



# ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL JOURNAL

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## ***About the Cover Artist***

### **Eric Rohmann**

The cover art has graciously been shared by award-winning Illinois illustrator Eric Rohmann. They are taken from his book *HoneyBee: The Busy Life of Apis Meliflerra*, co-authored with his wife, fellow award-winner Candace Fleming. Eric is also the author/illustrator of *My Friend Rabbit*, *Cinder Eyed Cats*, *A Kitten Tale*, and *Bone Dog*. Other books co-authored with Candace include *Giant Squid*, *Bulldozer's Big Day*, and *Oh No!*

Eric notes, "My favorite part of the bookmaking process is the beginning: exploring, doodling, daydreaming, discovering. This is when ideas come alive, when thoughts are put to paper and made tangible. At first I only have an inkling of what I want the finished book to look like, and I'll put those first rudimentary ideas down in pencil sketches. Then I write, and then a few more pictures informed by the words. Then more writing . . . more pictures . . . words . . . pictures . . . more words, until the story starts to find its way. From there, I can see my choices and move ahead."

<https://www.ericrohmann.com>

## ***About the Photography***

### **Brad Betz**

Brad Betz is a professional photographer from Chicago, Illinois. Since 1994, Brad has been exploring the world through photography. He attended DePaul University where he took his first photography class, and he continued to study photojournalism at Columbia College Chicago under the tutelage of Photojournalism Pulitzer winner, John H. White. Brad has been published online and in print in various publications, including *Chicago Public Radio* and *Time* magazine. His work has also been exhibited at The Art Institute of Chicago.

You can find Brad's photographs on pages 25, 26, 34, 39, 52, and 67.

# ILLINOIS READS

## A READING STATE OF MIND



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*Chicago, Baby!*  
by Feather Flores and  
illustrated by Kelly Leigh Miller  
*ABC Animals!*  
by Stephen F. Majsak  
*I'll Be Your Polar Bear*  
by Justin Roberts  
*Molly on the Moon*  
by Mary Robinette Kowal

### **6-8**

*Courage*  
by Barbara Binns  
*The Civil War of Amos Abernathy*  
by Michael Leali  
*Pilar Ramirez and the Escape from Zafa*  
by Julian Randall  
*Tumble*  
by Celia C. Pérez  
*ReThink the Internet: How to Make the Digital World a Lot Less Sucky*  
by Trisha Prabhu  
*Underground Fire: Hope, Sacrifice, and Courage in the Cherry Mine Disaster*  
by Sally M. Walker

### **K-2**

*The Most Haunted House in America*  
by Jarrett Dapier  
*Stella Keeps the Sun Up*  
by Clothilde Ewing  
*Elephant's Big Solo*  
by Sarah Kurpiel  
*The Meaning of Pride*  
by Rosiee Thor and illustrated by Sam Kirk  
*Tortoise and Hare: A Fairy Tale to Help You Find Balance*  
by Susan Verde and illustrated by Jay Fleck  
*Yetis are the Worst!*  
by Alex Willan

### **9-12**

*A Man Called Horse: John Horse and the Black Seminole Underground Railroad*  
by Glennette Tilley Turner  
*Murder Among Friends: How Leopold and Loeb Tried to Commit the Perfect Crime*  
by Candace Fleming  
*As Fast As Her: Dream Big, Break Barriers, Achieve Success*  
by Kendall Coyne  
*Strike the Zither*  
by Joan He  
*The Wolves Are Watching*  
by Natalie Lund  
*Darling*  
by K. Ancrum

### **3-5**

*Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*  
by Suzanne Slade and  
illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera  
*Buzzing with Questions: The Inquisitive Mind of Charles Henry Turner*  
by Janice N. Harrington  
*Pighearted*  
by Alex Perry  
*A Rover's Story*  
by Jasmine Warga  
*Apple Crush*  
by Lucy Knisley  
*Three Strike Summer*  
by Skyler Schrempp

### **Adult**

*The Upstairs House: A Novel*  
by Julia Fine  
*Grace: President Obama and Ten Days in the Battle for America*  
by Cody Keenan  
*Eat, Drink, and Be Murray: A Feast of Family Fun and Favorites*  
by Andy Murray  
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by Catherine Adel West  
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# Editor's Note:

## Archive Dive with Roxanne Owens

Roxanne Owens  
Editor, *Illinois Reading Council Journal*  
*DePaul University*  
*Chicago, Illinois*

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I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Jessica Rohr, the Member Director and Communications Specialist for the HathiTrust (pronounced hot-tea trust) Digital Library (<https://www.Hathitrust.org>). This archive houses almost 18 million digitized items, providing unprecedented access to historical primary resources in multiple areas of scholarly interest. It is one of my absolute favorite places to search for any research project I am undertaking.

The search engine leads to particular documents, and then links to the specific terms within the documents, saving hours of a researcher's time. As many of you know, I have been researching women's bowling for the last few years. This is because of the HathiTrust archive. I was not looking for anything even remotely related to women's bowling when I began my exploration. I don't really even remember what I was looking for—I wish I had saved the search. It was likely something concerning literacy education or children's literature since those are related to my actual job.

I know I started by clicking on a topic regarding women authors, then that led to links for letters from/to women authors. Next, I think, I found meeting minutes from a women's literary society, and I am pretty sure that brought me to minutes from other societies. Now, you might think that reading meeting minutes might be boring (well, okay, most are), but that's because



you have not read the minutes of the Women's International Bowling Congress. But I digress.

Jessica and I discussed the importance of preserving primary source documents. You just never know what is going to be revealing, useful, noteworthy, or just plain fun for future readers. We can see where we've been and whether we've made progress. Do we learn from our past? Sometimes.

On that note, I recently plugged "History of Reading" into the HathiTrust search engine. It returned availability of 2,262,807 documents. There are—thankfully—ways to limit the search by *place of publication*, *years of publication*, *language*, etc. I limited it by dates of publication and chose a 154-page annotated bibliography of relevant reading research articles from that decade. Here are some of the titles. Any guess what decade they are from?

- Car, J. W., "The Approach to Reading as a Meaning Process." *Elementary English Review*, XIII.
- Iverson, A. O., *The Relation of Reading Comprehension to Academic Success in High School*. University of Wisconsin.
- Kelley, V. H., "The Reading Abilities of Spanish and English Speaking Pupils." *Journal of Educational Research*, XXIX.
- Rogers, M. V., "Comprehension in Oral and Silent Reading." *Journal of General Psychology*.
- Rothney, J. M., & McCaul, R. L., "Reading Preferences of High School Boys." *English Journal*.



- Shaffer, L. F., *Children's Interpretations of Cartoons*. Teachers College, Bureau of Publications.
- Witty, P., "Reading for Meaning." *English Journal*, XXVI.

Any of those titles could be used today (except we rarely use the word *pupils* anymore). Those articles were highlighted in the following publication:

Strang, R. M., Lord, L., Margolin, A. J., McCullough, C. M., & Young, M. (1939). *Improvement of reading on high school and college*. Teachers College, Columbia University.

Yes, 1939. All of those articles were written in the 1930s. It is both fascinating and frustrating that we are still grappling with many of the same questions related to reading education. On the plus side, we have a solid record of what has been explored in the past that we can learn from and build upon.

Digital archives such as the HathiTrust are a powerful resource for learners today. They provide textual, visual, and audio resources (as in the case of the Library of Congress and many museum archives) that provide multiple perspectives on various areas of the curriculum. As teachers, we can provide a much more well-rounded picture of the past through these sources.

And, if we're lucky, sometimes we'll dive down a rabbit hole to discover strikingly amazing (but completely unrelated to what you were originally looking for) topics that open up a whole new area of passion and wonderful stories just waiting to be told.

## About the Author

Roxanne Owens has served as the lead editor of *Illinois Reading Council Journal* since 2014. She is currently the Chair of Teacher Education at DePaul University in Chicago where she has been teaching since 1992. In her spare time she bowls badly.

### Mission

*The mission of the Illinois Reading Council is to provide support and leadership to educators as they promote and teach lifelong literacy.*

### Vision

*The Illinois Reading Council advocates quality literacy opportunities for all learners and serves as a primary organization that provides educators at all levels access to research, materials, and methodologies to promote and teach lifelong literacy and learning. Support of an active, well-organized system of local and special interest councils and state committees provides a viable network for communication, exchange of information, and grassroots involvement of a diverse membership. The Illinois Reading Council's publications, special projects, conferences, and workshops stimulate the personal and professional growth of educators.*

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# ***Shanahan on Literacy***

Timothy Shanahan  
Distinguished Professor Emeritus  
*University of Illinois at Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois*

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**Editor's Note:** *We are honored to reprint with permission a revised version of Dr. Tim Shanahan's post from his popular ShanahanonLiteracy.com website. We think readers will find it thought provoking and informative.*

## **Is Emily Hanford Right?**

### **Teacher Question**

Our school district is all abuzz about *Sold a Story*, a documentary about reading instruction and the response it is getting from some reading experts. We've been surprised that you haven't written about this. We're sure you have an opinion. Would you be willing to share it?

### **Shanahan's Response**

I admire Emily Hanford and her work. I've been interviewed several times by her over the years. She always has treated me respectfully. She asks probing questions and relies on relevant research for the most part. In my experience, her quotes are accurate and fitting.

That doesn't mean I necessarily agree with all her views or even how she frames some of her arguments. Nevertheless, in my opinion, she usually gets things right, and I'm sympathetic with most of her conclusions since I believe they're more in tune with what research reveals about reading instruction than the positions of her supposedly expert critics.

The major thrust of her work (not just the documentaries you note, but also earlier productions) has been that readers must translate print (orthography) into pronunciation (phonology) and that explicit teaching of phonics helps kids learn to do this. She also emphasizes that many schools are not providing such instruction and that many teachers aren't prepared to teach it. Finally, she's revealed that the currently most popular commercial reading programs ignore or minimize phonics instruction and teach approaches to word reading that science has rejected (like 3-cueing, in which students are taught to read words by looking at the pictures or guessing from context).

Those positions are sound; well supported by lots of high-quality research. My disagreements with Ms. Hanford's work are more around the edges. I think she puts too much emphasis on the motivations of those who've advanced theories that don't stand the test of evidence. They shouldn't do that. I doubt that they did it just for the money, and whether they did is inconsequential. All that matters is how should we be teaching reading. Also, her reports tend to imply greater consequences of the problems identified than is prudent. She implies that if we taught phonics and dropped 3-cueing (two ideas I agree with), we would do away with low literacy. Neither experience nor the effect sizes of phonics studies suggest that the impact would be that substantial. I accept that enhancing the teaching of foundational skills in the primary grades will probably only improve 4th-grade reading achievement marginally, but that would be a good start and one I hope everyone can embrace.

The counterarguments to Ms. Hanford's reporting strike me as more troubling. I think they do more to confuse the issues than to enlighten. They often seem to have no purpose beyond attempting to discourage the teaching of phonics (a peculiar slant given that such instruction has long been required by all 50 U.S. states).

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I have neither the space nor patience to reply to all the criticism, but here are my thoughts on some of the more prominent ones.

## Challenges to the Source Rather than the Content

Since the early Greek philosophers, *ad hominem* arguments—as opposed to *ad verbum* ones—have been characterized as illogical, fallacious, and just bad form. Any student enrolled in Philosophy 101 learns that sound reasoning eschews attacks on the person rather than the person’s claims.

Accordingly, I reject the *ad hominem* judgments of some of my colleagues.

The idea that reporters can’t report on education unless they’ve taught school or possess a PhD in education strikes me as loony. It is akin to the idea that Woodward and Bernstein couldn’t cover Watergate since they’d never been elected President.

The accuracy of Ms. Hanford’s reports is legitimately open to challenge, but rejections of accurate reporting because the source isn’t a professional educator is fallacious.

I’m flabbergasted that those who reject Ms. Hanford’s reporting because she is a reporter aren’t similarly up in arms about commercial reading programs created by folks with little or no expertise or knowledge of reading instruction. The latter would seem to be more problematic since the likelihood of it harming children would be so much higher.

As for myself, I try to avoid *ad hominem* judgments altogether, though I certainly recognize the appeal (many of those critics have little expertise in these issues—for example, many in their research and teaching are focused on high school education and aren’t particularly conversant in issues of beginning reading instruction). Nevertheless, the issue shouldn’t be who the sources are but whether the reports are accurate.

## Reading Requires More than Phonics

Most critics have dismissed Ms. Hanford’s reporting because of its intensive focus on phonics instruction and decoding. Their criticisms are either that she doesn’t provide a definition of reading (so she must not understand what reading entails) or that she is neglecting potentially valuable instruction in other skills and abilities.

I understand why one would want to ensure that children receive comprehensive reading instruction—I’ve argued for comprehensiveness for decades. Teaching children all the skills that research has identified as beneficial to learning seems like the most likely to be successful approach one could take.

However, journalism is different than teaching. What’s requisite for a curriculum, state standards, core reading programs, teacher education, or daily classroom instruction has little to do with what one must include in a journalistic report.

The same can be said about research studies. If I conduct a study on the teaching of reading comprehension, editors don’t berate me with complaints that my study failed to consider the best way to teach children to deal with the schwa sound.

Imagine that a medical reporter discovers that doctors and nurses at the local hospital are not following sound sanitary protocols. She documents the problem, interviews medical personnel and patients, and examines local health records and research studies that have addressed the implications of such lapses.

Would you really be convinced that the reporter must be wrong because there is more to medicine than hand washing and instrument sterilization?

Perhaps the hospital administrator’s response would be something like, “Ms. Hanford doesn’t understand all the necessary components that go into sound health care. You might have noticed that she didn’t define

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sound health care in her documentaries, nor did she even mention the importance of tasty foods in the Commissary or the proper procurement practices when it comes to essential materials that must be kept on hand (an important part of health care to which I have personally devoted my career).”

We’d all laugh the dude out of the room because we still want the doctors to wash their hands.

My point is simply this: reporting, unlike reading instruction, doesn’t have to address everything to be sound and of value.

The reportorial identification of negligence or corruption should never be interpreted as being more than just that. If a reporter finds out that a public official is embezzling, that neither means that all public officials are crooks nor that the one so identified is the only fly in the ointment.

My sense is that neither Hanford nor the many reporters following up on her stories in their own locales are having any trouble finding schools that omit or minimize phonics, or teachers who claim they weren’t prepared to teach it.

This should not be terribly surprising to anyone in the field given that *Education Week* surveys have revealed some commercial reading programs that minimize phonics instruction or that omit it altogether are widely used in U.S. classrooms. Likewise, academic studies have demonstrated important gaps in coverage of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary/morphology, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension in teacher education programs.

