts as they work on the key driver of student achievement—literacy.

Additionally, the MDE maintains that equitable access to early childhood instruction is supported by five core beliefs, which include “culturally relevant curriculum, materials, and practices that are incorporated into daily classroom activities” (Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence, 2019). Collaborating with families to promote literacy as part of a culturally-relevant parent

curriculum may be familiar, challenging, exciting, or even a combination of all three, for schools and educators; thus, we offer a framework for implementing Michigan policy contextually.

A Culturally Relevant Parent and Family Curriculum

In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings published a landmark article introducing a pedagogical framework, “culturally relevant pedagogy” (CRP). Although Ladson-Billings coined the term CRP, culturally relevant teaching (CRT) is a similar term and the one we use in this article because it is what we most commonly hear in the schools and classrooms we work in. Upon sharing

culturally relevant teaching (CRT) with various school personnel, she regularly received the same comment that CRT is “just good teaching” (p. 159). We concur with Ladson-Billings and educators writ large; CRT is good teaching and an essential component of equitable early childhood education. Similarly, we have found that it is a helpful framework for respectfully engaging parents and families in developing their children’s literacy both at home and at school. In our 65 years of accumulated teaching experience among the three of us (Pat, Kristen, and Lori), we have found that when the home language and literacy practices of the children we have taught were valued in our classrooms, our students flourished academically and socially in and out of school, and we developed collaborative relationships with our students’ parents and families.

With 83 counties and two peninsulas, Michigan has different geographical features and populations (Figure 1). For example, while the lower-peninsula hosts urban cities like Detroit, Flint, Saginaw, and Lansing, the rural Upper Peninsula contains only 3% of the state’s overall human population (Detroit Free Press, 2018). Michigan has 12 federally recognized Native American tribes; five of them are located in the Upper Peninsula. Thus, family diversity in schools in Sault Ste. Marie includes the Native American tribe known as the Chippewa. The Native American population unique to that area is different than the Dutch population in Holland. We do not mean to stereotype the people in particular areas of the state but rather point out that the parents, families, and children attending Michigan schools are awesomely diverse! A CRT lens, then, is a



Figure 1. Map of Michigan Counties.

valuable resource for (re)conceptualizing a parent and family curriculum that schools statewide can employ to increase parent collaboration and promote literacy. We believe that a CRT framework illuminates, respects, and values the myriad ways that diverse families develop their children's language and literacies well before entering school. Furthermore, such practices are a vehicle for uniting the home and the school.

CRT as a framework, extended to include parent engagement, consists of three principles—academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1990). Ladson-Billings asserts that students who achieved academic success in her seminal study did so because their teachers attended to their academic needs and demanded excellence. In her study, Edwards (1992) found that parents, particularly African American, sought teachers who were honest with them about their children's academic progress. She thus worked with teachers at an elementary school to openly and honestly communicate with parents who were racially, ethnically, and culturally different from themselves. This resulted in improved communication between teachers and parents. Parents began to trust, believe, and gain confidence in teachers' assessment of their children. More importantly, this resulted in a positive and supportive school atmosphere.

Collaborating with families to promote literacy entails not only providing parents access to assessment data about their children's academic progress, but also explaining the data in terms that they understand. In turn, this means that classroom teachers must themselves understand the data. In addition to sharing and explaining mandated standardized test scores to parents, it is equally important to document and share evidence of children's growth in other areas. Teachers can achieve this goal through the use of anecdotal records and artifacts collected across content areas. For instance, these records can document the strategies children use as they read, write, and talk while participating in literacy events like play (Owocki & Goodman, 2002). These suggestions align with the MDE's Top 10 in 10 goals and the Michigan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan, which advocates for a "whole child approach."

A whole child approach recognizes that each child is a unique learner and encourages educators to attend to interacting dimensions such as the cognitive, physical, behavioral, social, and emotional. If one dimension is not functioning optimally, then educators must work diligently to attend to it.

As literacy educators, how often do we stop and consider our role in improving the life opportunities of students who fall outside of the cultural mainstream? There are educators who think about this a lot, and Lazar, Edwards, and McMillon (2012) call them "teachers for social equity" or "social equity literacy teachers" (p. 1). They strive to teach children to read because they see their work within the broader spheres of power and opportunity. They recognize that the educational playing field is often unequal for students who live in high poverty communities. Many are students of color who have been historically disenfranchised by public education, and many come to school with diverse language abilities that are not recognized in school. These students are often under-served by low-resourced classrooms, inexperienced teachers, and culturally foreign curricula. Lazar, Edwards, and McMillon (2012) stated:

Teachers for social equity know they cannot change these things without help from many corners of society, but they do their part by: 1) seeing students' inherent literate capacities, 2) helping students realize their fullest literacy potential, and 3) challenging the policies and practices that undermine students' literacy achievement. They not only assess students' literacy abilities and use this information to inform instruction, but they also *assume a political orientation to literacy teaching where issues of race, class, culture, literacy, language, and teaching intersect.* (p. 22)

Cultural Competence

Ladson-Billings (1995) asserts that culturally relevant teaching maintains children's cultures inside the classroom. One approach to learning more about children's diverse language and literacy practices at home is to send a questionnaire asking parents to offer information about their child and familial language and literacy

practices. Note, however, that to honor the languages spoken in the home, it is important to make sure that forms are translated into the family's heritage language, if necessary. Information provided by parents can help teachers learn about families' funds of knowledge, "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). Teachers can analyze and synthesize this information and use it to inform curricula and instruction in the classroom and as a way to collaborate with parents in furthering their child's literacy at home and in school. A limitation that teachers should be aware of is that when their students' home language and literacy practices do not align with their own, valuing, honoring, and respecting them means seeking ways to incorporate these practices into their teaching as well as their engagement with parents.

Critical Consciousness

Although Ladson-Billings (1995) articulates critical consciousness as ensuring that students develop a sociopolitical consciousness to critique the "cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 162), we suggest that in order to create a culturally relevant parent curriculum, school personnel do the heavy lifting. In other words, develop a sociopolitical consciousness by examining the self, school, or school district's existing practices for a culturally relevant curriculum for collaborating with parents to further their children's literacy. Some possible questions to consider are:

- In what ways has the school assumed, albeit unknowingly, particular cultural norms and mores that include particular groups of parents and families at the exclusion of others to promote literacy events (e.g., Family Literacy Night, volunteering during the school day)?
- Is there evidence that opportunities for parent collaboration impact students' academic achievement? If so, which groups of students?
- How are children's home literacies valued, respected, and included in reading and other areas of the curriculum?

- Are the books and texts in classrooms and the school library reflective of the student population?
- Are teachers in the school or district assessment-literate? Do they feel confident in their ability to understand the explain students' standardized test scores in terms parents can easily understand?
- Are deficit terms used to describe the language and literacy practices of some children (e.g., "at risk," "struggling," "low,") while other terms privilege the language and literacy practices of other groups of children (e.g., "high," "gifted," "smart")?
- Do the written and spoken language used around the school and district reflect the languages and literacies of the student population?

Family Engagement Improves Student Achievement

The past 30 years of American school reform have focused on course curricula, instructional methods, and teacher training as ways to improve student achievement. While American public education has changed over the years, one often ignored factor—family engagement—remains critical to student achievement. Ongoing research shows family engagement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores parents' confidence in their children's education (Edwards, 2004, 2016; Epstein, 1987, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Recent research on the best practices in education suggests that parental involvement/family engagement, not income or social status, is the most accurate predictor of scholastic achievement (Edwards, 2016; Epstein, 2011). Thus, family engagement and parental involvement benefit every facet of the educational process.

The Effect of Parent Involvement on Students' Academic Achievement

Families are the keystone that holds the educational framework together. "When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more." That's the conclusion of *A New Wave of Evidence*, a report by Henderson and Mapp (2002, p. 7) from the Southwest Educational

Development Laboratory. The report, a synthesis of research on parent involvement over the past decade, also found that regardless of family income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits;
- Attend school regularly;
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and,
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

Parental Benefits

Even parents themselves benefit when they are involved in their children's education. By involving themselves at both the school and community level, parents:

- Interact with their children more and are thus more sensitive to their emotional and intellectual needs;
- Have more confidence in their parenting abilities;
- Have a better understanding of the teacher's role and the curricula;
- Use more positive reinforcement when they learn about developmental stages;
- Are more likely to respond to teachers' requests for help at home when they stay apprised of what their children are learning;
- Have higher opinions of and feel more committed to their children's schools; and,
- Become more active in policy-making at school and in the community (Edwards, 2004, 2016; Epstein, 1987, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Benefits to Teachers and Schools

Educators have difficult jobs that are all too often thankless, but parent involvement helps ease their burden to some degree. When parents get involved, they join forces with teachers to make a formidable educational team characterized by mutual respect. Here are a few of the benefits to educators and schools when parents take an active role in their children's education:

- Teachers and administrators experience higher morale and job satisfaction.
- Parents have more respect for the teaching profession.
- Communication improves among educators, parents, and administrators.
- Communities have higher opinions of schools with involved parents.
- School programs that involve parents perform better and offer higher quality education (Edwards, 2004, 2016; Epstein, 1987, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

With all the potential benefits of parental involvement, spending time and paying attention to a child's education should be a top priority for all parents. When parents foster an atmosphere of learning and collaborate with educators, the entire educational system benefits, from students to teachers to parents themselves.

