

Illinois Reading Council



Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

Communicator

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"I like being around books. It makes me feel civilized. The only way to do all the things you'd like to do is to read."

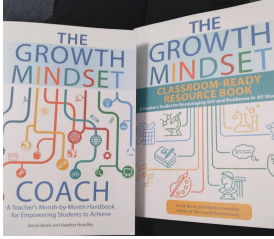
~ Tom Clancy

#WhatIAmReading



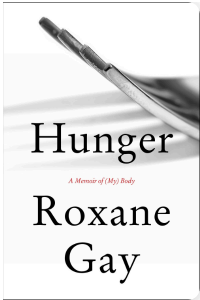
I am reading *The Growth Mindset Coach* by Annie Brock and Heather Hundley.

~ Jennifer Gratteau, 6th Grade and 8th ELA, Shiloh Village School District #85



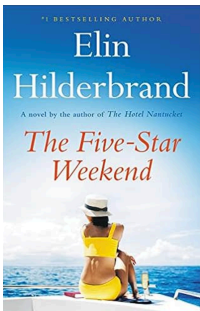
After a great session at my local ROE, I ran out and bought *The Growth Mindset Coach: A Teacher's Month-by-Month Handbook for Empowering Students to Achieve* and *The Growth Mindset Classroom-Ready Resource Book: A Teacher's Toolkit for Encouraging Grit and Resilience in All Students*. These books are amazing and I look forward to using them this year in my classroom to change OUR mindset.

I am reading *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* by Roxane Gay.
~ Julie Hoffman, IRC President



In the book, *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*, the author, Roxane Gay, brings vulnerability, courage, and honesty as she shares her journey with her weight, her body, and her healing.

I am reading *The Five-Star Weekend* by Elin Hilderbrand.
~ Carrie Sheridan, IRC Executive Director



With summer coming to an end, I am spending the last few weeks with my favorite beach read author, Elin Hilderbrand. Reading every one of her books has added spending a summer on Nantucket to my bucket list. Her newest book, *The Five-Star Weekend*, just adds to my dream as it tells the story of popular food blogger, Hollis Shaw, as she organizes a trip to Nantucket for her best friends from each phase of her life. The book will take you away to Nantucket in a story about love, friendship, and self-discovery.



DEVELOPING STUDENT LEARNING WITH AN ASSET-BASED THINKING MINDSET

By Laura Beltchenko, IRC Professional Learning and Development Chair



In the captivating story, *The Magical YET*, written by Angela DiTerlizzi and pictures by Lorena Alvarez Gomez (2020), the important combination of text and illustrations share:



"Yet is a dreamer, a schemer, a hop-er, a try-er, a maker, a do-er, a gotta-fly higher. This Yet finds a way, even when you don't, and Yet know you will, when you think you won't."



Consider pairing this book with [Y is for Yet: A Growth Mindset Alphabet](#) by Shannon Anderson. This alphabet book uses each letter as an organizer to share vocabulary and help students view themselves as achievers to be a little better each day. Together these books share a wonderful way to have not only a growth mindset but an asset-based way of thinking as a teacher. As we begin yet another school year, can we think of our students not as what they are not capable of bringing to the proverbial table of their skill set, but what

they in fact have as their base knowledge and build upon their assets and not always dwell in their deficits.

Asset and deficit-based thinking are two contrasting approaches used in education to understand students strengths and limitations, particularly those from diverse backgrounds or with varying levels of academic preparedness (Renkly, Bertolini, 2018). These concepts emphasize different ways of perceiving and working with students' strengths and challenges.

Asset-based thinking focuses on identifying and leveraging students' competencies, strengths, talents, interests, experiences, and cultural backgrounds (Alber, 2013). This approach views every student as having valuable assets that can contribute to their learning and development. Asset-based thinking is rooted in the belief that building on these strengths can lead to more successful outcomes for students. Teachers and educators using this approach aim to create a positive and inclusive learning environment that values diversity and promotes collaboration.