Even if your local school district is already doing a crackerjack job with phonics, that doesn’t mean that the other 67,000 U.S. schools are on point with decoding. Such reporting may increase the scrutiny your teaching is subjected to, but if you’re really addressing phonics, then that shouldn’t be a problem.

Hanford’s reports do not provide a comprehensive examination of all aspects of a reading program. I don’t think we should expect them

to do so, and I don’t accept that her identification of this problem prevents anyone from teaching other essential aspects of reading.

“We were going to improve our reading comprehension instruction, but that damn Emily Hanford won’t allow us to do that!” Yeah, that’s the problem.

Comprehensiveness of coverage is a responsibility of educational standards writers, curriculum designers, professors, boards of education, school administrators, and teachers. Not journalists. They are vigilant in trying to identify our shortcomings. They are not required to find all of them.

A fascinating aside: Many critics have written things like, “Of course, phonics is essential” or “Everyone agrees that phonics is an important part of reading instruction.” Those admissions usually precede admonitions that this reporting goes too far in advocating for phonics.

To me, that raises a question: If everyone knows that phonics is so important, how could an especially popular commercial reading program omit it for nearly 20 years without any remark from these vigilant reading educators? They blame reporters for not being comprehensive in their conceptions of reading instruction but then let themselves off the hook for being even more woefully inattentive.

## **There Are Many Ways to Teach Reading**

While many of the critics have been willing to concede the value of explicit decoding instruction, others seem to defend its neglect. Their claim is that this reporting is off-base since there are “many ways to teach reading.” In other words, in their opinion, teaching 3-cueing is as effective as teaching phonics—and either choice is equally supportable.

Those arguments may appear to deserve 4 stars for affability and reasonability. But only if you’re willing to ignore the research.

Studies show that explicit phonemic awareness and phonics instruction consistently provide

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a learning advantage. There are no such studies supporting 3-cueing.

Studies show the activation of visual and phonological centers in the brain when word reading . . . they don't reveal similar activation that would suggest 3-cueing.

Readers do sometimes guess words (e.g., damaged pages, reader distraction, lack of decoding ability), but this is more evident with poor readers than good ones.

Usually, we strive to teach students to emulate proficiency. I want my kids to try to golf like Tiger Woods, not some old duffer who can't get onto the green.

Three-cueing is the only instance I can think of that asks students to parrot low success performance rather than proficiency.

There are many ways to teach reading. It is sophistry, however, to pretend that these ways are all equal. Phonics provides a clear advantage.

To those who claim that we need different ways of teaching decoding (e.g., pictures, context) since all children are different, show me the research.

Until such research is available, I'm willing to follow this claim to its logical conclusion. Let's say that I'm willing to entertain the idea that all children learn differently. If that is the case, then why aren't these critics up in arms about programs that omit or minimize phonics given that research has found such omissions to be especially harmful to our most vulnerable children? Their position seems to be not just inconsistent but hard-hearted and downright mean.

Enough.

Emily Hanford's investigative reporting has been useful—a welcome relief from the wishful but misleading reporting that has often plagued this topic. (Patti Ghezzi, the astute former educational reporter for the *Atlanta Constitution*, recently provided an exceptionally candid account of why her past reporting went so wrong [Downey, 2022].) For many schools, these reports have led and will lead to a serious

rethinking of how best to meet young children's reading needs. Perhaps some of these long overdue appraisals will be led by wise schoolmen and women who will wonder, "Gee, if we so missed the boat on phonics, how are we doing with other aspects of reading? Maybe we could do better."

One can hope.

## Reference

Downey, M. (2022). Former education journalist: How I missed the phonics story. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. <https://www.ajc.com/education/get-schooled-blog/former-education-journalist-how-i-missed-the-phonics-story/2UHWCUJWYRBPXFTRBXJ2HPFI6Y>

## About the Author

Timothy Shanahan is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Chicago where he was Founding Director of the UIC Center for Literacy. Previously, he was Director of Reading for the Chicago Public Schools. He is author/editor of more than 200 publications on literacy education. His research emphasizes the connections between reading and writing, literacy in the disciplines, and improvement of reading achievement.

Tim is a former associate editor of the *Illinois Reading Council Journal* (and a favorite professor of the current editor), and he is a member of the Illinois Reading Council Hall of Fame. Tim is past president of the International Literacy Association, and he served as a member of the Advisory Board of the National Institute for Literacy under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. He helped lead the National Reading Panel, convened at the request of Congress to evaluate research on the teaching of reading, which has been a major influence on reading education.

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# Writer's Tips

Kate Hannigan

Book Author

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*This “Writer’s Tip” was originally published in the Fall 2022 issue of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators’ bulletin Prairie Wind. Reprinted with permission of the author.*

## Let’s Talk Mechanics of Getting Started

I never really know what I’m doing when I begin a new writing project. Every time I set fingers onto laptop keys, a voice in my head begins buzzing. How in the world am I going to do this? Do I really have 40,000 words in me? How do I even start? So the first order of business is to shut off the voices of self-doubt in our heads.

Previous *Prairie Wind* “Writer’s Tips” have shared fantastic advice about character, setting, voice, and beyond—writing that happens when we have a completed first draft to shape and mold further. Most of writing, after all, is revision. Refining. I want to take a few steps backward from that spot and share tips for getting ourselves started. Doing the front-end work that gets us on track toward that glorious moment of having a completed first draft in our hands.

What follows are the mechanics I use to produce a first draft. Some tricks to help move a great book idea from inside our heads to outside. To see our stories on a page instead of feeling them knocking around in our minds. Simply put, how to start the process.

My dream with a new book idea is that some unsuspecting editor somewhere will fall in love with my manuscript and rush down the hall (we’re no longer working virtually in this

fantasy) and exclaim to a colleague about what’s landed on their desk. Because I need this editor to be able to share the gist of my story succinctly, first I need to know exactly what I’m writing.

## One-Sentence Summary

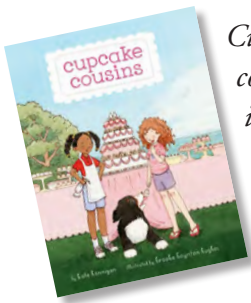
When I’m turning a new book idea around in my head, the first thing I do is open up a page in Google Docs and write up a quick summary. I try to paint the idea onto the page with broad brushstrokes, then sharpen it with each pass.

Once I have a sense of what I’m going for, I sum up my project in one sentence. A sentence I could put in a pitch letter to that unsuspecting editor. I consider this the Walking the Dog line as in, we’re out in the neighborhood, we run into an old friend, they ask what we’re working on, and we give them this line. One sentence. It’s the elevator pitch only tighter. They do not have time for a long-winded explanation. There are dogs tugging on leashes. There are walks to be taken. There are squirrels.

As we do this exercise, we can try to imagine how a description of our new book might read, like these from Kirkus:

*The real-life story of two intrepid female journalists and their competition to circumnavigate the globe.*





*Culinary mishaps ensue when 9-year-old cousins conspire to avoid being flower girls in their aunt's wedding.*

## Jacket Flap

After boiling down my book idea to its essence with the one-sentence summary, next I write the *jacket flap copy*. I find this exercise useful because it makes us step back and consider how a young reader might feel when they first pick up our book. What will entice them to open up the pages? What sets our book apart from the others clamoring for this reader's attention?

The jacket flap summary typically consists of only a paragraph or two of text, and writing it can help us visualize getting a reader interested—not only the young reader holding our finished project in their hands, but also an agent and a book editor who can make our dream a reality. And as a front-end exercise as we're teasing ideas out of our heads and onto pages, it helps give us accountability. When we get lost during the long process of writing our book, we can look back at the jacket flap summary and remember what we've promised our reader.

## Seriously, Write an Outline

All of us have our own approaches to writing our books. There are those who love the giddy, wind-in-the-hair thrill of flying by the seat of their pants (known as "pantsers") and those who prefer the reassuring cashmere-sweater comfort of writing with an outline (known as "plotters").

I am a firm believer in the latter. And my reason is rooted in personal experience: The books I've written as a pantsers are unfinished, while the books I've outlined are completed and even published. But that's just what works for me. Every writer is different, so we should explore whatever techniques work best for our own writing style. But at the end of the day, I encourage outlining.

## The 5/10 Split

My outlining style is something I have dubbed the "5/10 Split." It is incredibly basic. There are shelves of books on writing that offer ways to get started and much more sophisticated approaches than what I offer. But for me and my cluttered brain, this process works. Writing is so hard. It's lonely and complicated and often humiliating. Like a Zumba class. I try to keep things as uncomplicated as possible.

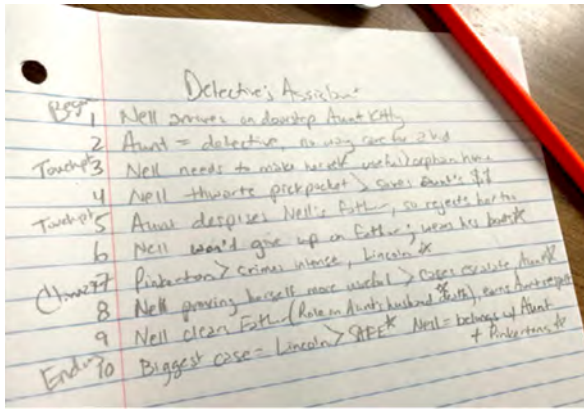
Any tools can be used for this technique: index cards that are easily moved around, sticky notes tacked up on a wall, spreadsheets, pencil-to-paper sketches. For me, it's just a list I scribble on paper or type out on my laptop.

With the 5/10 Split, I am trying to get an overview of my book so I can see where I'm writing action scenes and where I'm offering rest and reflection. I'll be deep in the trenches soon enough, but at the start, I write out *the five big hits* of the story that's ricocheting around in my head: a few words (like bullet points) about the opening, the ending, and the climax, and then two items I call "touchpoints," which are plot twists or emotional moments:

1. Beginning
2. Touchpoint
3. Touchpoint
4. Climax
5. Ending

Before we begin writing, we should know generally how we want our story to end. And that's because we write to the ending. As the authors, we're the all-knowing hands that move these characters around. So, having the ending in mind as we first start writing helps us get to that ending more effortlessly. Less gnashing of teeth, ideally.

Next, I flesh out each of these bullet points into a few sentences. I expand about what the main character wants, the conflict or obstacle in their way, and a little backstory for the various



The author's rough outline for her middle-grade mystery that eventually became *The Detective's Assistant*.

characters. Once I've fleshed out these five points, I split each of them into two points and write some more. So now we go from *five points to ten*. **Please note:** There's no set number here. For the sake of the exercise, I start with five and build to ten. But we can add more as needed.

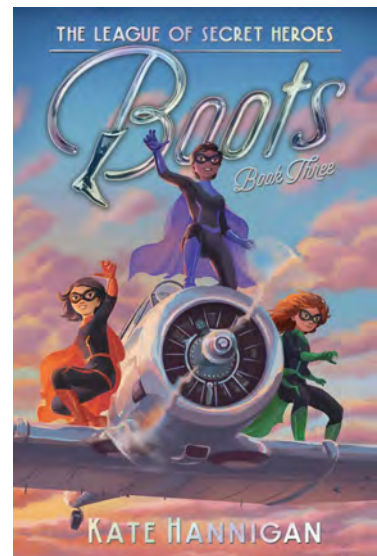
Now, with our ten plot points established, we can see where our inciting event should be and, even better, what it should be. We can see how we want the plot to flip in an exciting way. We can track the external action of our story and the internal heart of it. And we can move

things around to heighten those action scenes and emotional moments to propel our story to its exciting climax and conclusion. And we can chart our main character's change throughout their journey.

What comes next? Once we have our ten outline points taking us from opening to ending, we have something incredibly exciting. We have the framework for a ten-chapter book. *Our next step is to write it.*

## About the Author

Kate Hannigan writes fiction and nonfiction and, in an ongoing quest to better understand storytelling, has taught middle-grade novel-writing classes with StoryStudio Chicago. Her historical fantasy series, *The League of Secret Heroes* (*Cape*, *Mask*, and *Boots*; Simon & Schuster/Aladdin) is now out in paperback, and the first book in the series has been optioned for film. Her historical mystery, *The Detective's Assistant* (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers), won the 2016 Golden Kite Award for middle-grade works and also was optioned for film. Visit her online at [KateHannigan.com](http://KateHannigan.com).





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# **Encouraging Children’s Voices: Supporting Primary Students’ Questioning and Seeking**

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## **Supporting Primary Students’ Questioning and Seeking**

“But did you hear what Caleb was saying?” and “Did you hear what my genius Lukas said?” are examples of what I often hear during Diana Foster’s reading lessons when I spend time in her 1st-grade classroom. The teacher’s talk routinely draws attention to children’s thinking and interests. Children have frequent and multiple opportunities to ask questions, express feelings, and share ideas and information.

Mrs. Foster’s reading lessons offer important insights into teachers’ celebrating of diverse voices. Her lessons include simultaneous attention to English Language Arts (ELA) and science or social studies, and they engage children in the tasks of constructing new knowledge and affecting change in the school or local community. The teacher includes teaching moves that showcase and use children’s questions and

statements to achieve learning goals. In her lessons, children have time and support for developing their voices.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the insights gained from Mrs. Foster’s reading lessons. First, I will provide background information about the teacher’s instruction. Then, I will share one of her reading lessons and describe how she worked toward her students’ growth in asking questions and seeking answers. Finally, I will highlight how the teaching moves encouraged children’s voices.

## **The Instructional Setting: Children’s Reading, Writing, and Talking**

Mrs. Foster’s reading lessons are situated in extended units of study that ask children to develop solutions to problems or to create products that help others (e.g., Duke & Martin, 2019). Within and across the units, the teacher simultaneously addresses ELA and science or social studies learning standards. She devotes separate time to children’s learning to read and to write, using Reading and Writing Workshop (i.e., whole-group minilessons, small-group instruction alongside independent reading, and whole-group sharing periods; e.g., Calkins, 2000). Also, the teacher relies on a range of texts, including fiction and nonfiction books and digital media. Children are asked to read, write, and talk daily, and their work and learning are focused on world knowledge and affecting change.