One Final Story: Information, Awareness, and Outreach

Literature suggests that parent involvement is an important factor in student academic achievement (Edwards, 2004, 2016; Epstein, 1987, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Research findings reveal that the most effective parent involvement programs use personal contact, cultural sensitivity, accommodations, communication, and a focused approach to reach parents and students (Edwards, 2009, 2016). Throughout this article, we highlighted the benefits of family engagement and its effects on student achievement, as well as the shared benefits for parents, teachers, and schools. We also examined how a culturally-relevant parent curriculum can be used as a framework that schools can adopt and adapt for engaging the diverse language and literacy practices of the families in their context in order to promote early literacy. As we conclude our conversation around these topics, we leave readers with one final story from a kindergarten classroom in mid-Michigan. This story exemplifies how one teacher, Ms. Dow, collaborated with parents to promote their children's literacy in ways that were culturally relevant to the context. Ms. Dow knew her

families and the community well, and as a result, she not only made families aware of the importance of having access to books, but ensured their access by removing the barriers. Like Ms. Dow, we encourage educators around and outside the contours of the Great Lakes state to adopt and adapt state policy to (re)conceptualize a parent curriculum that promotes literacy in culturally and contextually relevant ways!

It was the last week of August and the mid-western air was thick and hot as Ms. Dow put the finishing touches on her kindergarten classroom in preparation for Back-to-School Night. It was her third year of teaching in the district, located near the state capital, and housing many international families from around the world—including a significant number of refugee families. In previous years, Ms. Dow noticed that many of her students entered kindergarten with very limited knowledge of books: how to locate the title, where to begin reading, and even which direction to hold a book.

In addition to the school library, Ms. Dow had a small classroom library, and allowed children to take books home with them freely throughout the year. However, this year, her goal was to expand her families' access to books beyond the four walls of the school building. The public library system located in the district had a substantial number of books in many of her students' home languages, which Ms. Dow knew was critical for supporting her students' literacy development, yet was more than she could provide in her classroom. Ms. Dow knew that many of her families faced two main limitations to their access to the public library system: language barriers and a lack of a permanent address or government identification. This year, at Back-to-School Night, in addition to providing information about story times and other recurring early literacy activities in the area, she also provided stacks of library card applications. Alongside three volunteers from the school's parent organization, Ms. Dow helped new families fill out the form with the information they provided. The next morning, she stopped at the library on the way into school where staff processed all the applications for her. She returned to school later that day with a stack of brand-new library cards—ready to hand out to all her students on the first day of school.

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Author Biographies

Dr. Patricia A. Edwards, a member of the Reading Hall of Fame, is a Professor of Language and Literacy in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. She served as a member

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Dr. Kristen L. White joined the faculty of Northern Michigan University as an Assistant Professor of Education in fall 2018. Interested in how young children are labeled as particular "kinds of readers" and embody imposed reading identities, Dr. White's research interrogates how materials in the form of prescriptive curricula and assessments, policy, and space operationalize young children's literate identity in early childhood classrooms. She can be reached at krwhite@nmu.edu.

Lori E. Bruner is a former elementary school teacher, reading specialist, and ESL interventionist. Lori's research focuses on word characteristics in early-grades text that impact young children's fluency development and how these factors can help educators support their students while learning to read. She is currently engaged in doctoral studies in Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education at Michigan State University. She can be reached at lbruner@msu.edu.



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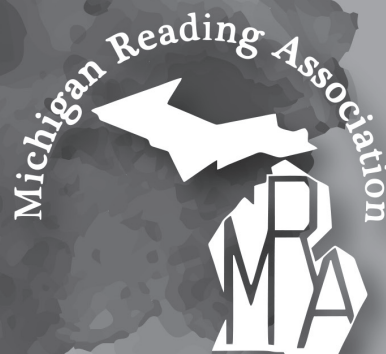
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Being Child-Centered and Focusing on Children: A Longitudinal Case Study

by Catherine Compton-Lilly, Ph.D.

“Whole child,” “child-centered,” “child-study,” and “kid-watching” (e.g., Calkins, 1983; Goodman, 1978; Klingner & Harry, 2006; Noddings, 2005)—all of these phrases focus on children. As educators, it is hard not to focus on children. While standards, textbooks, testing, and curriculum often compete for our attention, we ultimately teach the children and it is the children who drive our work and keep us coming back to our classrooms. This paper explores what it means to know children. Specifically, I draw on data from a longitudinal study that is currently in its eleventh year to examine the development of literacy and literate ways of being over time for children in immigrant families. I utilize a methodology, outlined by Wortham and Reyes (2015), to explore how one child, Adam, presents and depicts himself across modalities and across time. Through this exploration, I explore Adam’s sense-making and how he uses literacy and other communicative modalities to present himself across time (Compton-Lilly, 2014, 2017).

Understanding how children come to view themselves as readers, writers, students, and people is important for teachers. Schools often fail to recognize and honor the longitudinal emergence of children’s identities and ways of being. For example, as grade levels frame time according to grade level and when children move from grade to grade, relationships with former teachers are often severed. This is even more true when children move from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school. Very few adults have longitudinal knowledge of individual children. These understandings are particularly important for children who have been historically underserved by American schools. For immigrant children who often bring different languages, cultural backgrounds, and educational experiences to classrooms, forming and maintaining relationships with adults can be even more precarious.



**Catherine
Compton-Lilly, Ph.D.**

In this article, I consider the longitudinal experiences of Adam, a young man from a Muslim Moroccan family living in the American Midwest. I have followed Adam through Grade 11, but only address Grades 1 through 7 in this article. Specifically, I ask how Adam represents himself through drawing, writing, and talk.

Mapping Represented Identities

In our research, we are following nine children from early elementary school, through middle school. Each year, we invite them to draw a picture of themselves and answer interview questions about literacy, schooling, and themselves. In addition, we invite parents and other family members to share their thoughts about the children’s school and literacy experiences.

While Wortham and Reyes (2015) focused on the language used in classrooms, I draw on a multimodal data set that includes not only talk, but also Adam’s drawings and writing. I use their framework, which attends to spatial, temporal, and personal elements of representation (Table 1). Specifically, I ask how Adam locates himself in time and space. Consonant with “child-study” and “child-centered” approaches, I focus on who Adam is and how he presents himself. Thus, the events that I link together in this article, are moments of self-depiction as Adam moved through school.

Table 1

Framework for Analyzing Classroom Language Usage (adapted from Wortham & Reyes, 2015)

Analysis Type	Definition
Spatial Analysis	Spatial analysis attends to information about place. In spoken or written language, this includes words and phrases such as <i>here</i> , <i>there</i> , <i>next door</i> , or <i>at school</i> .
Temporal Analysis	Temporal analysis attends to temporal language: <i>now</i> , <i>then</i> , <i>after</i> , or <i>last month</i> .
Personal Analysis	Personal analysis often attends to pronouns—I, you, them, she—but also references to himself in relation to others (i.e., <i>the other kids at school</i>).

Adam's Presentation of Self

When asked to draw a self-portrait in Grades 1 and 2, Adam waxed philosophical in both his drawing and his writing. In Grade 1, he portrayed himself looking straight out of the paper. He located himself in Morocco surrounded by a sunny sky filled with birds (Figure 1). He spoke about his grandmother and explained that “she died and right now she is with Allah.” He wrote in first-person:

“I am looking at the sckieey and I meyde a smy-myas in eid and I am hipp in Eid.”
(I am looking at the sky and I made a smile in Eid and I am happy in Eid.)



Figure 1. Grade 1: Adam's self-portrait.

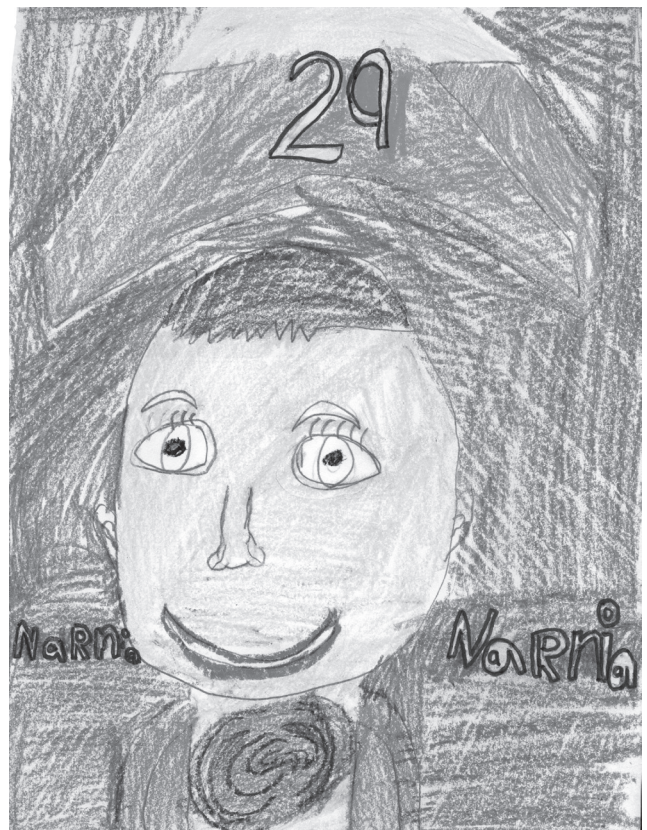


Figure 2. Grade 2: Adam's self-portrait.