Indicating Factors

- Identifying and acknowledging each student's unique strengths and talents
- Viewing students' cultural backgrounds and experiences as valuable contributions to the classroom
- Using students' strengths to meet challenges and support growth
- Fostering a sense of belonging and self-efficacy in students

Deficit-based thinking, on the other hand, is a perspective that focuses on identifying students' weaknesses, shortcomings, or challenges. If a student is underachieving, those that work from a deficit model believe the failure is because that student may not be trying hard enough (Lombardi, 2016). It looks at quantitative measures that tend to view students through what they lack or what they are unable to do. This approach can lead to negative stereotypes and assumptions about students' abilities, potentially leading to lowered expectations and limited opportunities (Alber, 2013).

Indicating Factors

- Emphasizing the gaps and challenges that students face
- Focusing on deficits rather than strengths
- Reinforcing negative stereotypes and biases
- Can lead to lower expectations and reduced opportunities for certain groups of students

It's important to note that asset-based thinking considerations are conducive to positive student outcomes. Instructional approaches that build on students' strengths and create an inclusive, supportive environment tend to lead to greater engagement, motivation, and

success. On the other hand, deficit thinking may perpetuate disparities and inequities by reinforcing negative perceptions and limiting students' potential. This is of particular importance with middle school students (Renkly, Bertolini, 2018).

As educators we should continually be encouraged to adopt asset-based thinking in all content areas and to create environments that value diversity and promote student strengths. This approach not only supports academic success but also contributes to students' well-being and sense of belonging in the classroom learning community.

Asset and deficit thinking in the context of student achievement explores the impact of these two different mindsets on educational outcomes. Adopting an asset-based mindset can lead to improved student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Renkly, Bertolini, 2028). It fosters a positive learning environment that values diversity and encourages collaboration between students and educators. Deficit thinking can perpetuate stereotypes, discourage students, and hinder their potential for individual success.

It is our responsibility as educators to increasingly recognize the benefits of asset-based thinking. By incorporating this mindset into our teaching practices and curriculum development, we create more inclusive and effective classroom learning environments. This will encourage our students with a mindset that builds on the social and emotional development and learning we know makes them thrive.

Along with the two books introduced at the onset of this article, I would also introduce a few other selections of children's literature in the bibliography that explore the idea of building our perceptions for a growth mindset for our students and ourselves.

References

1. Alber, R. (2013). Tools for teaching: Ditching the deficit model. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teaching-tool-ditching-deficit-model-rebecca-alber>
2. Lombardi, J. D. (2016). The deficit model is harming your students. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/deficit-model-is-harming-students-janice-lombardi>
3. Renkly, S., & Bertolini, K. (2018). Shifting the Paradigm from Deficit Oriented Schools to Asset Based Models: Why Leaders Need to Promote an Asset Orientation in our schools. *Empowering Research for Educators*, 2(1), 23–27.

Children's Literature

1. Anderson, S. (2020). *Y is for yet: A growth mindset alphabet*. Free Spirit Publishing Inc.
2. Andreae, G. (2019). *Giraffes can't dance*. Scholastic Inc. (Pair with: *Giraffe Problems*)
3. Byers, G. (2021a). *I am enough*. Free Spirit Publishing . (Pair with: I believe I can)
4. Byers, G. (2021b). *I believe I can*. Scholastic Inc.
5. DiTerlizzi, A., & Alvarez, L. (2020). *The magical yet*. Disney, Hyperion. (Pair with Y is for Yet)
6. John, J. (2020). *Giraffe problems*. Random House Children's Books.

Fall 2023 IRC Book Club

Join educators from all over the state in the online [Fall 2023 IRC Book Club](#)! Choose one, two, or all three books!

Read, reflect on, and respond to *Teaching Fiercely: Spreading Joy and Justice in Our Schools* by Kass Minor and/or *The Final Strife: A Novel* by Saara El-Arifi and/or *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Concepts Fundamentales* by David Schwarzer, Mary Petron, and Clarena Larrotta.