Mrs. Foster’s simultaneous attention to ELA and science or social studies learning standards aligns with contemporary recommendations. Scholars and professional organizations advocate for teachers’ simultaneous attention during kindergarten through 2nd-grade lessons (e.g., Cabell & Hwang, 2020; National Research Council, 2012). The integrated instruction benefits children’s learning (e.g., Wright &

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Gotwals, 2017). Children have opportunities to gain knowledge and skill related to (1) language and literacy, (2) the natural or social world, and (3) disciplinary literacy (e.g., Cervetti et al., 2012). Disciplinary literacy is the “ability to engage in social, semiotic, and cognitive practices, consistent with those of content experts” (Fang, 2012, p. 19) and involves use of the kinds of texts and literacy strategies that are central to the work of practitioners such as historians or scientists (e.g., Shanahan et al., 2011). Historians and scientists seek to construct and share knowledge and to affect change in the natural or social world. Their reading, writing, and talking are focused on learning, teaching, and advocacy. Children’s development in all three areas are believed to be foundational to school success beyond the primary grades, college and career readiness, and adulthood goals (e.g., Moje, 2015).

Moreover, Mrs. Foster’s teaching incorporates the available guidance for equitably addressing children’s learning through integrated instruction (e.g., Pearson et al., 2010). Children’s reading, writing, and talking are central to the instruction and occur within units of study (e.g., Brock et al., 2014). Teachers lead demonstrations and discussions, offer clarifications and practice, and engage children in inquiry, read-aloud, and writing activities (e.g., Vitale & Romance, 2012; Welsh et al., 2020). For example, Welsh et al. (2020) observed the 2nd-grade teacher in their study enacting an ELA–science unit driven by children’s inquiry and replete with read-aloud and writing (including drawing) activities. Rather than just reading nonfiction books focused on scientific topics during ELA instruction or using a science-focused theme to connect lessons across the school day, the teacher’s addressing of the children’s ELA and science learning was combined and balanced.

## **The Reading Lesson: Question-Driven Reading**

Mrs. Foster’s reading lesson focused on asking questions and seeking answers within texts. The lesson included a whole-group minilesson. Then, children read independently while the teacher taught two small-group segments. Finally, an end-of-lesson sharing period was offered. Below, I share information about the lesson’s background. Then, the transcript of the minilesson and sharing period are provided.

### ***Lesson Background***

Mrs. Foster’s reading lesson was one of many lessons I observed during my first semester in her classroom. She (alongside other primary teachers) was part of a research project exploring kindergarten through 2nd-grade teachers’ professional learning (e.g., Martin & Snow, 2022). The teachers invited my research team into their classrooms to observe their 90-minute ELA instructional block and responded to our interview questions as they completed a series of ELA-focused professional development activities and applied their learning to their own classroom teaching. All teachers taught in the same primary school, which served children living in a sprawling region that included a small town outside of a densely populated city and the town’s surrounding rural zones. In 2020-2021, the school’s enrollment included 637 kindergarten through 2nd-grade students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Of these students, 84% were White; 16% were Black, Indigenous, People of Color [BIPOC]; and 36% were eligible for free and reduced-price federal lunch programs. All teachers in the school had access to book collections within their classrooms, titles borrowed from the school library, and digital media available through the teacher’s laptop and children’s iPads. Mrs. Foster’s classroom included 1st-grade students demonstrating

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varied achievement levels, ranging from below- to above-grade level in reading. She had a large collection of fiction and nonfiction books, supplemented with tubs of the school library's books and digital media.

Mrs. Foster's reading lesson occurred during one of my 90-minute observations of her classroom. I sought greater understanding of how she supported children's learning by identifying, categorizing, and compiling the teaching moves intended to enable them to ask and answer questions (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The lesson analysis yielded four insights into Mrs. Foster's support of children's question-driven reading, which are detailed in a subsequent section ("Insights Gained from the Reading Lesson").

### **Whole-Group Minilesson: Interactive Read-Aloud**

The teacher read aloud and led a discussion of a nonfiction book that disseminated information about Earth's oceans (Gregory, 2014). Throughout, she focused on questioning and the group's collective answering of those questions:

*Mrs. Foster:* But did you hear what Caleb was saying? He doesn't understand how the water stays on the Earth. He doesn't understand when you have water that is just sitting around, it spills, right? So his question is why isn't the water falling off the Earth into space? What do you think, Dean?

*Dean:* It's the gravity that's pushing it up.

*Mrs. Foster:* You think the gravity in the Earth—okay, so now we have another question. What's gravity?

*Students:* Oh!

*Mrs. Foster:* Oh, all of these questions, friends! Oakley?

*Oakley:* Is it gravity because it's always down?

*Mrs. Foster:* Right, because when you see pictures of astronauts, they're just floating around in the spaceship. We don't do that here. Right? Because gravity is what holds us on the Earth. And it holds the water on the Earth, too, Caleb. We could probably study that a little more if we wanted to. Where could we find that information about gravity? Where could we find information about gravity, Asher?

*Asher:* On Earth, they have gravity. The gravity is pulling down.

*Mrs. Foster:* Where could we find information about gravity?

*Asher:* In a book.

*Mrs. Foster:* In a book or the Google, like you said yesterday. . . . Siri, yes.

*Caleb:* I'm asking my question because we once watched a *Magic School Bus* where there was gravity pulling down.

*Mrs. Foster:* Okay, so gravity is the same thing pulling down the water, yes?

*Asher:* Sometimes people think it's like gravity is pulling down, but if you look closer, I sometimes think it's the moon.

*Mrs. Foster:* Yeah, there's something to do with the moon and the tides and, yeah, we've got a lot to discover. We do. Can I tell you something truthful? Can I be really really honest with you? I don't really know how it works either. . . . I'm going to be learning with you, right?

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**(Teacher and students discuss what they already know about the ocean. Teacher begins to introduce the lesson's nonfiction book.)**

*Mrs. Foster:* So, look at this book. What kind of book do you think this is going to be? . . . A fiction book or a nonfiction book? What do you think, Skyler?

*Skyler:* Nonfiction.

*Mrs. Foster:* Nonfiction because nonfiction means it has real facts, right? It has information in it that we can learn. I'm going to ask you some questions, and I want you to listen while I read and see if you can find the answers to my questions. Because that's what good readers do. They come to a book with questions, and they read to find the answers. . . .

**(Students and teacher discuss why the book is nonfiction.)**

*Mrs. Foster:* Let's listen to the questions. You're so curious. "What is the ocean?" is my first question. "How many oceans are there?" is my second question. And "How much of the ocean is covered by ocean water?" That's my third question. We're going to *listen* to me read . . . .

**(Teacher finishes the book introduction, reviews highlighted words and the glossary, and begins reading aloud and helping students to articulate answers.)**

*Mrs. Foster:* Well, I think that we have to go with what the scientists that wrote the book are telling us, and they said 72%, right? We can't just make stuff up. We have to go with the facts that we find. Okay? So let's read the next card. We are trying to figure out how many oceans there are. So this says . . . five, or just one?

*Bailey:* I think there are five oceans.

*Mrs. Foster:* Let's listen: "You may have heard that there are five separate oceans on Earth. These oceans are described as the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Arctic, and Antarctic or Southern Oceans. But guess what?"

*Mrs. Foster:* But listen: "Guess what? There's actually just one."

*Mrs. Foster:* "The world ocean or the global ocean is one body of interconnected salt water." Look, this word, "interconnected" is highlighted. That means it's going to be in the glossary. . . . It's right down here for us. . . . Interconnected means "joined together and dependent on each other." So "interconnected salt water . . ." How many oceans are there?

*Students:* One!

*Mrs. Foster:* One. We have five names for parts of the oceans, but it's really just one great big ocean. Lukas?

*Lukas:* I knew it was one big ocean because on the globe the water isn't separated. . . .

*Mrs. Foster:* Woah! Did you hear what my genius Lukas said? He said he knew it was just one because there's no separation! There's not a place where it's just separated completely, is it?

**(Teacher and students continue to read and to answer the third question.)**

*Mrs. Foster:* . . . Did we answer all three of our questions?

*Students:* Yes. We did!

*Mrs. Foster:* Did we get smarter by reading that book?

*Students:* Yes.

*Mrs. Foster:* Yes, we did. We learned things we didn't know. Guess what? That's what readers do with informational text. That's what you do with nonfiction. The other thing I want to tell you . . . It is great to get your questions answered, but smart readers get more questions. What?! What?! What?! What did Mrs. F just say? When you read, you're reading to answer your questions, but smart readers also figure out that they have more questions once they get those questions answered. That's what we should be doing. When you're reading, you're trying to answer questions you have, but your brains are always thinking. You're always wondering. Right now, I'm wondering . . . why they call it the Pacific Ocean. Why did they come up with that name? Why is it the Atlantic Ocean? Why did they name one ocean five different names? Why did they do that? Did they just decide one day, I'm going to call this ocean this and this ocean this or is there a reason they named those oceans that? I don't know! But where could I find out?

*Lukas:* Oh! In a book!

*Mrs. Foster:* In a book! You're exactly right! I'm also wondering why have we only explored 5% of the ocean? Why?! Do you realize that the ocean is right here on the Earth, and do you know that they say some people think we know more about the moon than we do about the ocean? Okay.

**(Teacher continues to talk about her question and about exploring the ocean.)**

*Hudson:* This is too much learning for me. I think my brain's going to explode!

*Mrs. Foster:* Your brain is not going to explode. But I want you to think about these things when you're reading. You're getting answers to your questions, but good readers, big thinkers, always have more questions. Okay? Keep that in mind for the rest of your life. . . .

**(Teacher gives directions about their independent reading and launches a review.)**

*Mrs. Foster:* What did Mrs. F say that all smart, good readers do? You know? You're going to answer your questions but you're also going to have . . . Bailey?

*Bailey:* More questions.

*Mrs. Foster:* More questions. You're going to answer questions but you're going to have more questions and when you get more questions . . . what are you going to do? Lukas?

*Lukas:* Answer more questions.

*Mrs. Foster:* Answer more questions. And when you're answering those more questions, what are you going to do? Hudson?

*Hudson:* Get more questions.

*Mrs. Foster:* You're going to get more questions, and then you're going to answer those questions. And then you're going to get more questions. And then you're going to answer those questions. It's a never-ending process. Okay . . .

In the minilesson, Mrs. Foster introduced question-driven reading and the nonfiction book, shared a list of questions, helped children to find answers to each question, and reviewed the lesson. Throughout, she focused on readers' question-asking and -answering.

## **Sharing Period: Children's Reflections**

Mrs. Foster's reading lesson ended with a whole-group sharing period. The class reflected on their independent reading experiences and learning.

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*Mrs. Foster:* I had friends who were taking notes on Post-Its, and I had boys who were creating new questions. The Red Group was creating questions and answering questions. It was phenomenal! Do you know what *phenomenal* means? Fabulous! You did very, very well. Okay. I want you to turn and tell somebody that you did not partner read with a new fact or a question that you had answered today. . . .

***(Students share with each other. Teacher calls group together again to share out.)***

*Mrs. Foster:* Hudson, what's a question you had answered today?

*Hudson:* A question that I had answered was . . . if dolphins didn't have lungs, they wouldn't be able to breathe.

*Mrs. Foster:* Right. Because dolphins have lungs. So we learned that dolphins have lungs . . . .

*Mrs. Foster:* Did you learn something new today . . . or did a question get answered for you?

*Finn:* Dolphins breathe out of their blowhole.

*Mrs. Foster:* Dolphins breathe out of their blowhole . . . . Reagan?

*Reagan:* There's only one-third of dry land on the Earth.

*Mrs. Foster:* There's only a third of dry land on the Earth. Huh. So two-thirds of the Earth is covered in water. Interesting. Thank you for sharing that fact with us today. That's awesome. You blow me away every single time we start learning about something. Because you have such great questions and you're such smart thinkers. I'm so impressed.

During the sharing period, Mrs. Foster summarized and praised children's independent reading activities. Then the teacher invited children to recall their questions and answers. She

closed the sharing period with additional praise for their questioning and thinking skills.

## **Insights Gained from the Reading Lesson**

Mrs. Foster's reading lesson offers four insights into supporting children's asking of questions and seeking of answers. Her foundational teaching moves include modeling, leveraging, informing, and enabling children's question-driven reading.

### ***Insight #1: Modeling Question-Driven Reading***

Teachers' modeling involves verbalizing of questions and showcasing of attempts to find answers within nonfiction books and digital media. Displaying commitment to asking and answering questions while reading is also key.

In the lesson, Mrs. Foster often modeled question-driven reading. For example,

- "Can I tell you something truthful? Can I be really honest with you? I don't really know how it works either. . . . I'm going to be learning with you, right?"
- "'What is the ocean?' is my first question. 'How many oceans are there?' is my second question. And 'How much of the ocean is covered by ocean water?' That's my third question."
- "Right now, I'm wondering . . . why they call it the Pacific Ocean. Why did they come up with that name? Why is it the Atlantic Ocean? Why did they name one ocean five different names?"

In these moments, Mrs. Foster told the class that she was interested in answering the question which had emerged during the before-reading discussion ("What is gravity?") and had questions of her own with which she wanted

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their help in answering. Also, the teacher identified new questions that emerged when the group addressed one of her original questions.

Teachers can use Mrs. Foster's teaching moves to model question-driven reading across the school day. Expressing the desire to ask and answer questions, sharing questions related to authors' main ideas in nonfiction books and digital media, and looking for answers to the questions can highlight the value of question-driven reading and help children to understand how experienced readers ask and answer questions while reading the texts.

### ***Insight #2: Leveraging Children's Question-Driven Reading***

Teachers' leveraging involves recognizing and publicizing instances when children (on their own initiative) verbalize questions, attempt to find answers, and display commitment to question-asking and -answering while reading. Teachers' own attempts to clarify children's answers also may be included.

In the lesson, Mrs. Foster routinely took action when the class exhibited question-driven reading behaviors. For instance,

- “But did you hear what Caleb was saying? He doesn't understand how the water stays on the Earth. He doesn't understand when you have water that is just sitting around, it spills, right? So his question is why isn't the water falling off the Earth into space?”
- “. . . Okay, so now we have another question. What's gravity?”
- “Okay, so gravity is the same thing pulling down the water, yes?”
- “. . . Did you hear what my genius Lukas said? He said he knew it was just one because there's no separation! There's not a place where it's just separated completely, is it?”

- “The Red Group was creating questions and answering questions. It was phenomenal! Do you know what *phenomenal* means? Fabulous!”

In these moments, Mrs. Foster repeated children's individual and collective questions. The teacher also paraphrased children's attempts to answer questions, and she drew their attention to instances when they were choosing to engage in question-driven reading.