In Grade 2, Adam continued to adopt a celestial focus. Adam again depicted himself staring out from the page. The insignia and number from his basketball uniform floats over his head and references to his favorite book series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, flank his face (Figure 2). His writing is again ephemeral:

Onse I was playing in the clouds. I was in my basketBall soet. I was flipping.
(Once I was playing in the clouds. I was in my basketball suit. I was flipping.)

In Grade 3, Adam's face and shoulders again consume the entire page (Figure 3). When asked to talk about his picture, Adam explained, "This is me when I am happy." Across the three self-portraits, Adams uses the indexical "I" to present joyful feelings.

Grade 1 - I am looking, I made a smile, I am happy in Eid.
Grade 2 - I was playing, I was in my basketball suit, I was flipping.
Grade 3 - This is me when I am happy.



Figure 3. Grade 3: Adam's self-portrait.

While the Grade 3 self-portrait contained few clues about Adam's identity and interests, he proudly reported that he was a good artist. A few minutes later he told me that he had "messed up," although his

drawing looked perfectly fine to me. He then compared himself to his cousin, who he reported could "draw a picture almost like a camera took the picture." Adam rationalized this by explaining that his cousin was "a teenager though."

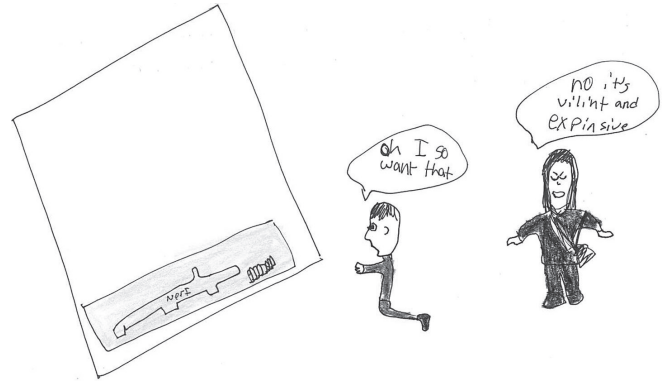


Figure 4. Grade 4: Adam's self-portrait.

Adam's Grade 4 portrait is very different from his earlier depictions. Rather than expressing childhood joy, Adam's portrait and talk reflect his everyday life. His pictures moved from dreamy ephemeral depictions that evoke his deceased grandmother to depictions of lived events. Unlike his earlier images, his fourth-grade image consumes only a small portion of the paper, yet it presents a more complete and connected narrative. Adam has drawn himself and his mother at a local toy store (Figure 4). Adam is kneeling in front of a toy sniper rifle while his mother stands nearby dressed in her Burka. Speech bubbles capture their reported speech with Adam saying, "Oh, I so want that" and his mother responding "No, it's vilint [violent] and expin-sive [expensive]."

Underneath the self-portrait, Adam has written a slightly different account of the picture, writing:

This is a rifle sniper im looking at that day I was really looking into buying it but my mom said no and I said next time she said maby.

(This is a rifle sniper I'm looking at that day. I was really looking into buying it, but my mom said "No" and I said "Next time?" She said "Maybe.")

Interestingly the speech bubbles in the illustration do

not match the reported speech when Adam wrote about this picture. In the captioned illustration, there was no “maybe” or “next time.” When I asked Adam if he drew himself on his knees because he was begging for the gun, Adam responded, “No, I was on my knees looking for the best one that like had a good box and stuff. Cause the ones that have ripped bags, [sometimes] something [is] inside could be gone.” He then laughed and added, “[I] was also begging.”



Figure 5. Grade 5: Adam's self-portrait.

In Grade 5, Adam produced another full body pose of himself this time standing next to a soccer ball in front of goal posts (Figure 5). Once again, he has drawn his team logo on his shirt. The depiction is detailed with spiky hair and cleats on his shoes. The sun shines down from the upper right-hand corner of the picture. Portraits from the next two years are headshots. In Grade 6, he is again wearing an athletic shirt with the team emblem over his heart, but is no longer smiling as he was in earlier pictures (Figure 6). He has written:

I'm from Morocco and I'm very athletic. I love to run and play sports my favorite sport is soccer and



adam P6R1
11-14-2014 Self Portrait

Figure 6. Grade 6: Adam's self-portrait.

running. I love to play video games and hang out with my friends. My favorite animal is a horse I love to ride them. I love to read the Qur'an and memorize.

Unlike Adam's earlier writing in which he describes his joyful actions, *looking* and *playing*, this time Adam chains together a series of I-statements. He focuses on activities that he enjoys: running, playing sports and video games, hanging out with friends, riding horses, and the Qur'an. While in the picture Adam is again wearing his soccer uniform, his accompanying talk references a vast range of physical activities and activities that involve friends, which includes those from his Qur'anic studies classes who will continue to emerge as his primary circle of friends.

In Grade 7, Adam drew only a disembodied head surrounded by a dark background (Figure 7). Together the dark color and his serious expression have a decidedly somber effect. His writing remains upbeat and is again



PTRI Adam #3
Seed

Figure 7. Grade 7: Adam's self-portrait.

filled with I-statements as he references being from Morocco, his best friend, and his middle school classes (Figure 8). He explains, "I don't play any sports at the moment because it's 'winter', but I am going to start snowboarding again soon!"

Adam's Configurations of Self

A longitudinal lens allows us to consider Adam across time. Through his words, drawings, and writing we observe the marvelous and intriguing ways in which Adam presents himself. Across time, he presents himself in different ways and highlights various dimensions of himself using words, images, and writing. We witness how he locates himself spatially, temporally, and personally.

As a young child, we witness Adam presenting himself in the ephemeral space of his native Morocco, surrounded by the ocean, birds, and the spirit of his grandmother. The depiction has an ephemeral quality created by the sun and sky. Adam not only identifies

MY name is Adam I am
a 12 year old boy from Morocco.
My best friend is (friend's name) (he was
my best friend from a long time. This year
I'm in 7th grade at (school name)
Middle School I have eight class periods
(1 La, 2 SS, 3 math, 4 math, 5 unified arts, lunch, 6 French,
7 reading, 8 science.) I don't have a favorite
class because they are all equally the
same. School is not that hard. I don't
play any sports at the moment
because it's "winter", but I am going
to start snowboarding again soon! and
that all about Adam 2015 (its almost
2016)!

Figure 8. Grade 7: Adam's self-portrait writing.

the holiday, Eid, but assures me that his grandmother is now with Allah. Adam is engaged and agential; he is looking, smiling, and happy. Adam uses I-statements to describe himself looking up at the sky during a “happy” celebration of Eid. As he reflects on his picture, he

remembers his grandmother. The picture presents more of a feeling than a story. There is no plot, no tension, merely the trees, birds, and the shining sun. This depiction is analyzed using the framework in Table 2.

Table 2

Analysis of Adam’s Portrait and Writing, Grade 1

Grade 1 Self-Portrait	Message	Contextualizations
Spatial Location	Adam’s face with trees and birds in the background	In Morocco on a beach
Temporal Location	Celebration of Eid	Located during the Muslim holiday of Eid; His Grandmother is “now” with Allah
Personal Location	“I am looking at the sckieey/sky and I meyde a smymyas/smile in eid and I am hipp in Eid.”	I am looking. . . I made. . . I am. . . Agential first-person accounts

Over time Adam’s depictions turn to everyday life. He tells the story of a recent visit to a toy store. Adam describes the “sniper rifle” that he wants and admits that he might have been begging his mother. Adam’s mother declines his request.

Adam uses “I” to situate himself in the story and use “my mom” to reference his mother. The writing that Adam did once his picture was complete was notably less harsh than his speech bubbles; Adam remained hopeful that she would say “yes” next time. This

Table 3

Analysis of Adam’s Portrait and Writing, Grade 4

Grade 4 Self-Portrait	Message	Contextualizations
Spatial Location	In a store	Store is represented by the shelf on which the sniper rifle is located
Temporal Location	“that day. . .” “Next time?” She said “Maybe.”	Past and future, being described from a location in the present
Personal Location	“I” “my mom” “She”	Pronouns used in telling an informal narrative

abbreviated narrative presents a situation and a resolution—the beginnings of a true narrative account. This is the first time Adam depicts himself engaging with other people. See Table 3 for analysis.