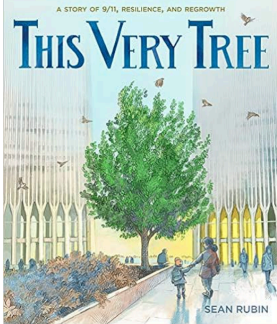
Beginning **October 22**, these seven-week online discussions will revolutionize the way you negotiate the realities of childhood education and/or you can explore the first book of a visionary fantasy YA trilogy that will offer ways to model book clubs with your students as you prepare plans with other books of your choosing. With *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*, a book with text written in both English and Spanish simultaneously, the underlying understanding is that ALL your language resources are welcome when it comes to discussing your ideas, understandings, and aha moments. We will be encouraging participants to feel comfortable using their best language assets and language as they use their bilingualism on a daily basis in social and academic settings.

Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club. Register by **October 15, 2023**, to participate in the book club. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$50, which includes IRC membership for one year.



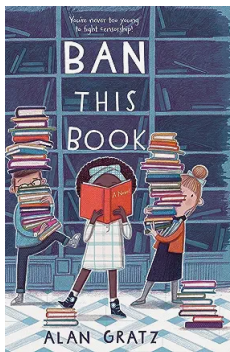
Family Literacy Bookshelf By Barb Ashton

Summer is slowly fading away. The new school year has started and autumn will soon be here with cooler temperatures, colorful trees, fall activities, festivals and the start of the football season. During September we celebrate Labor Day, honor our grandparents, remember and observe 9/11, and celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.



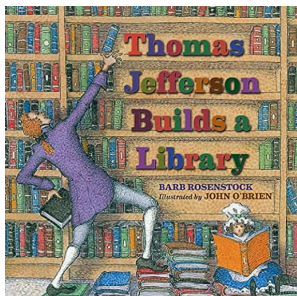
While many of us remember the actual events of September 11 (9/11) the students in our classrooms today have no idea what this day really encompasses. ***This Very Tree: A Story of 9/11, Resilience, and Regrowth*** by Sean Rubin is a beautifully written book that provides teachers, parents, librarians, etc., with a unique, simple, but thoughtful way to introduce the events and emotional impact of 9/11. This is the story of the Callery Pear Tree that stood between the Twin Towers. Over the years the tree not only provided a home for the birds but also a resting place for the visitors who came to visit the Twin Towers and New York City. This tree, now known as the “Survivor Tree,” actually survived the devastation of 9/11. Although badly scarred and burned it was taken to a special nursery where it was nursed back to health.

The tree was eventually returned to Ground Zero (rebuilt World Trade Center Plaza), replanted, and once again provides beauty, rest, and above all hope and the resilience of America. The back of the book provides a short history of the World Trade Center, 9/11, and the Survivor Tree.



Banned Books have been a hot topic covered by the media for the past several months. ***Ban This Book: A Novel*** by Alan Gratz addresses this issue through the main character Amy Anne Ollinger, a very shy and quiet African American girl who becomes upset when she is told by the school librarian, Mrs. Jones, that her favorite book *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* is banned because a parent complained the book wasn't appropriate for students to read. Upon hearing this Amy Anne decides to fight back. With the assistance of some of her classmates they collect several banned books. Amy Anne starts the B.B.L.L. (Banned Books Lending Library) from her school locker. Will the Principal find out about the secret library that allows her classmates to read the books? Along the way Amy Anne and her classmates learn about the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights in addition to taking on the School

Board. Will Amy Anne's parents support her efforts and will she be successful in resolving this controversial issue? Read *Ban This Book* to see how it ends. The back of the book contains an excellent discussion and activity guide.