Teachers can follow Mrs. Foster's example when children display question-driven reading behaviors while reading or listening to read-alouds of nonfiction books and digital media. Repeating children's responses can help them to understand when they and their classmates are asking questions and seeking answers. Assisting children's attempts to articulate their own answers and inviting classmates' attention to the attempts also may encourage them to engage in question-driven reading.

### ***Insight #3: Informing Children's Question-Driven Reading***

Teachers' informing involves offering explanations of the processes central to asking questions and seeking answers within texts. Teachers also may clarify why and how readers ask and answer questions before, during, and after reading.

In the lesson, Mrs. Foster actively informed children's question-driven reading. For example,

- “Because that's what good readers do. They come to a book with questions, and they read to find the answers. . . .”
- “Well, I think that we have to go with what the scientists who wrote the book are telling us, and they said 72%, right? We can't just make stuff up. We have to go with the facts that we find.”

- “. . . Did we answer all three of our questions?”
- “It is great to get your questions answered, but smart readers get more questions. What?! What?! What?! What did Mrs. F just say? When you read, you’re reading to answer your questions, but smart readers also figure out that they have more questions once they get those questions answered.”

In these moments, Mrs. Foster explained that readers seek answers to questions and use the words and ideas in the text to answer the questions. The teacher drew attention to the parts of the text which held those answers. She also conveyed that question-driven reading includes readers’ confirmation of answers and posing of new questions.

Teachers can inform children’s question-driven reading during whole- and small-group lessons. Sharing brief explanations of why and how readers ask and answer questions as children listen to or read nonfiction books and digital media can help them to enhance their own asking of questions and seeking of answers.

#### ***Insight #4: Enabling Children’s Question-Driven Reading***

Teachers’ enabling involves providing firsthand opportunities for children to engage in the processes central to asking questions and seeking answers. The opportunities include children’s own question-asking and -answering and also their verbal rehearsal of the processes.

In the lesson, Mrs. Foster frequently invited children to experience and talk about question-driven reading. For instance,

- “Because gravity is what holds us on the Earth. And it holds the water on the Earth, too, Caleb. We could probably study that a little more if we wanted to. Where could we find that information about gravity? . . .”

- “I’m going to ask you some questions, and I want you to listen while I read and see if you can find the answers to my questions.”
- “Look, this word ‘interconnected’ is highlighted. That means it’s going to be in the glossary. . . . It’s right down here for us. . . . Interconnected means ‘joined together and dependent on each other.’ So ‘interconnected salt water . . . .’ How many oceans are there?”
- “Hudson, what’s a question you had answered today?”

In these moments, Mrs. Foster provided teacher-guided and on-their-own practice opportunities. The teacher encouraged the class to answer the questions she had posed and to ask and answer their own questions. She also encouraged children to take stock of whether they had addressed each question and supported their use of the book’s words and ideas when answering questions.

Moreover, Mrs. Foster created additional opportunities for children who needed further practice. After the teacher’s minilesson, she conducted two small-group segments featuring question-driven reading. The segments can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

As the appendices show, Mrs. Foster used the same teaching moves alongside different nonfiction books. In Appendix 1, the teacher explained the task and shared her questions. After the group finished reading, she led a discussion in which children articulated their answers, and she supported their use of the nonfiction book’s words and ideas. In Appendix 2, Mrs. Foster’s after-reading discussion drew attention to children’s thinking and reviewed the importance of question-driven reading. Then, the teacher helped children to share their answers to their questions. Finally, she reviewed the group’s experience and learning.

Teachers can enable children’s question-driven reading with the nonfiction books and



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digital media used across the school day. Posing questions for the class to answer, asking children to come up with their own questions, and encouraging classmates to find answers to each other's questions can help children to gain first-hand experience. Also, reviewing children's questions and answers may help children to check and confirm they have addressed their questions and used the text's words and ideas in their answers.

## **Beyond the Reading Lesson: Encouraging Children's Voices**

Teaching reading lessons is one approach to encouraging children's voices in the primary grades. As Mrs. Foster's lesson demonstrated, the teaching offers opportunities for teachers to model, leverage, and inform children's asking of questions and seeking of answers within texts. Also, the teaching offers children opportunities to experience and talk about the processes involved in question-driven reading.

Importantly, teaching lessons is not the only approach. Children's voices also can be encouraged through teaching moves that highlight the usefulness of asking questions and seeking answers and that value children's attempts to do so throughout the day. Examples include

- Posing and addressing questions during the morning routine.
- Recording teachers' and children's questions about topics of study on charts.
- Noting children's individual questions and subsequently offering them nonfiction books and digital media that address their questions.
- Making connections to children's questions during read-alouds and science and social studies lessons.
- Recounting anecdotes featuring question-driven reading from teachers' out-of-school lives throughout the school day.

These teaching moves can provide exposure to, and experience with, the processes central to asking questions and seeking answers. Teachers may model the processes and leverage or inform children's usage. Children may practice or verbally rehearse their question-asking and -answering. When teachers consistently and frequently support children's question-driven reading, the benefits can include growth in children's knowledge and skills related to language and literacy, the natural or social world, and disciplinary literacy. Like Mrs. Foster's students, children may "get smarter by reading that book" and may "[learn] things we didn't know." Like her students, children may come to be "always thinking and you're always learning and you're always questioning" (Appendix 2). In conclusion, teachers may help children to find and to use their voices to construct new knowledge and to affect change in the future.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## About the Author

Nicole M. Martin is an associate professor in the Department of Elementary Education at Ball State University. Dr. Martin teaches graduate and undergraduate courses, serves as director for the undergraduate elementary teacher education programs, and consults for schools and districts. She also researches disciplinary literacy and integrated instruction in kindergarten through 8th-grade classrooms. Dr. Martin's recognitions include "Teacher of the Year" for her work in an urban school district.

## Appendix 1

### ***Mrs. Foster's First Small-Group Segment***

The teacher introduced a nonfiction book about dolphins (Stewart, 2010) and explained students' reading task. Then, students read the book, and she led an after-reading discussion.

*Mrs. Foster:* Okay, so here's what you need to do. I have some questions that I'd like for you to read to find out. Okay? Here are the questions I'd like for you to answer: Are dolphins whales? Do all dolphins live in the sea?—I don't want you to answer right now. I want you to read to find answers—What is a group of dolphins called? How do dolphins breathe air? And can dolphins do tricks?

***(Teacher hands out whispering phones and reviews their use. Students read.)***

*Mrs. Foster:* Has everybody read through at least once? Okay, so can you answer some of my questions?

*Mrs. Foster:* Okay. When you get the answer to the question, I want you to show me where you found the answer to the question. Can you do that for me? Okay, so the very first question. Are dolphins whales? Are dolphins whales? Oakley, what do you think?

*Oakley:* I think yeah. I think—

*Mrs. Foster:* Are dolphins whales? And where did you find the answer? You have to read the sentence to me.

*Oakley:* "Dolphins are small whales."

*Mrs. Foster:* "Dolphins are small whales." Dolphins are whales? Yes, our book told us that. Do all dolphins live in the sea? Do all dolphins live in the sea, Asher?

*Asher:* Most.

*Mrs. Foster:* But do all?

*Asher:* Some do, some don't.

*Mrs. Foster:* How do you know? Show me where you found that in the book.

***(Students and teacher continue reading and discussing the answers to the questions.)***

During the segment, Mrs. Foster's focus was on readers' question-asking and -answering. She posed questions, and students sought answers while reading. Afterward, they worked together to articulate each answer.

## Appendix 2

### *Mrs. Foster's Second Small-Group Segment*

The teacher introduced another nonfiction book about dolphins (Berger & Berger, 2013) and explained students' reading task. Then the group read the book. She led an after-reading discussion.

*Mrs. Foster:* Can everybody put their book down? Can I tell you something that made Mrs. F so happy? I'm proud of you guys! You read beautifully. But the thing that I loved was how excited you were when you found answers to the questions. It was so cool! Okay, but here's what I'm going to tell you. Why do you think I think it's so important? Why do you think I think it's so important for you to come up with new questions while you're reading? Because you get so excited when you find the answers, right?

*Bailey:* Because you know that what you found is right.

*Mrs. Foster:* You have the answers to the questions. . . . Okay, so do dolphins have lungs?

*Students:* Yes.

*Mrs. Foster:* Okay so you have to prove it to me. Show me where you found it. Do dolphins have lungs?

*Skyler:* I found it on page six.

*Mrs. Foster:* Did everybody find it on page six?

*Students:* Yes.

***(Students and teacher continue reading and discussing the answers to the questions.)***

*Mrs. Foster:* . . . You did an awesome job. You found all the answers to our questions, and we created tons of new questions, right? We have purpose when we go to read next time. We have answers to look for, don't we? Okay. When you're a reader, it's very important that you answer the questions you have, but you also want to create more questions. That's what's going to make you the smartest person I know. Okay? You don't just stop. You're always thinking and you're always learning and you're always questioning. Got it?

During the segment, Mrs. Foster's focus remained on readers' question-asking and -answering. After reading the book, the group worked together to articulate the answers to their questions. Then, she reviewed their experiences and learning.

## How to Use the Photos in this Issue as Writing Prompts

There are several beautiful photos in this issue by Brad Betz. Consider using these for writing prompts with your students:

1. What's the story behind this photo?
2. What life experience does this photo remind you of?
3. What is this image trying to communicate?
4. Start a new story inspired by the photo. Begin with "That was the day the world changed."
5. What is the most important element of this photo and why?
6. Write a caption for this photo and explain how it relates to the photo.
7. Write a dialogue bubble for the person or people in this photo.
8. What is the tone of this photo? Is it happy, sad, anxious, hateful, loving? Explain how you know.
9. You're walking through your local park and a fortune teller hands you this photo. Write what happens next.
10. How does this photo relate to a world issue?
11. How does this story relate to another text (story, novel, painting, song, movie, etc)? Explain.
12. How does this photo use repetition to help communicate the message of the photo?

Adapted and excerpted from *www.teachwrite.com* by Meredith Dobbs and posted on <https://www.bespokeclassroom.com/blog/2017/8/31/20-writing-prompts-for-photos>.

### Additional Ideas

- *Go Beyond the Frame:* What do you think was just beyond the frame of the picture? What wasn't captured in the lens?
- *Before and After:* What happened just before or just after the camera clicked? What did the camera just miss? What difference could that have made?
- *Fiction vs. Nonfiction:* Write a fiction story and a nonfiction piece to accompany the photo.
- *Write different forms of poems for the photo:* A haiku, a Cinquain, an Acrostic . . . .
- *What's Your Angle?* Discuss the perspective from which the photo is taken. How would the photo be different if taken from a different angle?
- *Background Music:* What would be good background music to accompany this photo?
- *Word Cloud:* Create a Word Cloud to accompany this photo: [www.wordclouds.com](http://www.wordclouds.com).



Brad Betz, "Morgan Street Stroll"



Brad Betz, "Flying Above Lincoln"

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# BOOK CLUB

To register, return this form with payment by **March 15, 2023** to  
**Illinois Reading Council, 1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2, Normal, IL 61761**  
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Join educators from all over the state in the online **Spring 2023 IRC Book Club!** Choose one or two books!

Read, reflect on, and respond to *Being the Change: Lessons and Strategies to Teach Social Comprehension* by Sara K. Ahmed and/or *Rebellious Read Alouds: Inviting Conversations About Diversity With Children's Books* by Vera Ahiyya. Beginning March 26, these seven-week online discussions will help your students develop skills of social comprehension to make sense of themselves and the world as they navigate relevant topics in today's society and/or to spark meaningful conversations about race, identity, and social justice in your classroom using read alouds as an entry point. Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club. Participants who complete one book club during the Winter will have the opportunity to participate in the other one during the Spring session.

Required for participation:

- Gmail address (free at <https://mail.google.com/>). The Book Club uses Google Classroom, which does not work with Yahoo, AOL, Hotmail, etc.
- Texts: *Being the Change: Lessons and Strategies to Teach Social Comprehension* by Sara K. Ahmed and/or *Rebellious Read Alouds: Inviting Conversations About Diversity With Children's Books* by Vera Ahiyya. Books can be purchased from the bookseller of your choice.

Register by **March 15, 2023**, to participate in the book club. Registration is **FREE** for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$45, which includes IRC membership for one year. **PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.**



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# ***Finding Common Ground: Understanding Ourselves and the World Through Literature***

Jung Kim and Deborah Augsburger

## **About this Column**

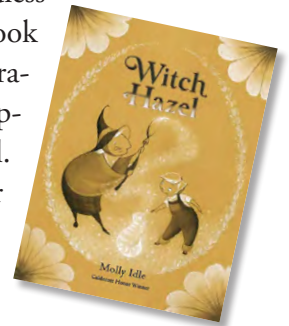
With all that is going on in the world today, it is no longer enough to simply appreciate differences. We must learn how to understand one another, see each other's humanity, and work toward greater justice. High-quality children's and young adult literature can provide an important first step for helping youth to begin exploring these critical viewpoints, as well as to develop empathy and love for the world around them. It should be highly enjoyable and engaging, yet it can open doors to understanding, raise questions about the status quo, and begin conversations about how we move through and shape the world in which we live. To this end, this column will present literature that provides a variety of perspectives in exploring and valuing the world around us.

## ***Dreaming of Other Possibilities, Magic, and Mayhem***

The current realities of today are difficult. From governmental disturbances to climate change to eroding human rights, there is much to leave us discouraged. Yet, books always invite us to dream and wonder and hope. They challenge us to learn about others different from us, imagine worlds never before seen, discover possibilities for love and friendship, and offer us respite. Some of the books in this issue cover serious issues like climate change and pandemics, others are pure magic and romance, and still others are "all of the above." However, they all offer dreams of other possibilities to the reader. Even the most serious books in this column still offer a light in the darkness. We hope you find them as intriguing as we did.

## **Books for Preprimary/Primary Readers**

**Idle, Molly.** *Witch Hazel*. Little Brown, 2022. Told through a mix of print and wordless picture stories, this unique picturebook defies genre and convention. Its caramel-and-white illustrations are deceptively simple yet thoroughly magical. Hilda is entranced by the stories her grandmother Hazel whisks up with her broom as they meet through the seasons. Readers may notice hints of fairy tales in the images of her life story that Hazel magically conjures from dust. The final story prompts us to remember that the end is really the beginning for new stories that keep loved ones alive in our memories.