By middle school, few clues are provided about spatial location. Temporally the portrait is located in the present with a concluding temporal reference to the upcoming new year; Adam writes, it will “soon be 2016.” While he references himself within time, Adam

does not connect the flow of time to his development or his future aspirations. Adam presents a fact-based account of himself. We learn the name of his best friend and his school, he tells us what classes he is taking and diplomatically describes himself as liking all his classes. Finally, he presents himself as capable student by assuring me that his classes are not too hard. His interest in sports has moved from team sports to recreational sports, including horseback riding and snowboarding. For analysis, see Table 4.

Table 4

Analysis of Adam’s Portrait and Writing, Grade 7

Grade 7 Self-Portrait	Message	Contextualizations
Spatial Location	No background, no objects are presented	Place is not established; in the drawing, the focus is on Adam’s face only; the style is serious
Temporal Location	“My name is. . .” “I am. . .” “I have. . .” “my best friend from a long time” “I am going to start snowboarding again soon.” He notes that it is 2015 and will soon be 2016	Most of Adam’s writing addresses the present; Past is referenced in his longstanding friendship; Future is referenced in his plans to start snowboarding soon and in the coming new year;
Personal Location	“My best friend. . .”	Only Adam’s best friend is referenced as “he”

Conclusions

This longitudinal analysis does not discuss Adam as a reader. We do not learn what level he reads at or whether or not his writing meets grade level standards. Instead, Adam is presented as the young Moroccan, Muslim, sports fan growing up in the Midwest United States. He tells us about things that matter to him—his family, religion, interests, friends, school, and sports. I argue that while knowing children as readers and writers is important, it is perhaps even more important to know children as people.

Being “child-centered,” is an aspiration for many teachers. We care deeply about our students. We have their best interests at heart; and we want to see them thrive and become successful young adults. I have been honored to witness Adam as he emerges into a delightful young man who strives to do well in school, enjoys his classes, and explores new interests and activities as he moves into adolescence. Significantly, Adam’s becoming that I describe in this article is very different from the development that is often over-emphasized in schools. These are important noticings. In this paper, watching

Adam mature is not about standards, grade levels, test scores, and covering curriculum. It is about knowing Adam as a person and attending to the multimodal and enacted ways of being that make Adam who he is.

Over time, we witness changes in the amount and the type of information that he shares, his use of multiple modalities to convey thoughts, ideas, and experiences, and changes in his interests and values. In this article, my goal has been to re-direct our gaze to children. Educators have referred to this stance as the “whole child,” “child-centered,” “child-study,” and “kid-watching” (e.g., Calkins, 1983; Goodman, 1978; Klingner & Harry, 2006; Noddings, 2005). Adam’s case helps us to take our focus off standards, textbooks, testing, and curriculum and return to focusing on children. All children, including Adam, bring much more to classrooms than their academic abilities. By focusing on Adam as a person, we gain insights into his interests, dreams, and passions, which are significant considerations if we aspire to help all children learn.

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Author Biographies

Dr. Catherine Compton-Lilly teaches courses in literacy studies and works with professional development schools at the University of South Carolina. She has a passion for helping teachers to support children in learning to read and write. Her interests include examining how time operates as a contextual factor in children’s lives as they progress through school and construct their identities as students and readers. Dr. Compton-Lilly is the author/editor of several books and has published widely in educational journals. She can be reached at comptonlilly@sc.edu.



Writing Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Writers

by Meghan K. Block, Ph.D.

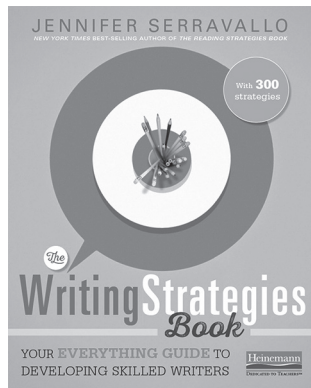
Serravallo, J. (2017).

***Writing strategies book:
Your everything guide to
developing skilled writers.***

Portsmouth, NH:

Heinemann.

ISBN 978-0-325-07822-9



**Meghan K.
Block, Ph.D.**

As elementary writing instruction garners much-needed attention, many teachers are seeking quality resources to support and enhance their writing instruction. One recent resource that teachers report using or considering is called *The Writing Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Writers*. On its cover the book promises 300 strategies to support elementary teachers' writing instruction and delivers exactly that and more in its content.

In general, the book is user-friendly, easy to navigate, and includes many photographic examples of charts and graphic organizers which teachers will undoubtedly find useful. In fact, included with the book is electronic access to a variety of writing papers and tools. The amount of resources could be overwhelming; however, the first chapter offers a detailed explanation of how to navigate the book and includes useful visuals throughout to support the explanation and to highlight the resources. Not only does the introduction explain the organization and the content of the book, but Serravallo, the author, suggests very specific ways in which this book might be used to support a variety of writing curricula. All in all, the introductory chapter is quite informative and serves as a valuable resource to explain and preview the content of the book. Both novice and experienced teachers will find the front matter to be important and beneficial as they survey the resource and begin to incorporate recommended practices into their writing instruction.

The bulk of the book provides teachers a multitude of strategy ideas to support children's writing development. For each strategy, the author provides a range of grade levels for whom the strategy might be valuable, the writing genre for which the strategy is best suited, the step(s) in the writing process for which the strategy might be most beneficial, and a visual representation of key charts or organizers. On the whole, the strategies address important aspects of writing including idea generation, organization, elaboration, word choice, and conventions. The author notes that the strategies come from a variety of sources, and identifies the original sources so readers can access them. In addition to the variety of strategies, readers will better understand important elements of an ideal writing classroom. As such, teachers will gain ideas for setting up the writing space, managing conferences, and planning units.

However, though the book can be a useful support for writing instruction, it is important to note that some important elements of or approaches to writing instruction are missing. In addition, some of the strategy descriptions lack key information. As an example, one strategy suggests encouraging children to use an alphabet chart for referencing letter-sound associations in young children's writing. Though an important

strategy, the book does not address the need for a high quality alphabet chart nor does it identify elements of a high-quality alphabet chart.

Overall the book may best serve as a supplemental resource to a high quality writing curricula. Elementary teachers of all levels of experience will find that it is easy to navigate and offers many ideas to inspire writing lessons.

Author Biography

Dr. Meghan K. Block is an Associate Professor of Elementary Literacy in the Teacher Education and Professional Development Department at Central Michigan University. Her teaching and research interests focus on early literacy development and instruction. She can be reached at block1m@cmich.edu.



Critical Race Theory: An Introduction

by Tanya Christ, Ph.D.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York, NY: New York University Press. ISBN 978-0814721353

Delgado and Stefancic's (2017) book provides an easy-to-read introduction to critical race theory peppered with narrative examples from law, the civil rights movement, and history that illustrate theoretical ideas. This volume is important both conceptually and practically for literacy educators, as the critical race theory movement provides perspectives on race and racism that no doubt inform our pedagogical and advocacy choices.

Critical race theory is defined as a "movement...of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). Delgado and Stefancic underscore the importance of this movement:

If racism is embedded in our thought processes and social structures...then the "ordinary business" of society—the routines, practices, and institutions that we rely on to do the world's work—we will keep minorities in subordinate positions. Only aggressive, color-conscious efforts to change the way things are will do much to meliorate misery." (p. 27)

Given that literacy classrooms are embedded within the institution of our nation's schools, it seems critical to consider how our practices may be supporting change or perpetuating inequities.

Delgado and Stefancic (2017) present multiple perspectives from which critical race theorists, and we, can consider these issues:



Tanya Christ, Ph.D.

- Idealists consider "racism and discrimination are matters of thinking, mental categorization, attitude, and discourse" (p. 21).
- Realists' perspective is that "racism is much more than a collection of unfavorable impressions by members of other groups...[it] is a means by which society allocates privilege and status...including... the best schools" (p. 21).
- Materialists believe that "one needs to change the physical circumstances of minorities' lives before racism will abate" (p. 25).
- Revisionist history "reexamines America's historical record, replacing comforting majoritarian interpretations of events with ones that square more accurately with minorities' experiences" (p. 25).
- Structural determinism forwards "the idea that our system, by reason of its structure and vocabulary, is ill equipped to redress certain types of wrong" (p. 31).
- Empathic fallacy acknowledges that "most people in their daily lives do not come into contact with many persons of radically different race or social station" (p. 34), and so our own scripts often serve as the script. "The idea that a better, fairer script can be readily substituted for the older, prejudiced one is attractive but falsified by history" (p. 35).

As literacy educators, considering how each of these perspectives might affect our students' success could be the start to identifying important changes that we make

to our pedagogy, classrooms, advocacy, and schools. In fact, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) assert that “critical race theory...tries not only to understand our social situation, but change it” (p. 8).