September is Library Card Sign Up Month. Did you ever wonder how the American Library system got started? To answer that question read ***Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library*** by Barb Rosenstock. This is the story of the third president of the United States and his love for reading and collecting books. As a young boy he read all the books in his father's library and later in college often read for 15 hours a day. While serving in France he saw a library which inspired him to purchase books in different languages. Upon his return to the U.S. he learned that the U.S. Congress had a small reference library of books on law and government. As President he supported this library and tripled the size of the Library of Congress. When the

library was burned during the War of 1812 Jefferson gave his books to the Library of Congress, but was eventually paid \$23,950 which was a fraction of what they were really worth. Each page of the book is done in muted earth tones which reflect America's past along with book boxes that provide additional information to the reader. Can you guess how many books the Library of Congress adds each day or how many books they own? Read *Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library* to get the answer.

Looking Ahead

September is Library Card Sign Up Month.

September is Hispanic Heritage Month – Find many resources at [Teaching Central America Week](#) that is planned for October 2 – 6, 2023

September 4: Labor Day – Enjoy a restful day

September 8: International Literacy Day

September 10: Grandparents Day – Wish your grandparents a Happy Day

September 11: Patriots Day – Remember those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001
September 19: Talk Like a Pirate Day – Read your favorite book to learn more about pirates
September 21: International Peace Day – Be kind and peace loving to others
September 23: Autumn equinox Fall begins
September 26: Johnny Appleseed Day – Enjoy reading about this American tall tale character

Library of Congress Announces National Ambassador Tour



The Library of Congress has recently announced that they will be planning Meg Medina's second year of travel as the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature in 2024.

Beginning on September 6th, [proposals](#) will be accepted for those who want to host Meg Medina at your school and libraries in 2024. The proposal requires schools and public libraries to work together as the proposed visit must include an Evening Public Library Visit and a Daytime School Visit. Participating organizations must coordinate to submit a single, unified proposal.

The deadline to apply is October 5, 2023.

UPCOMING PD EVENTS

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **September 1, 2023: IRC** is accepting Program Proposals to present at the 2024 IRC Conference planned for March 14-15, 2024 in Springfield, Illinois.
- **September 6, 2023: IRC Webinar on Poems Can Heal the Heart: Empower Poets in the Classroom** with Zetta Elliott from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **September 8, 2023: IRC** is celebrating International Literacy Day

- **September 14, 2023: Western Illinois Reading Council** will host Sweet Reads: Life is Sweeter with Books from 5:30 to 7:00 pm at Wordsmith Bookshope, 235 E Main St, Galesburg, Illinois.
- **September 18, 2023: Prairie Area Reading Council** will host Book Gossip with Kathleen March from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Gatto's Restaurant, 5123 Main Street, Downers Grove, Illinois.
- **September 18, 2023: West Suburban Reading Council** will host A Book Look: Popular Resources for PreK- to Adult Educators from 4:30 to 7:00 pm at St. Giles Gleason Building, McDonough Hall, 2nd Floor, 1101 North Columbian Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois.
- **September 21, 2023: Secondary Reading League (SRL)** will host Back To School Book Talks from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Harvey's Tales, 216 James St, Geneva, Illinois.
- **September 24, 2023: MID-State Reading Council** will host Board Games for Bored Teachers: Heading to the Bored Teachers Comedy Show at the BCPA? Join us for some pre-show fun from 6:00 to 7:00 pm at Red Raccoon Games, 309 N Main Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **September 25, 2023: Fox Valley Reading Council** will host the Fall Book Talk from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at Anderson's Bookshops, 123 W Jefferson Avenue, Naperville, Illinois.
- **September 28, 2023: Sauk Valley Reading Council** will host Beverages, Books, & Bingo from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at Last Stop, 1914 Lowell Park Dr, Dixon, Illinois.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

#WhatIAmReading: Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences. Creative pictures of you and your book in your favorite reading spot are encouraged.

IRC Highlight Reels: Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

Other Literacy Topics:

- Strategies for Struggling Readers
- Building the Reading and Writing Connection
- Increasing Equity & Opportunity for All Learners
- Diverse Books for your Classroom
- And any other literacy topics that interest you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

QUICK LINKS

Visit the IRC Website

Full IRC Events Calendar

Latest on the IRC Conference

Available IRC Awards and Grants

Bring IRC PD to your School District

Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