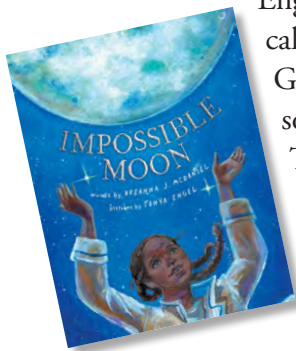


**Macdonald, Erin.** *Star Trek: My First Book of Space*. BenBella Books–SmartPOP, 2022. Illustrated by Jason Kayser. Interest in science fiction and science fact is often reciprocal. This



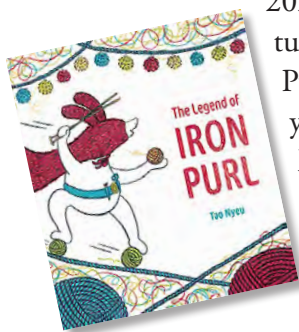
board book for very young readers orients the reader in our solar system, galaxy, and the universe by merging photographs of these with images of fantasy starships from the Star Trek franchise. Written by an astrophysicist, the text invites readers to become space explorers. Whether this book inspires young readers to become scientists or to read science fiction, the concept is fun, and the text makes complex concepts simple.

**McDaniel, Breanna.** *Impossible Moon.* Simon & Schuster, 2022. Illustrated by Tonya Engel. How to describe this fantastical journey through the night sky? Gorgeous, inspiring, imaginative, sobering, joyful, impossibly possible. The illustrations are pure magic and depict constellations, the moon, and the importance of community and Black culture as Mable travels to the moon and back in a quest to make impossible things possible.



Mable is an aspiring astronomer and draws moon maps from her telescope. An author's note explains the constellations that are featured in the story and the author's own experience as a Black woman visiting planetariums and rarely hearing connections to Black history in the talks about the stars there. This book will help encourage "a love of science and space and story" as well as inspire readers to push past limitations others impose on their dreams.

**Nyeu, Tao.** *The Legend of Iron Purl.* Dial, 2022. This quirky picturebook features an unexpected superhero, Iron Purl, whose power of knitting with yarn as strong as steel saves the village from the dastardly Bandit Bob. Iron Purl uses her needles and yarn to capture thieves, extinguish fire, and rescue those in peril, even when the imperiled one happens to be herself. The illustrations have details to examine, revealing hints about the villagers and



the possible secret identities of Purl and Bob. Is this a superhero fantasy or a love story? It's up to the reader to decide.

**Rothman, Scott.** *Attack of the Underwear Dragon.* Random House, 2020. Illustrated by Pete Oswald. Intrepid letter-writer Cole becomes an assistant to Sir Percival, knight of the Round Table. Cole trains hard to learn to be as brave a knight as Sir P. The only thing Sir Percival fears is that the Underwear Dragon may come and destroy the kingdom. Of course, the worst happens. When all the knights have been defeated and only Cole remains to fight the dragon, he relies on all of his assistant knight training and ingenuity to save the day. The illustrations add a dash of hilarity to the fun fantasy in this quirky take on the tales of the Knights of the Round Table.



**Voiklis, Charlotte Jones.** *A Book, Too, Can Be a Star: The Story of Madeline L'Engle and the Making of A Wrinkle in Time.* Farrar Straus Giroux, 2022. Illustrated by Adelina Lirius. One of the first fantasy/sci-fi authors for young readers, Madeline L'Engle changed the children's literature world. She overcame intense loneliness and difficulty in school and found her place in the theatre and as a writer. Madeline experienced several rejections before her Newbery Award-winning *A Wrinkle in Time* was published. An afterword explains how L'Engle's granddaughter became inspired to write this picturebook biography that pays tribute to L'Engle's life, legacy, and gift for asking and answering big questions. The illustrations show the influence of words and music in her life and her fascination with the stars.



## Books for Intermediate and Middle Grade Readers

**Hernandez, Carlos.** *Sal and Gabi Break the Universe*. Hyperion, 2019. Set in Miami



and drawing on Cuban mythology, this extraordinary sci-fi series is delightful. One thing Sal knows about himself is that he can access the multiverse and take things from parallel universes; this is extremely helpful when he performs magic. Other facts about him are that his *Mami* is dead and he has diabetes.

He uses all of these facts to manipulate circumstances to try to bring his mother back and to get along in his new middle school. When he meets Gabi, he thinks he has found a nemesis; he couldn't be more wrong. She has her own reason for grief and, together, they probe the universe seeking a solution. Their multilingual families are diverse in makeup and talent, and each member enriches their adventures with love, enthusiasm, food, science, and a bit of magic. The sequel, *Sal and Gabi Fix the Universe* (2020), finds Sal without his



powers and trying to figure out how his father's scientific experimental machine has gained sentience, while a Gabi from another universe is seeking revenge and their friend Yasmany may have disappeared into a wormhole that Sal's father had supposedly repaired.

It's easy to fall in love with the whole-hearted characters in these amazing and inventive books.

**Pinfold, Levi.** *Paradise Sands*.



Candlewick, 2022. Stunningly beautiful and mysterious, this picturebook is an adventurous fairy tale for older readers. Its themes and ambiguities are

reminiscent of ancient myths and tales, but they also appear to be modern and futuristic. The illustrations are architectural and photorealistic but also a bit surreal. A girl and her brothers stop to pick flowers on their way to visit their mother but, instead, are drawn into an enchanted palace. The brothers fall under the spell of the Keeper, but their sister is determined to avoid their fate and rescue them. When they ultimately visit their mother, her apparent knowledge of the enchantment raises more questions—about family, history, and mental and physical health. This book will spark conversation, raise questions, and inspire reflection.

**Rioux, Jo.** *Cat's Cradle: The Golden Twine*.

First Second, Roaring Brook Press, 2022.

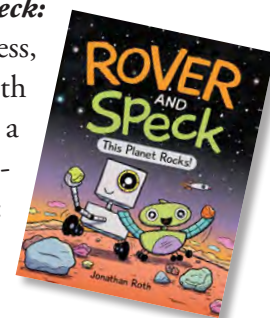
The *Cat's Cradle* graphic novel series begins with this introduction to Suri, a street urchin and storyteller traveling with a caravan of merchants, who claims to be a monster hunter. A mysterious person has a monster captive in a wagon in the camp and, on a dare, Suri attempts to tame the monster. The real menace comes from an unexpected source, and Suri finds herself captured but unaware that she is in possession of an object that has great power. The story is fast-paced and exciting, with illustrations that move the action along and reveal the emotions and true motives of the characters. The story ends on a cliffhanger, so readers will want to write the next chapter or get the next book in the series. An appendix with a guide to monsters is a handy resource for creating new stories.



**Roth, Jonathan.** *Rover and Speck: This Planet Rocks*.

Kids Can Press, 2022. Illustrated by the author with

color by Paulina Suarez. First in a series, this graphic novel sci-fi adventure is about two exploratory rovers: Speck, which had been abandoned on a rocky planet, and Rover, which



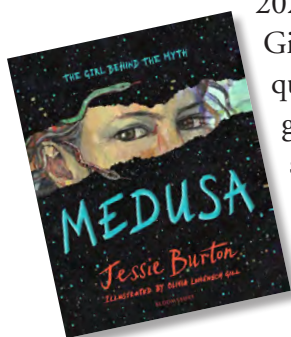
crash-landed there. The planet is populated by fearsome rock creatures, which threaten to smash the rovers. One creature, Rocky, is different from the rest. Rover and Speck befriend Rocky, and they work together to win over the rock creatures, and then use science to engineer their rescue from the planet. The science behind the sci-fi is presented in inset info boxes, and a guide to drawing your own rover will inspire readers to write their own Rover and Speck adventures.

**Sebastian, Laura.** *Into the Glades.* Delacorte Press, 2022. Yet another book about grieving the loss of a parent? Environmental responsibility? Coming of age? Friendship? Handling emotions? Yes, but this book is so much more. While all of the above issues are woven into the story, none are too heavy-handed or pedantic. Rather, this is a fast-paced fantasy adventure set in a magical world that resembles the Everglades. Friendly (at first) dragon-gators help out; pix-squitos never bite (yet); and other fantastic creatures exist in harmony with the humans, some of whom are witches with magical powers. Eleven-year-old best friends Cordelia and Larkin anticipate the arrival of Larkin's magic at the solstice celebration, but the death of Cordelia's father brings a curse to the very heart of the Glades. Their trek to find a spell that will bring him back to life threatens everything they hold dear.



## Books for Young Adult Readers

**Burton, Jessie.** *Medusa.* Bloomsbury YA, 2022. Illustrated by Olivia Lomenech Gill. This hybrid text that is not-quite traditional novel and not-quite graphic novel is a haunting, moving story about one of Greek mythology's most monstrous characters, Medusa—a woman whose very look would turn you into stone. In



this story, though, Medusa is a teenager who was cursed/gifted with her condition by Athena for an incident that occurs with Poseidon, god of the sea. Exiled to an island with her two older sisters, Medusa lives an uneventful life until a young man, Perseus, lands on shore. Remaining out of sight, Medusa befriends Perseus and slowly begins to fall in love with him, realizing how lonely she has been. However, Perseus's future is tied to Medusa's fate, and choices will be made that will impact both of their lives. A story about love, assault, and healing, this is Medusa as you have never seen her. The text in the book is accompanied by beautiful illustrations that capture the many emotions in the book and the power of Medusa's story.

**Carson, Rae.** *Any Sign of Life.* Greenwillow Books, 2022. The last thing Paige Miller wants is to get sick as her basketball team makes it to the championships. When she wakes up attached to a daisy chain of dried-out IV bags and the realization that she's been out of it for a long time, Paige realizes she's missed more than a game. She finds a world empty of human life but encounters her neighbor's very alive dog. With only this dog for company, Paige sets out to figure out what happened and if she really is the last person alive. When she encounters others who have survived, Paige realizes that those in the new world are still haunted by the ghosts of the old one, and she senses how much trauma and grief each of them are carrying. Further complicating their survival is learning that the sickness that killed everyone may not have been natural like they thought. Filled with complex characters and relevant issues, *Any Sign of Life* is not your typical post-apocalyptic book.



**Oh, Axie. *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea.***

Feiwel & Friends, 2022. Every year, Mina's village sacrifices a beautiful girl to the sea god in hopes of ending the violent storms that battle their shores and sweep people away. When her older brother's beloved is chosen as the next victim, Mina decides to take her place to preserve her brother's happiness. She jumps into the sea before anyone can stop her and is transported to the Spirit Realm by a sea monster. There, Mina learns that the sea god has fallen into a long sleep, and no one knows how to wake him—and some don't want him to ever wake. Mina learns that the political intrigues of the Spirit Realm are complicated as the various gods and spirits wrestle for power and prestige. Most disturbingly, despite sacrifices and prayers, the gods have little interest in the fate of humans. Meanwhile, Mina's time as a human in the spirit world is limited. She must act quickly if she wants to help her people. Based on a Korean folk tale, this is a beautifully written, romantic book about love, sacrifice, and outwitting fate.



**Oshiro, Mark. *Each of Us a Desert.*** Tor Teen, 2020. A book very different from Oshiro's debut, *Each of Us a Desert* is a bit difficult to describe. Part post-apocalyptic fantasy, part romance, part adventure story, it follows the story of Xochitl. Xochitl is the cuentista for her desert village, someone who listens to the confessions of others to prevent those dark secrets from manifesting as nightmare spirits. Xochitl is tired of the endless flood of secrets, however, and she dreams of a different life, a life with someone who will understand her. When she finally decides to escape, she finds herself connecting with Emilia, the seemingly spoiled daughter

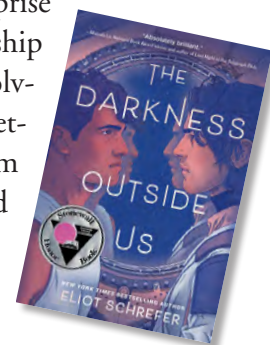


**Sutherland, Krystal. *House of Hollow.*** G. P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2022. Iris Hollow is the youngest of three sisters who went missing as children and inexplicably returned a month later. They came back changed, with an otherworldliness that remains, making them desirable and frightening. As they get older, Iris's sisters capitalize upon their strangeness, becoming a supermodel and a rockstar, but Iris just wants to fit in. When one of

of the local bad guy. As they make their way through the desert, they encounter dangers, magic, and love. While this book will not be for everyone, Oshiro's writing will lure you in and have you thinking about the book long after reading it.

**Schrefer, Eliot. *The Darkness Outside Us.***

Katherine Tegen Books, 2022. Wholly unique in its storytelling, this book will surprise you. Ambrose wakes up on a spaceship with little memory of anything involving the ship—not the launch, not getting on the ship, and nothing from being on the ship. From a renowned space family, he knows he's on a mission to try and rescue his missing sister from one of Saturn's moons. Soon, Ambrose discovers that he is not alone on the ship, that someone is sealed off on the other half. When he finally meets Kodiak, there is mutual distrust as their countries are enemies. Eventually, they realize they are both missing memories and that is only the beginning of the multiple mysteries surrounding them. Why is there evidence that there were others on board? Why does the ship's AI want them not to go to certain parts of the ship, and why does it sound like Ambrose's mother? Why can't they remember anything? And is it possible they are also falling in love? This is a book I wanted to immediately read again after finishing it the first time.



**Sutherland, Krystal. *House of Hollow.*** G. P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2022. Iris Hollow is the youngest of three sisters who went missing as children and inexplicably returned a month later. They came back changed, with an otherworldliness that remains, making them desirable and frightening. As they get older, Iris's sisters capitalize upon their strangeness, becoming a supermodel and a rockstar, but Iris just wants to fit in. When one of



her sisters goes missing, and mysterious figures seem to be chasing Iris and her sister, Iris must revisit what exactly happened when the three of them disappeared and discover some hard truths about who—or what—they are. This story is what fairy tales were intended as originally: dark stories meant to warn and cause unease. Filled with lush imagery and fast-paced storytelling, this book will linger with you.

## About the Authors

Jung Kim is Professor of Literacy in the Department of Education at Lewis University and, when not working, can be found either running or reading. A former English teacher and literacy coach, she is interested in critical literacy, issues of equity, and coffee. She has written two books on teaching with graphic novels, and her most recent book is on the racialization of Asian-American teachers.

Deborah Augsburger is a professor and co-chair of the Department of Education at Lewis University. She serves as treasurer of the Will County Reading Council and long ago was on the executive board of the Illinois Reading Council. Her specializations in the field of literacy are children's literature, diagnostic assessment, and storytelling. You can reach her via e-mail at [augsbude@lewisu.edu](mailto:augsbude@lewisu.edu).



Brad Betz, "Education Pavillion"

# ***Family Engagement in Literacy***

Laurie Elish-Piper

## **About this Column**

Families play a key role in their children's literacy development and school success. To support educators in building positive working relationships with their students' families, practical suggestions are offered to promote family communication, involvement, and partnerships.