As I read the book, and considered these perspectives, I thought about several ways that this might apply to my literacy education practices:

- Paying attention to my own language choices;
- Selecting books and primary source documents that present under-represented perspectives that are not part of the traditional school curriculum;
- Engaging students in deep book discussions to challenge racism and stereotypes;
- Teaching students to take a critical perspective when reading, including analyzing power structures, language, and who is included or excluded; and
- Voting to change how schools and local libraries are structured and funded, and for other more institutional-level changes that might address inequities.

I am sure that there are many more ideas, and reading this book as part of a book discussion group might be

one way to generate relevant ideas for your school or district.

If you are a literacy educator who is, or aspires to be, invested in working toward more equitable schools, classrooms, and life opportunities for all students, then I encourage you to read this book. It provides the tinder for new ways of thinking about and practicing our craft to serve children better.

Author Biography

Dr. Tanya Christ is an Associate Professor of Reading and Language Arts at Oakland University. She teaches courses related to reading assessment and instruction for K-12. Her research focuses on early childhood vocabulary, comprehension, and digital literacies learning and instruction; culture, access, and equity in literacy education; and literacy teacher education. She has taught both inclusion and general education in Title 1 classrooms in Brooklyn, NY. Her work appears in journals such as *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *The Reading Teacher*, and *Young Children*. She can be reached at christ@oakland.edu.



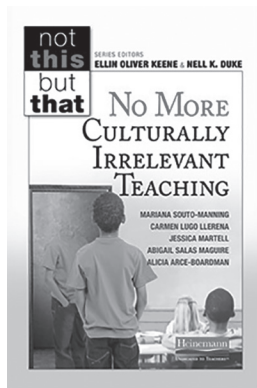
No More Culturally Irrelevant Teaching

by Angela Harris

Oliver Keene, E., & Duke, N. K. (Eds.). (2018). *No more culturally irrelevant teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. ISBN 978-0325089799

In *No More Culturally Irrelevant Teaching*, we are introduced to educators who share their experiences and commitment to ensuring that all students' identities are recognized and valued in the classroom. The authors weave together classroom experiences, research, strategies, and practices for culturally relevant teaching that would be beneficial to both novice and seasoned teachers. The book is divided into three sections: sections one and three are written by classroom teachers Lugo Llerena, Martell, Salas Maguire, and Arce-Boardman, who provide readers with classroom expertise and tools to use in a culturally-inclusive classroom. Section two is written by Souto-Manning and focuses on the research aspect of culturally relevant teaching.

In section one, entitled "Not This," the authors present two classroom vignettes—Ms. Smith's kindergarten classroom learning about kings and queens via read alouds and Ms. Garza's second-grade classroom being introduced to picture books depicting Latinx characters to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month. On the surface, the materials and lessons may seem harmless; however, each vignette is followed by a "What's the Problem?" section that highlights the subtle and overt ways that these lessons cause classrooms to be culturally irrelevant. Both lessons were met with less-than-enthusiastic students who were not engaged in what was being presented. In both classes, the students "could not see themselves, their communities, or their cultural practices in the stories being read" (Lugo Llerena, Martell, Salas Maguire, & Arce-Boardman, 2018, p. 8). The authors inform readers that, "curriculum and teaching are always cultural, but they are not always culturally relevant or responsive" (Souto-Manning, 2018, p. 18).



Angela Harris

In section two, Souto-Manning discusses the "mismatch of culture and curriculum" (2018, p. 17). The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) reported that students of color represent approximately 50 percent of school populations in the United States; however, the curriculum rarely reflects this reality (as cited in Souto-Manning, 2018). With this realization, Gay (2010) identifies six key practices of culturally responsive teaching (as cited in Souto-Manning, 2018, p. 29):

- having high expectations for all students
- engaging students' cultural knowledges, experiences, practices, and perspectives
- bridging gaps between home and school practices
- seeking to educate the whole child
- identifying and leveraging students' strengths to transform education
- critically questioning normative schooling practices, content, and assessments

Section three provides educators with tools and strategies for culturally relevant teaching. These involve actions as straightforward as learning to pronounce students' names. "When teachers mispronounce students' names, they may foster the notion that students' cultures and identities are not valued, and the students are often left feeling ridiculous and embarrassed, believing their names are troublesome and wishing they were different" (Lugo Llerena et al., 2018, p. 55). Other

worthwhile strategies that are introduced include creating an artifact museum to explore culture and using videos to develop cross-cultural understandings.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who is seeking to learn more about culturally relevant teaching. This book is a powerful, yet easy-to-read text that offers practical strategies and resources to implement in the classroom.

Author Biography

Angela Harris is a speech language pathologist at Dove Academy in Detroit, Michigan. She is currently a doctoral student in the Reading, Language, and Literature program at Wayne State University. She can be reached at dx1992@wayne.edu.



A Closer Look: Children's and Young Adult Literature

by Kristin McIlhagga, Ph.D.

Empowering Teachers by Disrupting Texts

I have had the privilege of teaching and learning with teacher candidates for the past 10 years. I often tell them that they give me hope for our profession. Each week they come to class with questions, concerns, and an earnestness to become teachers that positively impact children's lives. During a class discussion last October, one of my students looked me in the eye and asked with a quavering voice, "How are we supposed to do this Dr. Mac?! There is so much to think about—the curriculum that someone else mandates, standardized testing, state standards, school-wide initiatives! How are we supposed to do all of that AND meet the needs of individual students?!" A chorus of voices followed with similar concerns, questions, and near-desperation for answers. They were recognizing all of the outside forces that are pushing into classrooms that aren't always best for students. They were feeling disempowered, as are many teachers who have been in the classroom for years. We talked a lot about our "sphere of influence" but I couldn't stop thinking about how I could support them to begin to navigate the many layers and forces that they would encounter in this profession without losing their passion for it.

Fast forward to the 2018 National Convention of Teachers of English convention in Dallas. The best session that I attended was by the #DisruptTexts team of teachers Tricia Ebarvia, Lorena Germán, Dr. Kimberly Parker, and Julia Torres. I had seen some of their conversations on Twitter and wanted to learn more. According to their website (www.disrupttexts.org),

Disrupt Texts is a crowdsourced, grass roots effort *by teachers for teachers* to challenge the traditional canon in order to create a more inclusive, representative, and equitable language arts curriculum that our students deserve. It is part of our mission to aid and develop teachers committed to anti-racist/anti-bias teaching pedagogy and practices ("#DisruptTexts", n.d., para. 1).



**Kristin
McIlhagga, Ph.D.**

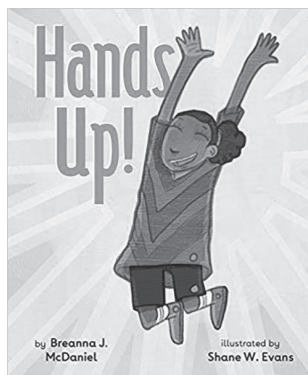
Though their presentation was focused on texts in middle and high school English classrooms, as they spoke, I realized how applicable it was to all grade levels (including college). While elementary teachers may not think that there is a canon of literature like there is at the high school level, I argue that there is very much a canon of picturebooks and lesson plans that have been taught over and over again (e.g., Chicka-Chicka-Boom Boom). The power of #DisruptTexts is a framework that supports a tangible way for teachers to have power in their sphere of influence. It won't look the same for everyone and will take time and effort, but choosing texts that support anti-racist and anti-bias pedagogy is a start. We must consider the drawbacks (unintended or intended) along with the benefits. For those teachers who are mandated to teach specific texts, consider adding other texts to represent other perspectives and experiences.

The books reviewed in this volume all represent stories and voices that disrupt stereotypes and single stories. For those of you on Twitter, be sure to check out the #DisruptTexts slow chats each week. For additional book titles, check out socialjusticebooks.org and the We Are KidLit summer reading lists found at <https://wtpsite.wordpress.com/>.

Kristin

Hands Up!

by Breanna J. McDaniel,
illustrated by
Shane W. Evans
Dial Books for Young
Readers
2019
ISBN: 978-0-525-55231-4
32 pgs, Grade PK-2



Hands Up! by debut author

Breanna J. McDaniel is a celebration of a young Black girl's joy as she grows up surrounded by love and encouragement. That joy is communicated beginning with the front cover which features the main character Viv leaping with both arms up, eyes closed, a wide grin, and sun beams radiating from behind her. McDaniel's lilting text begs to be read aloud and the repetitive "hands up" invites listeners to join their own voices with Viv's joy.

This chronological story starts with Viv as a baby, lifting her "hands up" to get dressed, play peek-a-boo, clean up, and fix her hair. Readers see Viv grow in size, age, and sophistication as she goes to school, learns to ride a bike, dance, worship, play basketball, and protest—all with "hands up." Ballerina Misty Copeland, the first African American Female Principal Dancer with the American Ballet Theater is referenced as Viv dances in her ballet class, "Graceful like Ms. Misty."

The only time that both Viv's hands aren't up in the air is when she has fallen from her bike. Visibly shaken, she is looking down with tears on her face, but still reaches up to the encouraging adult saying, "It's all right, baby girl, I'll help, hands up." Showing Viv at times when she needs others to help her up reminds readers that while life may not always be joyful, people who love us help us to get back up.

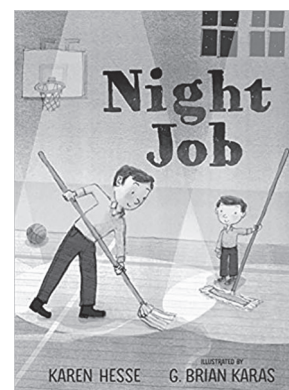
Shane Evans's illustrations show her being supported by loving grownups that could be interpreted as parents and grandparents. The ambiguity of their identities enhances the story by allowing for multiple interpretations of what constitutes family. Evans's

digital multimedia brings in a variety of subtle but rich textures that add a visual multidimensionality throughout the book. The bright yet subtle colors throughout always include yellows and greens, colors associated with joy and life.

The final double-page spread shows Viv along with a crowd of people with hands up holding signs of protest and support. Sun rays shine down upon them from the upper right side of the page, while all of the people are facing the left, insinuating movement beyond the confines of the story and physical book. Be sure to read notes from the author and the artist to learn about the inspiration for the book.

Night Job

by Karen Hesse, illustrated
by G. Brian Karas
Candlewick Press
2018
ISBN: 978-0-7636-6238-7
32 pgs, Grade PK-4



Night Job is the story of a young child's Friday night adventure going to work with their father, a custodian at a middle school. Told in first person by the child, this book reclaims the often-scary night time by making it a special time of bonding. Hesse's sensory-rich text combined with Karas's gentle illustrations invite readers to slow down and linger in this book. It also begs extended conversations about how schools and our communities stay clean, and what goes on in the world while many of us are asleep.

The story begins on the title page with panels showing the child making sandwiches and leaving home with their father. They head into the night on a motorcycle (wearing helmets of course!) over a "darkening bay" and park in "our spot," arriving at a school where Dad is a custodian. Karas's use of small square, framed panels reveals unique details, and together they show passage of time as father and child move from space to space in

Must Read Texts

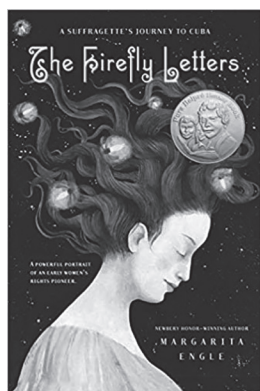
the school. As they travel from gym to cafeteria to stage, a baseball game soundtrack plays from a radio. They break for sandwiches in a courtyard before heading to the library where Dad begins cleaning again while the child lays down on a sofa, saying “I read to him until I fall asleep.” The adventure ends with a celebratory ride across the “brightening bay, two of us airborne, hooting” as morning sun begins illuminating the day.

The adventure comes full circle as four panels show the motorcycle “glide silently into our spot.” The same language of parking in “our spot” at the school insinuates that this Friday night adventure is a part of a beloved routine for the father/child pair. Rich, creamy, matte paper, and subdued colors throughout add to the sense of calm that comes with a nighttime ritual.

The Firefly Letters: A Suffragette's Journey to Cuba
by Margarita Engle
Henry Holt and Company, LLC
2010 ISBN 9780805090826
151 pgs, Grade 5 and up

*Guest Review by Carolina
Frederick, Oakland University*

In *The Firefly Letters*, Margarita Engle transports readers to Cuba, which she describes “as one of God’s most beautiful creations—an island of eternal summer” (p. 69). *The Firefly Letters* tells the story of Cecilia, a pregnant slave, Elena, the master’s daughter, and Fredrika, the free-spirited feminist from Sweden who gave up her wealth to roam and write. Fredrika documents her observations of the island and falls in love with exotic fruits of sapote, mamey, mango, and tamarind. Unless you have tried these fruits, it is difficult to imagine their juicy sweetness and unique flavors. Engle could almost be writing a travel blog inviting readers to Cuba to enjoy the lush gardens, moonlit beaches, and lying in a hammock if it were not for the slavery. As a child who spent summers in Mexico, this book transported me back to chasing fireflies, or lucierganas in the evening hours.



I am reminded of life in Mexico where it is very common to have household help. Usually the maids, cooks, and nannies are indigenous women. Although not slaves, their freedoms are limited; their lives limited by time, lack of resources and education, prejudice and racism. Fredrika asks, “Do they ever wonder about the slaves who chop the cane that sweetens their tea?” (p. 143). Do we ever wonder about the immigrant who willingly works in the fields to harvest the crops, who works 12-hour days as a cook, who works at construction, landscaping, or driving a cab?

“We go out at night to rescue fireflies” (p. 37), states Cecilia. In this book, not even the fireflies are free as women tie them to dresses as ornaments, and “girls weave them into their hair like flashing jewels.” Fredrika, Cecilia, Elena, and Beni explore the meaning of freedom and what they are willing to give in order to obtain it. Engle exemplifies that man cannot enjoy beauty in the world while others are not free to do the same.

Make Lemonade
by Virginia Euwer Wolff
Henry Holt and Company, LLC
1993
ISBN 13:978-0-8050-8070-4
212 pgs, Grade 9 and up

*Guest Review by Alyssa Silver,
Oakland University*

Virginia Euwer Wolff’s novel, *Make Lemonade*, is a heartbreaking story of the hardships of poverty and the importance of family to overcome obstacles. Wolff’s use of free verse told in first person point of view by LaVaughn provides multiple ways for readers to connect with the main character.

Fourteen-year-old LaVaughn decided years ago that she was going to college despite, “This word college is in my house, and you have to walk around it in the rooms like furniture” (p. 122). Her mom’s response to LaVaughn’s ambition is “nobody in this building—went



to college, nobody in my family” (p. 123). LaVaughn who is in disbelief that no one in “64 apartments” has ever gone to college, sets out on a mission to achieve her goal through hard work and constant reminders from her mom about being diligent.

Needing a paying job to help her get out of the projects and into college, LaVaughn accepts a job babysitting the two children of 17-year-old Jolly. The story juxtaposes Jolly’s despair and loneliness with LaVaughn’s ambition supported by her mother. LaVaughn describes her mom as “big,” meaning a big presence, someone who has always been a steady presence in her life, supporting her throughout. Jolly does not have the support of a parent and admits to living in boxes in the past. She repeatedly says, “I can’t do it alone” (p. 7), a phrase LaVaughn is not accustomed to. LaVaughn’s mother is her rock, supporting her through her words and actions, a presence Jolly is lacking.

LaVaughn’s plan to save money for her future is jeopardized by Jolly losing her job and her inability to pay LaVaughn. She grapples with the decision to babysit Jolly’s children for free as a show of belief, which means sacrificing her need to earn money for college. LaVaughn wants to help and support Jolly the way LaVaughn’s mom has taught her. In the end, *Make Lemonade* is an inspiring story of how one loving and supportive individual can change the course of a life.

The Storm Runner

by J.C. Cervantes
Rick Riordan Presents - Disney
Hyperion
2018
ISBN 978-1-3680-1634-6
448 pgs, Grade 3 and up

*Guest Review by Libby Dunlap,
Oakland University*



For his whole life, people have called Zane Obispo a freak. His left leg and foot are smaller than his right causing him to walk with a limp. Despite his identities

as a freak and a boy who can’t run, Zane finds himself at the center an adventure in which he releases the Maya god of death, darkness, and destruction (Ah-Puch) from an ancient prison. As Zane’s quest to prevent the destruction of the world by Ah-Puch unfolds, he also discovers the reality of his own lineage.

In the beginning of the story, Zane is overcome with feeling powerless, even as he strives to defeat Ah-Puch, prevent the destruction of the world, and prevent himself from becoming a soldier of death. He is frustrated by his perceived lack of choice in fulfilling the prophecy in which he releases Ah-Puch, he is devastated that he couldn’t save Rosie, and he is especially worried that he won’t be able to defeat Ah-Puch given that he is both mortal and a freak.

After discovering that he is the son of the Mayan God Hurakan, Zane learns more about Mayan gods and goddesses and begins to see himself as much more than a boy with a limp. As he discovers his inner strength and develops the ability to wield fire, Zane begins to believe that he may actually have a chance at defeating Ah-Puch.

Throughout the story, Zane is empowered by multiple relationships including his uncle, his mom, Brooks, his father, Jazz, Ms. Cab, and Mr. O. In the end, his physical powers were critical to his victory, but so was his internal power and the sense of self he developed over the course of his adventure.