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## ***One Size Does Not Fit All: A Multi-Tiered Approach to Family Engagement***

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Family engagement programs in schools provide many benefits, including increased homework completion and student motivation (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013) as well as higher grades and better attendance (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The importance of providing family engagement programs in classrooms and schools is clear at all levels and in varied contexts (e.g., Castro et al., 2015; Ma et al., 2016), but the path for doing so can be challenging as individual teachers work to develop family engagement strategies in addition to their instructional planning, teaching, assessment, student support, and other professional responsibilities. Using a schoolwide approach to family engagement allows multiple educators and families to come together and plan a system that provides equitable and meaningful access to family engagement for all (Jacques & Villegas, 2018).

Just as no two students are exactly alike, the same is true for families because they differ by composition, backgrounds, identities, and experiences with U.S. schools. While it is well known that students' families vary widely, many family engagement programs use a one-size-fits-all approach that assumes all families have the same needs or want the same opportunities

for involvement. A single approach to family engagement leads to unsatisfactory experiences for families as well as limited effectiveness for educators seeking to involve families meaningfully in supporting student learning (Bachman & Boone, 2022; Benner & Quirk, 2020).

In recent years, we have seen growth in the use of differentiated instruction and multi-tiered systems of support to tailor instruction and address the individual needs of students. Benefits of such multi-tiered models include the ability to provide widespread support that meets the needs of most students while also developing and implementing strategies to address specific student needs. Based on models of multi-tiered systems of support for academic, behavioral, and health issues, Bachman and Boone (2022) proposed that school teams of educators and families collaboratively build family engagement programs around three tiers to connect with all families in meaningful and productive ways that support student learning.

## **What Is Multi-Tiered Family Engagement?**

A multi-tiered approach to family engagement is flexible, inclusive, and proactive. It focuses on building a set of practices, services, and activities at the school level that can be organized into different tiers to help educators expand their repertoire of family engagement practices so they can effectively engage with all students'



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families. Bachman and Boone's (2022) model has three tiers: Tier 1 is universal and designed for all families; Tier 2 is tailored and designed for families who are unable to engage with the strategies in Tier 1 or who need or want more involvement; and Tier 3 is designed for families and students who need more intensive supports and opportunities or who seek to be involved to a greater degree. Bachman and Boone caution educators that families are not classified as Tier 1, 2, or 3; rather, the practices are aligned to tiers that can be used to provide varied levels of engagement and support for families as they are needed. They explain that the purpose of this model "is to widen educator practices so that every student's family can be engaged in a meaningful and impactful way" (para. 3).

### ***Tier 1: Universal***

Tier 1 of the approach focuses on schoolwide strategies that address the whole child and that all families are invited to experience such as parent-teacher conferences, whole school surveys, open houses, family coffee chats with school personnel before school or at other mutually convenient times, and e-newsletters. Tier 1 strategies are designed to establish family-school partnerships and channels for communication. They are available to all families and, if effective, they should meet the needs of at least 80% of families in a school. If a lower percentage of families participates in Tier 1 offerings, it is a sign that the strategies need to be reviewed for accessibility and meaningfulness so more families are able and willing to engage.

### ***Tier 2: Tailored***

Tier 2 focuses on programs and strategies for groups of families with similar needs or interests. For example, if families are unable to participate in conferences or open house events due to work schedules or lack of transportation, home visits or virtual meetings can be

offered to engage these families. Additionally, if some families have limited English skills, open houses can be arranged with translators, so the information is accessible to the families. Another example of a Tier 2 strategy is to meet the needs of families with students who find reading challenging by offering regularly scheduled conferences to address student progress in reading. This tier of family engagement should meet the needs of about 15% of families in the school.

### ***Tier 3: Intensive***

Tier 3 is designed for a small number of families who need additional support and options for one or more of the following reasons. These families may have children with specific individual needs, they may be unable to or uncomfortable with participating in Tier 1 or 2 offerings, or they may wish to be involved at deeper levels such as through committee membership or leadership. For example, Tier 3 can include weekly check-in phone calls with the teacher, school counselor, or social worker for a family who has a student experiencing learning, behavior, or mental health challenges. In addition, families who wish to be involved more deeply may want to engage in Tier 3 opportunities such as serving on or leading school committees to design open houses or review new curricula or to serve in leadership roles for the PTA or other school-wide groups. Tier 3 should address the needs of about 5% of families in a school.

## **Considerations for Development and Implementation**

The model described by Bachman and Boone (2022) is situated at the school level and is developed by a group of teachers, administrators, and family members who collaborate to create the family engagement program. This group or committee may use surveys, focus groups, and interviews to get input to determine the overall

goal and to develop the model for a multi-tiered family engagement program in their school. This group or committee can also be charged with gathering input on the implementation as well as suggestions for improvement.

The family engagement program may have a general focus such as supporting student learning and well-being or a more specific focus such as promoting reading or STEM learning. For example, at the elementary level, a school may create a multi-tiered family engagement program that encourages reading at the K-5 levels. Tier 1 strategies may be a schoolwide newsletter with tips and information about reading, a schoolwide family reading night event each semester, and quarterly updates from classroom teachers about each child's reading progress. Tier 2 strategies for families who are unable to engage in or for whom Tier 1 strategies are not sufficient may include options to attend virtual family reading nights for families who are unable to attend in-person events. In addition, Tier 2 strategies can be aimed at families with students who struggle with reading such as biweekly progress updates from the classroom teacher as well as workshops with targeted ideas for what families can do at home to reinforce their children's reading growth and progress. In

addition, Tier 2 strategies can focus on students who excel in reading by providing information to families about selecting more complex texts and building higher-level comprehension skills. Tier 3 strategies are aimed at families who need more support because of their student's reading challenges as well as families who seek deeper involvement and leadership opportunities. These Tier 3 strategies may include weekly progress reports from the reading specialist on the child's progress in a reading intervention program and opportunities to observe the reading instruction and intervention the child receives so families have a clearer understanding of what the child is learning and how they can reinforce that learning at home. In addition, Tier 3 strategies may also include invitations for families to participate in planning for future family reading nights and other family-focused activities such as book fairs and author visits.

This multi-tiered approach can also be implemented in secondary schools at the school level or at the team level in a middle school or the department level in a high school. For example, in a middle school setting, a team of teachers may develop a multi-tiered plan to address student reading and writing across the core classes (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Middle School Example for Reading and Writing Across Core Classes**

<b>Overall Goal:</b> The 6th-grade team is committed to working with students' families to support their development in reading and writing across their core classes.	
Tier 1: Universal (for all families; general focus)	Open house introduces the goal to families. Monthly team e-newsletter provides information on reading and writing development and at-home application ideas. Updates on reading and writing progress provided at parent-teacher conferences offered once each semester.
Tier 2: Tailored (for families who are not able to participate in Tier 1 or who need additional support)	Quarterly virtual workshops for students to show what they are learning in reading and writing and how families can reinforce this learning at home. Virtual or phone meetings to share open house or conference information with families who are unable to attend.
Tier 3: Intensive (for families who have greater needs or who wish to be more involved, including taking on leadership responsibilities)	Monthly conferences for families of students who are experiencing challenges with reading and writing. Opportunity to serve on the family advisory committee to plan events and offer feedback on how the family engagement program is designed and offered.

**Figure 2. High School Example for Schoolwide Focus on Study Skills and Research Skills**

<b>Overall Goal:</b> The 9th-grade family engagement program focuses on supporting students' development of the study and research skills needed for success in their core classes.	
Tier 1: Universal (for all families; general focus)	Open house begins with a group presentation about the importance of and expectations for study skills and research skills. Families then visit their children's classrooms, and teachers give examples of study skills and research skills they will be addressing during the semester.  Website provides information and resources for 9th-grade families and students regarding study skills and research skills.
Tier 2: Tailored (for families who are not able to participate in Tier 1 or who need additional support)	Virtual open house option for families who are unable to attend in person.  Teacher-led online workshops for families who need or want additional information to support their students with specific study skills and research skills.
Tier 3: Intensive (for families who have greater needs or who wish to be more involved, including taking on leadership responsibilities)	Three-way conferences (student–teacher–family member[s]) to address study skill and research skill questions and concerns.  Opportunity to serve on 9th-grade family–teacher committee to review the effectiveness of the family engagement program and resources for families.

At the high school level, the entire school may focus on developing study skills and research skills with a specific focus for each grade level as illustrated in Figure 2.

This schoolwide approach provides a framework that can become part of the fabric of the school over time. By having teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and families work together to build and review the multi-tiered model for family engagement, they can make revisions as needed to ensure the program is as effective as possible for participating families as well as for the school representatives.

Using the multi-tiered approach as a foundation, classroom teachers can supplement the schoolwide program with additional family engagement strategies that are specific for their own classrooms. For example, some elementary teachers may decide to facilitate their own workshops on selecting and reading informational text to align with an upcoming project in their classrooms, or they may host a virtual storytelling festival for their students and families to share favorite stories that represent their backgrounds and lived experiences. Middle or

high school teachers may choose to supplement the school program by creating and sharing their own short digital videos for families to demonstrate study strategies that are aligned to specific units of study. With a multi-tiered family engagement program in place at the school level, teachers can devote their efforts to building relationships with their students' families, developing and offering engagement strategies as needed to supplement the schoolwide program.

## Conclusion

There is extensive evidence about the benefits of family engagement on student learning progress and outcomes; however, many educators face challenges with developing and implementing meaningful strategies on their own at the classroom level. Having a team of teachers, administrators, and families work together to create a multi-tiered model for family engagement at the school level offers a collaborative, effective, and efficient approach to connecting with all families to support student learning.

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## About the Author

Laurie Elish-Piper is Dean of the College of Education at Northern Illinois University. She is also a Distinguished Teaching Professor and Presidential Engagement Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at NIU. Prior to her work in higher education, Laurie was an elementary and middle school teacher, and an educational therapist in a clinical setting. Her research, publications, and presentations focus on family literacy, parent involvement, literacy assessment, and literacy coaching.



Brad Betz, "Never. Never. Never Give Up"



# IRC Webinar Series

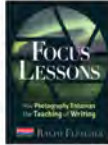
All webinars will begin at 7:00 p.m.

IRC will be offering the Webinar Series for members only in 2022-2023. All webinars will begin at 7:00 p.m. Members who watch the live or recorded webinars can earn professional development clock hours. Mark your calendars and register to take part in this convenient, free IRC membership benefit. Members will receive monthly emails with links to register. Nonmembers can join online and email for the registration link.

## September 7, 2022 ~ Ralph Fletcher How Photography Enhances the Teaching of Writing



Language arts teachers tend to be text-oriented—comfortable in the world of reading and writing. However, the world in which our students live is increasingly visual. They are bombarded by images. We ignore that world at our peril. We'll look at the interplay between photography and writing, and the uncanny parallels between them. We may find out that our students already know a great deal about images. We will look at how we can tap into their understanding of the visual world to help them become stronger writers.



## February 1, 2023 ~ Becky Anderson Discovering the 2023 Illinois Reads Books



Join Becky Anderson as she presents the Illinois Reads books for 2023. Learn more about the Illinois Reads statewide literacy initiative that promotes reading for all Illinois citizens. Six books in six age bands from Birth to Adult will be shared. A variety of book topics and themes are chosen for each age band, highlighting the work of Illinois Authors.



## October 5, 2022 ~ Melissa Stewart Creating Passionate Nonfiction Readers



After learning simple ways to increase your classroom or library nonfiction circulation by two or three times, discover how tools like book match surveys, preview stacks, and reading ladders can help students identify the kinds of nonfiction books they enjoy reading most. Melissa will also share a wide range engaging, innovative ideas and activities for nurturing a love of nonfiction in ALL students.



## March 1, 2023 ~ Jasmine Warga Stories As Connectors, Stories as Community Builders, and Stories as Conversation-Starters



A discussion about how stories are perfect vehicles for connecting us to one another, building community, and asking big questions about our world and the human experience. There will be a specific focus on the power stories have to shape our understanding of people and cultures that are often misrepresented or not represented at all. Jasmine will talk about the way she approaches her own writing—from a place of asking questions. She will explore the idea that books for young people should be viewed as conversation-starters—that we should always be most invested in helping young people to find and exercise their own voices.



## November 2, 2022 ~ Lisa Fipps Starfishing



Lisa tells the story of how she went from a little girl reading books under the shade of a Rose of Sharon tree in her backyard and dreaming of writing books of her own to a journalist to an award-winning author. She talks about the inspiration for *Starfish*, a book she needed as a child – that all children need. A book that's a mirror for fat children and a window for nonfat children. She discusses why she chose to write *Starfish* in verse, why bullying is never okay, and how we can all be upstanders in our own lives.



## April 5, 2023 ~ Beverley Holden Johns The Impact of Anxiety on Children's Literacy: Practical Strategies That Support Children



Anxiety disorders are recognized as the most prevalent mental health disorder among children and adolescents. Prior to the pandemic, twenty five percent of children between the ages of 13-18 had an anxiety disorder. Now there are estimates that this percentage may have doubled. Anxiety can negatively affect a child's academic success in the area of literacy. Teachers are often the first to notice signs. This session provides educators a basic understanding of the characteristics of anxiety in its various forms, guiding principles regarding positive interventions, and a whole array of strategies to support students with anxiety.



## December 7, 2022 ~ Candace Fleming Writing Great Nonfiction With Kids



Can kids write engaging nonfiction? Absolutely! In this fast-paced presentation, award-winning author Candace Fleming will share her secrets for creating fascinating nonfiction. Participants will not only discover strategies for effective research and directed inquiry, but they will also leave with tips to help students create exciting "true stories" rather than dull, encyclopedic accounts. 3rd -8th grade.



## May 3, 2023 ~ Josh Carlson Trauma 101



Trauma 101 will provide a brief overview of trauma, developmental trauma and adverse childhood experiences and their impact on children and youth. Participants will develop an understanding of the impact of trauma on brain development and how this manifests in behaviors. Participants will also gain some basic strategies to support and build resiliency within their students.



## January 4, 2023 ~ Aimee Ellis Using Inclusive Texts in the K-6 Classroom



In this one hour session, we will explore a four-part framework from Inclusive Texts in Elementary Classrooms (Heineke & Papola-Ellis, 2022) on selecting, using, and engaging students with texts that promote students' identity, literacy engagement, and learning across disciplines. Various examples from teachers' classrooms will be shared, as well as suggested book titles to use across literacy and content area instruction.



## June 7, 2023 ~ Blue Balliett Reading as a Secret Tool



Blue will share the many ways in which reading books has quietly made her the person she is today, and the deceptively invisible ways in which reading can be used to build life-changing strengths. Readers can engage in an activity that looks quiet to the outside world but in which thrilling, wild changes to their own thinking can occur... The right book at the right moment can definitely change a life! And with Q & A throughout the webinar, it can lead to unpredictable sharing and insights.



To register, sign into your IRC Membership Account at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org)

# Professional Development

Sophie Degener, Adelfio Garcia, and Ivy Sitkoski

## About this Column

It's spring and time to consider some fresh ideas, even if they are about topics we have been considering in an ongoing way in the past few years. As educators, we have always taken on hefty challenges and done important work. Recently, we have been more and more focused on the challenge of creating a more equitable society by turning the deficit model of cultural difference upside-down. The movement to value differences in culture and language as assets, and to embody that view in classrooms, is definitely gathering momentum. More and more books, articles, seminars, and workshops focus on this endeavor. It is not surprising, then, to find that all three of the books in our column for this issue reflect that perspective. One of the books describes highly authentic, deeply informative literacy assessments that help teachers more fully understand students' identities and the community-based funds of knowledge each one brings to the reading process. Another of the books issues a stirring call to all bilingual educators to reflect on their strength, power, and richness of their own bilingualism; incorporate all of the resources it gives them into their teaching; use the linguistic resources their students bring from home; and work together to advocate for the cultivation of bilingualism. The third book shares the practices of a small group of highly effective teachers who use community building, culturally sustaining practices to celebrate the diverse languages and cultures of their kindergarten through 3rd-grade students and to create an atmosphere of belonging. Sit down with at least one of these books this spring! As nature renews, get some new ideas from the unique insights these books offer.

## Let's Turn Old Models Upside-Down this Spring!

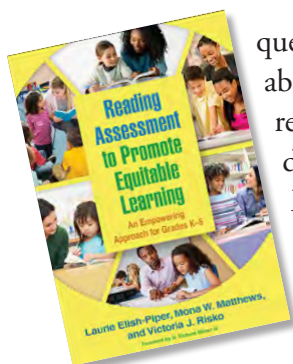
Elish-Piper, Laurie, Matthews, Mona W., and Risko, Victoria J. *Reading Assessment to Promote Equitable Learning: An Empowering Approach for Grades K-5*. The Guilford Press, 2022, 340 pp. ISBN 978-1-4625-4997-9.

The teachers I work with frequently share their frustrations about the assessments they are required to use: high stakes standardized tests, the ubiquitous MAP tests (given thrice yearly), fluency snapshots, DIBELS, and other discrete skill assessments, not to mention additional tests given to emergent bilingual students. And for what? What

do these assessments tell us? They typically provide incomplete and deficit-focused snapshots of our learners, and the results are often insufficient to inform our instructional planning across all areas of literacy.

Fortunately for literacy teachers, *Reading Assessment to Promote Equitable Learning* provides a welcome alternative to this kind of assessment. The book offers an approach to holistic literacy assessment that is guided by four principles. According to the authors, assessments must

1. Be viewed through an equity lens or mindset.
2. Ensure that both students and teachers are visible during the process.
3. Be embedded in daily learning activities.
4. Account for the complexity of reading. (p. 12)



The book includes 28 different assessments across seven chapters, organized by type. Assessments include those that help us to understand students' identities (e.g., interviews with students and parents), those that support relationship building (including conferencing and retrospective miscue analysis), comprehension assessments (both discussion- and text-based), constrained skill assessments (within an authentic context), and assessment of student agency and literacy-related strengths.

Each chapter follows the same structure, starting with an overview of the assessment type, an explanation of how that type of assessment addresses the four principles, and then a detailed look at the specific assessments that can be used in each category. The authors share clear procedures for planning for and administering the assessments, and for analyzing the data that are collected, as well as examples of the assessments in use in classrooms and blank forms to be used for note taking, analysis, and recordkeeping.

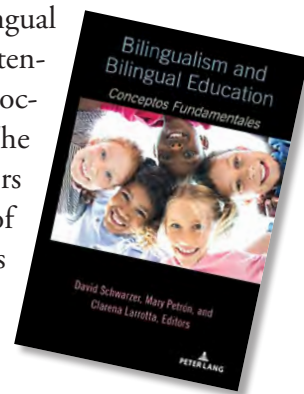
Some of the assessments will be familiar to teachers, particularly those that are detailed in Chapter 6, "Assessing Constrained Skills Within the Big Picture of Reading," where assessments such as running records and developmental spelling inventories are detailed (though even these are modified to better address the four principles). However, there are assessments that will be new to teachers, offering unique ways to assess those things that are not always easy to measure. I really appreciated the two chapters devoted to assessing student comprehension as the seven assessments detailed in these chapters shed light on students' thinking as they make sense of texts, giving teachers insights into all the ways students utilize strategies and funds of knowledge to understand what they read.

The notion that literacy assessments could provide a complete picture of our students that considers their full selves—languages, families, communities, experiences, interests, and strengths—and honor teachers' knowledge and

capacity for decision making is in direct contrast to current assessment practices in schools. I hope teachers will see the potential of this book to "view reading assessment as a humanizing, empowering process that proceeds through an equity mindset" (p. 6). My suggestion would be to start with the assessments in Chapter 2 that are designed to help teachers learn about students' out-of-school lives and perceptions of their own reading. The assessments in this book will provide a greater understanding of students that will help make their strengths and needs visible. —SD

**Schwarzer, David, Petrón, Mary, & Larrotta, Clarena (Eds.). *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Conceptos Fundamentales*. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2021, 178 pp. ISBN 978-1433184505.**

I want to invite all bilingual educators to read this enlightening resource written in a provocative, translanguaging way. The editors challenged contributors to use their entire repertoire of linguistic resources to address today's bilinguals, bilingualism, and bilingual education in today's classrooms.



The book is divided into three parts. The first part is entirely devoted to the contribution of authors whose work highlights bilingualism as an asset. The second part includes the experiences and stories of several authors in whose lives two languages are intertwined and can serve as inspiration to bilinguals experiencing simultaneous input in different contexts. The third section establishes the groundwork for speakers of two languages across the globe to increase awareness of their self-power as bilinguals in any context.

The structure of the book, which is similar in each section, is one of its strengths. The introduction and relevant literature are presented first, then further explanation of the

concept is discussed. The last part of each chapter includes relevant implications for bilingual teachers and ways to discuss ideas and concepts, either self-reflecting or in small groups. Do not forget to visit the glossary because it includes terminology that would be complex to understand in one named language and helps reinforce the concepts and big ideas.

Dive into each section and uncover the power in the words that bilingual researchers and teachers have and underutilize, maybe even suppress, daily. Remember your daily languaging acts and pride yourself on allowing your bilingual self to abolish subtractive schooling and what it means to many of us. In this way, we are no longer promulgating and contributing to the colonial structures that persist in educational institutions. Advocate to highlight and use the rich language bilinguals bring into classrooms and utilize those linguistic resources students already have to enhance their learning. The authors' theoretical stance provides research-based terminology to support your bilingual actions in all educational and social contexts. These concepts and theories also invite the readers to reflect on their ideologies and embrace their translingual and transracial selves. They summon our help to stop language policing in our classrooms and make a difference in societal and institutional perceptions of linguistic and ethnic differences.

The second part of the book brings the voices of several authors who reflect on their reading and writing identities and express the frustrations of their bilingualism in a large society and in the institutions in which they are a part. These narratives can potentially be used as models for preservice and practicing teachers so they can see how their bilingualism supports professional and personal growth. The authors' reflections and challenges while writing using their entire set of linguistic resources are important visible reminders of our bilingualism. Also, the authors provide recommendations for us to continue pushing the cultivation of

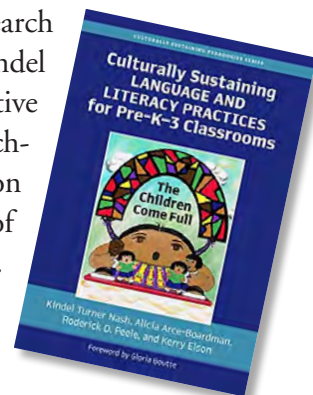
bilingualism in ourselves and in our bilingual students.

The book's third part is a call for action—a commitment to undertake REAL action. This writer joins the authors and editors of this book in their call. Teachers, practitioners, and all bilinguals must work together to inspire the cultivation of bilingualism in self, families, and educational institutions. This call may be foreign to some educators, but taking the language away from our students is not honoring and valuing them as human beings. —AG

**Nash, Kindel Turner, Arce-Boardman, Alicia, Peele, Roderick D., & Elson, Kerry.** *Culturally Sustaining Language and Literacy Practices for Pre-K-3 Classrooms: The Children Come Full.* Teachers College Press, 2022, 156 pp. ISBN 978-0-8077-6746-7.

This book grew out of research conducted by the first author, Kindel Turner Nash. Her search for effective culturally sustaining literacy teaching led her to the four teachers upon which this book focuses, three of whom wrote the book with her. The book describes, in joyous detail, the practices these teachers use to create a caring space. In this space, children feel they are known, they belong, and they are free to express their diverse identities and cultural practices. The teachers use moves and approaches well-grounded in research that are thoroughly explained at the beginning and cited throughout the book.

We first learn how the teachers go to great lengths to get to know students, their families, and their communities in depth through a variety of practices before school even starts. One of my favorites is the informal playground gathering at which the teacher, students, and family members come together in a playground, bring dinner, and interact through conversation and play. One teacher directly asks families how they would like to see their cultural, linguistic, and





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ethnic backgrounds represented in the classroom. Then, when the school year begins, the teachers use every opportunity to develop and deepen feelings of community, self-worth, and cultural affirmation during such initial tasks as setting up the classroom, establishing routines, and assigning classroom jobs.

As I progressed through the chapters, each discussing different aspects of literacy instruction, I came across descriptions of all of the components of a balanced literacy program that so many of us have taught but with culturally affirming adaptations. Oral language and vocabulary development are grounded in the belief that all children are capable speakers of their own languages, and no single language is privileged above any other. Instead, multilingualism is encouraged by creating activity structures in which children can interact with each other and converse throughout the day, giving them the opportunity to experiment with each other's language conventions. Comparison among languages is encouraged and is extended into other components of literacy instruction. Classroom libraries are curated to make sure they represent and affirm multiple cultures, especially those of the children in each class, and that they explore issues of racism in age-appropriate ways. They are used for interactive read-alouds, small-group guided reading, and Writing Workshop.

Often, books for instruction are chosen based on daily questions and reflections from children, which, in turn, are informed by children's cultures, revealing aspects of those cultures to the teachers. Writing projects are inspired by these revelations as well. An example that I loved grew out of the preference expressed by several students in one teacher's class for a version of "Happy Birthday" by Stevie Wonder. Their teacher then provided the opportunity for all of her students to share their linguistically diverse family birthday songs, read about different birthday traditions, and write a class multilingual birthday song. These teaching

practices center the children in the curriculum while engaging them in well-established, research-supported instruction.

As you read this book, I know you will agree that it is easy to see what makes these teachers so effective. If you teach a diverse class of young children, and have been looking for ways to make your teaching more culturally sustaining, I truly believe you will find what you have been looking for in the examples and other resources in this book. —IS

## About the Authors

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# Climate Justice Now

Rebecca Woodard and Kristine M. Schutz

## About this Column

This column supports the development of urgent pedagogies about climate justice learning in elementary and middle school ELA classrooms. In each issue, we explore practical ways elementary teachers can engage young people to read, compose, learn about, and act on climate justice. This column is the second part of a three-part series where we share picturebooks that can support learning with children about central themes of climate education.

## Picturebooks that Support Learning About Relationality as Part of Climate Education

This column is the second in a three-part series focusing on exploring children’s picturebooks that support learning about anchoring themes of climate education with elementary-aged children (see Figure 1). We conceptualize the second anchoring theme as *relationality*. Relationality emphasizes that we have a responsibility to live in relationship to and in care for both other human beings and the natural world. We see this idea enacted as humans appreciate, take responsibility for, and care for the Earth and our communities, as opposed to simply extracting what we need from them.

Our conceptualization of relationality is informed by the concept of kinship. Kinship

is used in the natural sciences to define relationships and the degree of relatedness between individuals who are genetically related, and anthropologists have long studied kinship in the form of our webs of social relations. These understandings of kinship have also been resisted and expanded, particularly by Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) feminist scholars who frame kinship as a way of living in connection and relation (Ramnath, 2022). For example, we love the way Cree-Métis children’s author Julie Flett (2021) talks about kinship in her book *We All Play*. She writes,

*When I was growing up, my dad shared a lot about our relationship to animals and to each other, including the land, plants, beetles, the earth, wind, water, and sky. Whether we are running and hopping through the grass or rolling along the street or pondering creatures in the creek, we are all connected, living in relationship and in care to one another, in kinship. In Cree, that is called Wâhkôhtowin.*

**Figure 1. Anchoring Themes to Support Climate Education in Elementary Classrooms**

Anchoring Themes to Support Climate Education with Elementary-Aged Children
<b>Interconnectivity</b> involves understanding that our social and natural worlds are deeply intertwined, and everything matters/has a role.
<b>Relationality</b> means that we have a responsibility to live in relationship to and in care for both our fellow human beings and the natural world.
<b>Action</b> emphasizes that we must work together to create change, solve complex problems, and impact systems.

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Neither of us identify as Indigenous, and we cannot fully understand and forward Wáhkôhtowin or related Indigenous conceptualizations of kinship. However, like others interested in ecological sustainability, we believe that it is necessary for humans to live in relationship to and in care for both our fellow human beings and the natural world. With honor and gratitude to more expansive Indigenous and feminist conceptualizations, we hope to embody this spirit of the idea as we teach children about living in relationality to both our social *and* natural worlds.

## **Picturebooks that Foster Conversations About Relationality**

In this column, we share picturebooks that support understandings of relationality. In particular, we want children to understand that humans must live in reciprocity to/relationship with nature, the importance of ecological *and* communal care, and what ecological stewardship is. As in our last column, we will share a brief description of how we use books to explore particular themes, and then offer an abbreviated list of selected books that we really love with summaries.