The Serpent's Secret

by Sayantani DasGupta
Scholastic
2018 ISBN: 978-1338185706
328 pgs, Grade 3 and up

*Guest Review by Nicole
Williamson, Oakland University*



The Serpent's Secret tells the story Kiran (Kiranmala), who *thinks* she is living a regular life with her Indian parents in

Must Read Texts

Parsippany, New Jersey. She has always thought of herself as a normal kid, until she wakes up on her 12th birthday to discover her parents are missing and the house has been destroyed by a “carnivorous, snot-trailing demon” called a rakkhosh. Shortly after, Lal and Neel—two princes from another dimension—arrive to warn her of the peril she now faces. Kiran soon realizes the endless folktales her parents told her were true, along with the fact that she is an actual Indian princess from another dimension. Though the protections that have been in place since her birth are beginning to wear off, Kiran and the princes depart on a quest to save her parents from grave danger. The journey is filled with solving complex riddles, fighting off serpents and more carnivorous snot-trailing demons.

Princess Kiran is a strong female warrior who embodies the spirit of self-determination. She is not a damsel-in-distress, waiting to be rescued. Several times in their adventures, she puts her life on the line to rescue the princes. Kiran is smart, solving life threatening

riddles and problems without help. She says what is on her mind and does not allow anyone to talk down to her.

Author Sayantani DasGupta has drawn on her own experiences of growing up biracial and navigating across two cultures. Discovering that she is an Indian princess sets Kiran on a journey of self-discovery, learning how to code-switch between different languages and the variation in the meanings of words. Though frustrating for her at the beginning of the journey, Kiran discovers strength in learning to live and navigate two worlds.

Author Biography

Dr. Kristin McIlhagga is an Assistant Professor of Reading and Language Arts at Oakland University. Her interests include children's and adolescent literature, teacher education, language arts methods, English education, and multicultural literature. She can be reached at kmcilhagga@oakland.edu.



Great Lakes, Great Books

by Lynette Marten Suckow



The Great Lakes Great Books Award list for the 2018-19 school year has a large offering of titles that include something for every member of your home and school families. Choose from non-fiction, graphic novels, poetry, and wordless books, to get you started. Read to your family or read with them; taking turns with the same book or making time to read separate books alongside each other. I remember favorite stories from my children's childhood because we read picture books every night and, as the years passed, we talked together about the novels they enjoyed as teens. Whatever your preferred method of sharing books with others, add some Great Lakes Great Books titles to your family reading list for the year.

Each year, The Great Lakes Great Books committee selects 40 books, published within the last two years, to introduce to K-12 classrooms. Teachers and librarians provide students with books from their grade-level lists and allow them to vote on their favorites. Great Lakes Great Books is one of Michigan Reading Association's Student Involvement projects, promoting active participation in the reading process by students. Look for a classroom ballot, student certificate, promotional book-marks, last year's winning titles, and the opportunity to nominate your favorite new book at www.michigan-reading.org under the Student Involvement tab.

THE SECRETS OF NINJA SCHOOL, by Deb Pilutti, is the tale of a summer camp experience like no other. Ruby looked forward to attending Master Willow's School for Ninjas, hoping to discover her own secret skill, as well as learn ninja kicks and jumps. She practiced the ways of the ninja and kept trying



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while other students found their secret abilities one after another. Ruby did not find hers—until one night when everyone confided that they were all homesick. Ruby was also homesick, but wanted to help the other students feel better. She used the sewing skills learned from her grandmother to make them stuffed dragons for bravery, and told them stories—just like her father did when she couldn't sleep. By helping her friends, she realized how to use the skills that she already possessed. At the end of the book, the author shares Ruby's Dragon Softie pattern with those readers who also want to rise to their own potential by developing a new skill.

THIRTY MINUTES OVER OREGON: A Japanese Pilot's World War II Story, by Marc Tyler Nobleman, begins with a timeline of events that drew the United States into World War II in 1941. After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, the U.S. retaliated by bombing Tokyo, Japan's largest city. That led to another attack on the U.S., this time a mission to start forest fires by dropping bombs near the town of Brookings, Oregon. Nobuo Fujita, a Japanese pilot, catapulted his plane from a Japanese submarine and flew it to the Oregon coast. Although Fujita completed his bombing mission, only one bomb detonated, and it didn't burn very long in the recently rained-on forest. The war ended

Must Read Texts

in 1945, and Nobuo Fujita became a regular civilian, although he harbored some guilt about his part in wartime destruction. Twenty years later, the town of Brookings invited Fujita to a Memorial Day Festival to put old World War II resentment to rest. He accepted the invitation, and so began a 35-year journey of forgiveness and acceptance between the people of his home in Japan and his new friends in Oregon. Over time, he donated money to the Brookings Library for "children's books that celebrate other cultures" with the hope that understanding other people would prevent future wars. Nobuo Fujita died in 1997 at the age of 85. Watercolor illustrations by Melissa Iwai lend a sense of calm to this story of acceptance and healing.

BOB, by Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead, is introduced by its cover with gold lettering and a small triangle of color set against sepia tones that give form to Bob and hints to the mystery inside. It's been five years—half of her life—since Livy visited Gran in Australia. She doesn't remember much about the things she enjoyed last time she was a visitor in Gran's house, but when she opens the upstairs closet, someone remembers her. A short green creature named Bob, dressed in burlap and feathers, stands before her talking about a promise to help him find his way home. As Livy reacquaints herself with Bob, she learns about friendship and keeping promises. Bob is very literal, which leads to some humorous situations, but he is also connected to Australian geography and the five-year drought that took place during Livy's absence. Everything comes around in the end, and it's a pleasure reading this well-constructed story to get there. The quiet sepia-colored illustrations by Nicholas Gannon are few in number, but effectively support the fantasy elements of this very contemporary story.

APPLE IN THE MIDDLE, by Dawn Quigley, features Apple Starkington, the cultural product of a Minneapolis, Minnesota suburb, who always feels like she doesn't quite belong. She speaks with an Australian accent when under pressure, is overly sensitive about her tan skin, and hasn't liked her name since someone told her that an apple is red like a Native American on the outside, but white on the inside. Born of a White

dad and an Ojibwe mom, who died giving birth to her, Apple has always lived with her dad and her stepmom. This summer, 15-year-old Apple is being reunited with her grandparents on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in North Dakota. The grandparents give her space to adjust to a very practical, rural way of life, a collective and inclusive sense of humor, a community of extended family that makes sure everyone is cared for, and an acceptance of people and nature that she has never experienced before. Finding the other half of her heritage is just what Apple needs to accept herself and confidently choose a path in the world. Since Michigan is also home to various Ojibwe tribes, Apple opens up their world to all of us.

HEY, KIDDO: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction, by Jarrett J. Krosoczka, is Jarrett's own story of growing up in a non-traditional family. Some kids with difficult childhoods are saved by music or books or caring for animals. Jarrett was saved by drawing, which could explain why his autobiography is also a graphic novel. As the subtitle implies, Jarrett's childhood experience is becoming more commonplace today, but still needs to be told. Jarrett was born to a single mom with a drug problem that led to stealing, dealing, and an inability to hold down a job. Within a few years, it became apparent that the grandparents needed to take custody of Jarrett, with help from his aunts who were still in high school. Although Jarrett didn't find out the facts of his parentage until he was also in high school, or that his mom was in and out of jail for years on drug charges, he felt the absence of his biological parents. He was very aware of the generational differences between his grandparents and his friends' parents. While his mother popped in and out of his life, his grandparents were always there for him, encouraging his ambitions with art classes and good schools. In spite of the angst that accompanies teenage years, Jarrett finally tracked down his father and tried to accept a new relationship with the man who deserted him at birth. Jarrett's artwork effectively conveys his emotional journey through the first 18 years of his life with a balanced color palette of sepia and gray panels laid out in readable order. Readers may be interested to know that Krosoczka grew up to

become a famous graphic novelist, creator of the Star Wars: Jedi Academy books, the Lunch Lady series, and author/illustrator of an impressive list of picture books.

Author Biography

Lynette Marten Suckow works at the Peter White Public Library's reference desk in Marquette, MI where she provides assistance with library resources and digital technology. She holds a master's degree in education from Northern Michigan University, is actively involved with the Marquette-Alger Reading Council, and has been a follower of the Great Lakes Great Books Award list for the last 12 years. She can be reached at lynette.suckow@gmail.com.





OFFICIAL BALLOT FOR THE 2019-20 GREAT LAKES GREAT BOOKS AWARD

COMPLETED BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 19, 2020. Ballots may be e-mailed to greatlakesgreatbooks@gmail.com or completed online at www.michiganreading.org under the Student Involvement tab. Enter one vote per student.

Grades K-1			Grades 2-3		
Vote	Title	Author	Vote	Title	Author
	Hello Lighthouse	Sophie Blackall		Zoey and Sassafra: Unicorns and Germs	Asia Citro
	The Day War Came	Nicola Davies		Love	Matt de la Pena
	We Don't Eat Our Classmates	Ryan Higgins		Islandborn	Junot Diaz
	I Walk With Vanessa	Kerascoet		Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History	Vashti Harrison
	Stretch to the Sun	Carrie Pearson		Julian is a Mermaid	Jessica Love
	The Secrets of Ninja School	Deb Pilutti		Desmond Cole Ghost Patrol: Major Monster Mess	Andres Miedoso
	Baby Monkey, Private Eye	Brian Selznick & David Serlin		Thirty Minutes Over Oregon	Marc Tyler Nobleman
	The Hidden Life of a Toad	Doug Wechsler		Vivid: Poems & Notes About Color	Julie Paschkis
Grades 4-5			Grades 6-8		
Vote	Title	Author	Vote	Title	Author
	Pashmina	Nidhi Chanani		Endling: The Last	Katherine Applegate
	Lafayette!	Nathan Hale		Sweep: The Story of a Girl and Her Monster	Jonathan Auxier
	I'm Just No Good at Rhyming	Chris Harris		Aru Shah and the End of Time	Roshani Chokshi
	Can I Touch Your Hair?	Irene Latham & Charles Waters		Illegal	Eoin Colfer & Andrew Donkin
	Bob	Wendy Mass & Rebecca Stead		Martin Rising: Requiem for a King	Andrea Davis Pinkney
	Knights vs. Dinosaurs	Matt Phelan		Apple in the Middle	Dawn Quigley
	Ghost Boys	Jewell Parker Rhodes		The Prince and the Dressmaker	Jen Wang
	Harbor Me	Jacqueline Woodson		Front Desk	Kelly Yang
Grades 9-12			Grades 9-12		
Vote	Title	Author	Teacher Name: _____		
	The Poet X	Elizabeth Acevedo	E-mail Address: _____		
	What If It's Us	Becky Albertalli & Adam Silvera	School or Library: _____		
	A Heart in a Body in the World	Deb Caletti	City: _____		
	(Don't) Call Me Crazy	Kelly Jensen, Editor	For more information about GLGB, please visit: www.michiganreading.org		
	Orphan Monster Spy	Matt Killeen			
	Hey, Kiddo	Jarrett Krosoczka			
	Blood Water Paint	Joy McCullough			
	On a Sunbeam	Tillie Walden			

BOOKS OPEN DOORS

Dates: March 14-16
Detroit, Michigan
2020 Annual Conference

Saturday:
Sara K. Ahmed
Cornelius Minor

Sunday:
Ernest Morrell

Monday:
Jennifer Serravallo



Michigan Reading Journal

Call for Manuscripts & Graphics

The *Michigan Reading Journal* is the peer-reviewed journal of the Michigan Reading Association, which is composed of and serves more than 6,000 classroom teachers, literacy specialists, educational leaders, teacher educators, and university faculty. The journal publishes on diverse topics related to literacy, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, visually representing, technology, and literature for children and young adults. Submissions are invited in any of the categories below, though we are particularly interested in manuscripts that connect literacy and social justice or address new literacies (e.g., technology, graphic novels, podcasts, etc.).

Bridging Research and Practice Articles: Articles submitted in this category present original descriptions of research-based instruction that improves the literacy learning of students ranging from birth to college age. Articles describing research-based practices in literacy teacher education will also be considered. Manuscripts in this category must include 5-10 practical steps to guide readers in applying the research to their practice. Manuscript submissions should include APA formatted references to the relevant research literature and must not exceed 5,000 words (including tables, figures and appendices; excluding reference list) in 12-point font. Any charts or graphics must be of high-quality and in black and white. These manuscripts undergo blind review by members of the journal's editorial review board.

Voices from the Region: Articles submitted in this category will showcase evidence-based literacy practices being implemented throughout the state and region in such varied spaces as classrooms, districts, libraries, after school programs, online schools, homes, daycares, preschools, ISDs/RESAs. We are specifically interested in submissions from practitioners who can share tips and ideas about what is working in their context, why they are engaging in these ideas, and how others could do this, too. Our goal is to hear from a range of practitioners in and around the state who are interested in literacy. Manuscripts in this category should begin with an introduction to the authors and the context of their work. Please also include APA formatted references to the relevant research literature, if appropriate to the piece. Manuscript submissions should be between 750 and 2500 words (including tables, figures and appendices; excluding reference list), double-spaced, and in 12-point font. Any charts or graphics must be of high-quality and in black and white. These manuscripts undergo blind review by members of the journal's editorial review board.

Visual Artifacts and Graphics: Submissions in this category share visual artifacts of literacy teaching practices through photos of teachers and students engaging in literacy, literacy projects, literacy centers, and artifacts of student learning. Each image should be clear, in focus, of a high resolution/quality, and sent as a full-size jpeg or tiff file attachment, accompanied by a brief, 50-100 word description. Documents must be scanned, not photographed; the latter will not be of high enough quality for publication. By submitting an item in this category, the individual indicates that he/she has obtained consent from the district, school, teacher, parent, and child to use the image for publication. The journal's editorial team reviews submissions in this category.

Letters to the Editors: We invite and encourage your letters in response to what you have read in the *Michigan Reading Journal*. Did research presented help you better understand teaching and learning? Were you inspired to try a new teaching strategy? Are you still puzzling over a topic recently featured? Is there something you haven't seen in the journal that you want us to address? Let us hear from you, please. Letters may be edited, with author's permission, for publication.

Nominations for Professional Books to Review: We invite and encourage nominations of professional books to review for our Professional Books of Interest column. Please send book titles, author names, and year of

publication to us via e-mail with a brief 1-2 sentence description of what the book is about and why it should be reviewed in *MRJ*.

New this year! Reviews of Children's and Young Adult Books: Have a great book that you and your students love? We invite teachers of students of all ages to write and submit book reviews of children's and young adult books of any genre that have been published in the last year. Book reviews should be no more than 200 words in length.

Review of Manuscripts

Below are the questions that the journal's Editorial Review Board members use when reviewing submitted research manuscripts and practitioner pieces focused on sharing teaching practices. The questions are intended to guide reviewers and help them shape their written summaries of feedback and recommendations regarding publication. The answers are forwarded to authors, along with the publication decision. The editorial team will provide feedback on spelling, grammar, mechanics, APA format, etcetera, so reviewers should focus their review and feedback on the more global guiding questions below. The guiding questions can also serve to help authors shape their manuscripts in order to meet standard for publication in *MRJ*.

Part I: Guiding Questions

1. Does the article address an important or compelling topic for reading practitioners in Michigan? Why or why not?
2. Does the manuscript contain an appropriate blend of theory, research and practice? Are there ways to improve this balance?
3. Does the article offer practical implications or suggestions, based-in-research, that reading practitioners can implement? Are there additional implications that would improve the manuscript?
4. Does the manuscript include enough information on how-to practical steps for classroom or practitioner implementation (i.e., What can teachers do on Monday morning?)?
5. Will the article appeal to *MRJ*'s diverse audience? What can be improved?
6. What are the revisions that you would recommend to improve this manuscript for our practitioner audience?

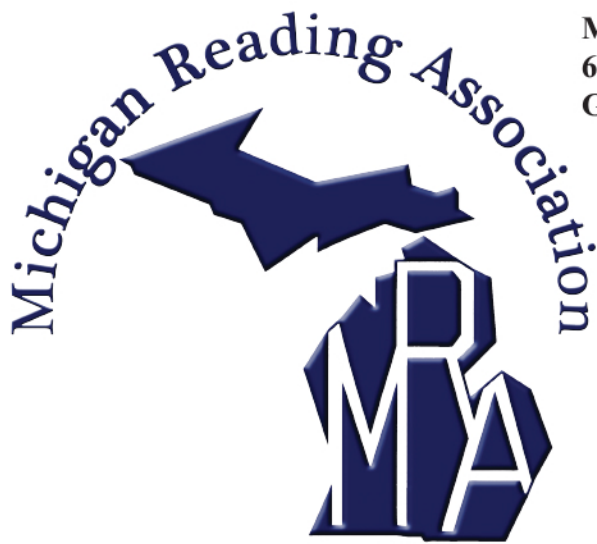
Part II: Recommendation Regarding Publication: Reviewers mark recommendations by placing an X in the appropriate box below. Reviewer recommendations are not disclosed directly to the authors.

☐Accept ☐Accept with Minor Revisions ☐Revise Substantially and Resubmit ☐Reject

Submitting Your Work

All submissions should represent the author's original work, not be submitted for publication elsewhere, and follow guidelines as described above. All submissions should be sent electronically as e-mail attachments to the journal's editorial team at MRJ@wayne.edu. Manuscript submissions should be sent as Microsoft Word documents, and graphic submissions should be sent in black and white as jpeg or tiff files. Due to the blind review process, manuscripts should not include the author's name. A separate cover letter should be submitted as a Word document and should provide: a) title of submission, b) a brief narrative describing the article and its fit with the journal audience, c) the type of article you are submitting (see article types, above), d) author's name, e) author's title/position, f) school/district affiliation, g) telephone number, h) e-mail address, i) mailing address, and j) up to 75 words of biographical information the author would like to share with readers regarding his/her professional work or background.

Deadlines: The *Michigan Reading Journal* is published three times yearly—fall, winter, and spring. Manuscripts are reviewed on a rolling basis.



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