### ***Living in Reciprocity***

Reciprocity, or living in mutual benefit, is an ethic in many Indigenous cultures, including human–nature reciprocity. To live in relation to nature, humans must accept responsibility for how our actions impact its well-being and strive to honor and care for it. One way to think of it is that humans have different kinds of ecological relationships such as seeing the natural world from a utilitarian/extraction perspective (i.e., behaving under the assumption that the natural world is something that can be used), from a sustainability/mitigation perspective (i.e., increased awareness of impact and greater consideration for mitigation), or from a relational/reciprocal perspective (i.e., understanding humans in relation to land and striving for reciprocity) (Forest Schooled, 2020).

This relational/reciprocal perspective involves thinking about our relation to humans and all aspects of the natural world, including our obligation to the future. Some of our favorite books on reciprocity share Indigenous perspectives on the topic, including *Be a Good Ancestor* by Leona Prince, Gabrielle Prince, and Carla Joseph (2022); *The First Blade of Sweetgrass* by Suzanne Greenlaw, Gabriel Frey, and Nancy Baker (2021); *Stand Like a Cedar* by Nicola Campbell and Carrielynn Victor (2021); and *All Around Us* by Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia (2017).

While not as explicitly focused on reciprocity, there are many books about humans' particular relationships with and obligations to plants (e.g., *Tree Full of Wonder* by Anna Smithers & Martyna Nejman [2021]), animals (e.g., *Begin with a Bee* by Liza Ketchum, Jacqueline Briggs Martin, Phyllis Root, & Claudia McGehee [2021]), water (e.g., *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom & Michaela Goade [2020]), and air (e.g., *Every Breath We Take: A Book About Air* by Maya Ajmera & Dominique Browning [2016]; *Iqbal and His Ingenious Idea: How a Science Project Helps One Family and the Planet* by Elizabeth Suneby & Rebecca Green [2018]). These books can also encourage an understanding of the importance of living in relation with the Earth.

### ***Ecological and Communal Care***

Another thematic focus that supports understanding relationality is highlighting intersections of ecological and communal care. With young children, we love exploring books about intergenerational and natural relationships such as *Birdsong* by Julie Flett (2019), *Grandpa's Garden* by Stella Fry and Sheila Moxley (2012), and *Where Wonder Grows* by Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia (2022).

Many picturebooks with an environmental focus highlight intergenerational connections among neighbors, guided by a strong sense of communal care for each other and for

the places where we live. There are a number of books about community gardening on this topic such as *Harlem Grown: How One Big Idea Transformed a Neighborhood* by Tony Hillery and Jessie Hartland (2020), *Jayden's Impossible Garden* by Mélina Mangal and Ken Daley (2021), *Zora's Zucchini* by Katherine Pryor and Anna Raff (2017), and *Our School Garden* by Rick Swann and Christy Hale (2018).

Climate activists have long suggested that intergenerational efforts are necessary to both prevent and respond to the climate crisis. As climate disasters become more common, neighbors engaging in mutual aid—exchanging resources and services for mutual benefit—will become increasingly important. Two books we like about this topic are *The Coquíes Still Sing: A Story of Home, Hope, and Rebuilding* by Karina Nicole González and Krystal Quiles (2022) and *A Place Where Hurricanes Happens* by Renée Watson and Shadra Strickland (2014).

## Stewardship


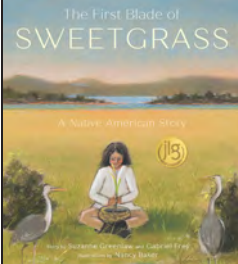
Stewardship is a concept used to describe conserving natural resources over long periods of time; it is another theme that can be used to understand relationality. Many environmentalists believe Indigenous stewardship, which has gone on for thousands of years and includes a variety of




methods (e.g., prescribed burning of grasslands; subsistence-focused agriculture), provides models of how humans can better live in relation with the land. A great picturebook on this topic is *Who Needs a Forest Fire?* by Paula Henson, Sue Todd, and Emily Underwood (2021).

Other books about stewardship focus on topics such as ecological restoration (e.g., *Creekfinding: A True Story* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin & Claudia McGehee [2017]), sustainable gardening/farming/harvesting (e.g., *Moth and Wasp, Soil & Ocean: Remembering Chinese Scientist Pu Zhelong's Work for Sustainable Farming* by Sigrid Schmalzer & Melanie Linden Chan [2020]; *Secrets of the Mutis Honey Hunters* by Johanna Ernawati, Ani Adiwanata Nawir, Yeni F. Nomeni, Budy Kristanty, Deanna Ramsay, Larasputri Setyawati, & Erna Yulia Rahmah [2017]), and land advocacy (e.g., *Ajijaak-Crane* by Cecilia LaPointe, Dolly Peltier, & Margaret Noodin [2018]).

## Getting Started: Summaries of Selected Picturebooks that Foster Discussions of Relationality

Just as we did in the first column of this series, we highlight in the boxed text some of the titles we have discussed in the previous section. Be sure to read the sections above for even more recommendations.

Title/Cover	Author & Illustrator	Summary
	Leona Prince (author), Gabrielle Prince (author), and Carla Joseph (illustrator)	<b>Be a Good Ancestor</b> This gorgeous picturebook helps readers understand their responsibility to the Earth and future generations. The lyrical words and detailed illustrations introduce Indigenous perspectives on caring for water, land, and future generations and welcomes conversation about the idea of reciprocity.
	Suzanne Greenlaw (author), Gabriel Frey (author), and Nancy Baker (illustrator)	<b>The First Blade of Sweetgrass</b> Musquon, a young Wabanaki girl, acquires the patience, knowledge, and respect for the land of her ancestors as she harvests sweetgrass for basket making for the first time with her grandmother. Greenlaw (Houton Band of Maliseet), Frey (Passamaquoddy), and Baker evoke tranquility and peace in this beautiful picturebook as they speak to our reciprocal relationship with the land and the importance of conservation.

	<p>Anna Smithers (author) and Martyna Nejman (illustrator)</p>	<p><b>Tree Full of Wonder</b> This rhyming book helps readers understand the many important roles that trees play in our world—from protecting the land in storms to bearing fruit in the summer. It is a great text to talk about reciprocity as it highlights the bond between people and trees, and it shows young readers the importance of slowing down to notice and honor the magnificence of trees. To us, this book feels like everything we wish <i>The Giving Tree</i> was!</p>
	<p>Liza Ketchum (author), Jacqueline Briggs Martin (author), Phyllis Root (author), and Claudia McGehee (illustrator)</p>	<p><b>Begin with a Bee</b> Bees are fascinating creatures that can serve as an entry point to talking about issues of climate with children. This informational picturebook tells the story of the life cycle of a queen bee and helps us to understand the many contributions bees make to our world and how integral they are to the ecosystem. It is a wonderful text for talking about reciprocity as it also highlights humans' responsibility to the natural world as well.</p>
	<p>Julie Flett (author &amp; illustrator)</p>	<p><b>Birdsong</b> Humans' connection to the land is visible on multiple levels in Flett's gorgeous picturebook where the landscapes speak to us just as much as the storyline. The richness of intergenerational friendship between Katherena and her artist neighbor, Agnes, and their relationship with the land and seasons make this picturebook perfect for discussing communal care and the intersection of social and natural relationships. It also serves as a beautiful model for translanguaging as Flett includes Cree words in the text, as well as a glossary to support readers.</p>
	<p>Tony Hillery (author) and Jessie Hartland (illustrator)</p>	<p><b>Harlem Grown</b> This beautifully told and illustrated picturebook tells the story of how Tony Hillery engaged students at their local elementary school to transform a vacant lot into a local garden and how that garden has continued to thrive. Add this text to your collection of community garden books, many of which are highlighted in this column, to support children in talking about how to engage in communal care.</p>
	<p>Karina Nicole González (author) and Krystal Quiles (illustrator)</p>	<p><b>The Coquíes Still Sing: A Story of Home, Hope, and Rebuilding</b> Luna, a young girl in Puerto Rico, loves her mango tree and listening to the peaceful sound of the coquí frogs every night. However, when Hurricane María destroys her town, it takes the sweet sounds of the coquíes with it. A beautiful story of communal care as Luna, her family, and her community respond to the impact of extreme weather and climate change.</p>
	<p>Paula Henson (author), Sue Todd (illustrator), and Emily Underwood (illustrator)</p>	<p><b>Who Needs a Forest Fire?</b> This captivating book teaches us about stewardship of the land by way of controlled burning practices historically used by Indigenous people. It helps young people understand how fire can be used to support the land instead of destroying it, and it emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between humans, trees, and the broader natural world.</p>
	<p>Jacqueline Briggs Martin (author) and Claudia McGehee (illustrator)</p>	<p><b>Creeking: A True Story</b> Caldecott award-winning author Jacqueline Briggs Martin teams with illustrator Claudia McGehee to tell the inspiring story of how one man worked with the land to bring back a creek that had been buried decades ago by a farmer wanting more land. This fact-filled story shows how a creek is not just a creek but, rather, every living and non-living thing that inhabits it. It is a beautiful story of stewardship of the land and ecological restoration!</p>

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## Tips for Leading Interactive Read-Alouds

In our last column, we suggested that picture-books are powerful to use across disciplines and ages, and that they can be read in small sections and multiple times. Now, we want to highlight some tips for leading interactive read-alouds.

### **Remember WHY We Read**

Most importantly, teachers need to remember that when people read texts, we are always involved in a process of constructing understandings. Even when we design interactive read-alouds focused on supporting children in using particular reading strategies and skills, we must not lose sight of the big ideas in the text. What a shame it would be to focus so intently on making inferences while reading *Be a Good Ancestor* by Leona Prince, Gabrielle Prince, and Carla Joseph (2022) that we fail to take time to engage in conversation about how our actions in the social and natural worlds impact future generations. This is not to say that we cannot focus on supporting strategic reading through the interactive read-aloud, but we must not lose sight of the ultimate goal of reading any text.

### **Introduce the Text and Set a Purpose for Reading**

Have you ever started watching a movie without any understanding of what it might be about? If you have, you know that it takes a considerable amount of time to get into the movie because you are expending so much energy trying to figure out what is going on. It is so much easier when someone has shared a synopsis (without spoiling the ending, of course!) or you have watched the trailer. We can support children's meaning-making by providing quick but intentional text introductions that (1) prime background knowledge to support conceptual understandings, (2) frame the

text through a quick overview and introduction to ideas and plot elements that will support children, and (3) establish a purpose for reading that is related to the ideas in the text. For example, instead of saying, "As we read, we'll practice drawing conclusions," try, "As we read, let's think about what the author is telling us about our responsibility to the land and natural world around us."

### **Plan for Interactions Focused on the Ideas in the Text**

Edtech responded quickly to many of the challenges we faced in quickly shifting to remote teaching and learning in 2020, and suddenly we found ourselves with access to a plethora of videos of read-alouds. While helpful at the time, we worry that showing these videos to children does not allow for the kind of intentional interactions that teachers plan for and facilitate *while* reading texts in their learning communities. Because talk and interaction are what build understanding, teachers must be intentional about planning opportunities for children to talk throughout an interactive read-aloud—from turn-and-talks where we listen in and feature the thinking of multiple students to whole-class discussions where we support children in connecting their ideas to others to build a collective understanding.

### **Ask "Curious" Questions that Relate to the Theme**

Playing a game of "guess how the teacher wants me to respond" is not enjoyable for children and fails to use the interactive read-aloud as a rich context for thinking and reasoning as a collective. Yet, when we pose questions of which we are genuinely curious, we find ourselves quickly becoming part of the conversation with children, thinking together as opposed to evaluating their responses and closing opportunities for talk. "Curious" questions like "How do you see this

idea of relationality in this particular moment or text?” and “Does this remind you of anything from your own life or culture?” provide us with the opportunity to learn *with* children, which can also support our own developing understandings about anchoring themes in climate education.

## Synthesize Across Texts

New (to us) concepts like relationality can be difficult to grasp when first introduced. Interactive read-alouds provide a space in which we can expand our understandings as we explore and discuss multiple texts that address the same anchoring theme. For example, after reading a text set focused on relationality, we might ask students to think about how the texts collectively shift our thinking from one in which we *use* the land to one in which we live *with* the land. We could imagine extending this by working with texts, media, and even policies that adopt these different orientations and speaking back to them.

## Conclusion

We believe that cultivating understandings of relationality—the important idea that humans must live in relationship to and in care for fellow humans *and* the natural world—has an important role in climate education with children. Using picturebooks, like those we have featured in this column, to plan for and facilitate rich, interactive read-alouds is one relatively simple way to launch your exploration of climate justice with children.

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Brad Betz, "End Racism Now"

# Check this Out!

Marie Ann Donovan and Mary Yockey

## About this Column

The roles and activities of school librarians and media specialists are rapidly shifting in our 21st-century schools as they transform their centers into learning laboratories for all stakeholders—students, school personnel, and family/community members. This column connects Illinois Reading Council members with the latest research, trends, resources, and ways of thinking about the unique roles and expertise of library and media specialists in fostering student literacy.

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## Undoing Dewey

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You might be among the many classroom teachers who noticed something quite different about your school's library last fall: Its collection was no longer arranged by the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system. Instead, depending upon your librarian's or district's chosen framework, your library's signage and guides might appear more "user-friendly" and be absent any numbers, including decimals. Such changes are more than window dressing. Rather, they demonstrate your librarian's deep commitment to ensuring the collection is student-centered and reflective of how children think as well as who is in your school community. Those changes are part of a larger movement afoot in our country to rework Dewey's 150-year-old knowledge organization system upon which most public and school library holdings are classified. Why more librarians are investigating ways to "ditch Dewey" is best understood by first learning more about the DDC system and the man who created it.

## Dewey's Historic System

Librarian Melvil Dewey (1851-1931) designed his library collection classification system with one goal in mind: To establish a standardized

organization system so books could be shelved together according to their similar content, not according to the whims of any given librarian. Before Dewey's system gained hold around the turn of the 20th century, individual public and private libraries used whatever approach made sense to their owners and administrators. If you wanted to read Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, for example, depending upon the library, you might find it shelved with other scientific books or tucked onto a shelf with recently acquired titles of all sorts. Or it might not be available for at least another week because that library organized books by assigning them a specific spot on a shelf. Any new acquisitions, then, required a rethinking and reshuffling of the space. Visiting a library meant visiting a librarian, someone who guided you through the library. Patron self-service was neither possible nor expected.

Dewey's seminal work published in 1876, *A Classification and Subject Index for Cataloguing and Arranging the Books and Pamphlets of a Library*, organized all subject matter into ten broad categories, or classes, outlined in Table 1. (This table's contents reflect today's titling of the classes, not Dewey's original ones.) Dewey initially developed his system in 1873 while finishing his bachelor's degree at Amherst College in Massachusetts, where he worked in the library. The library's administrators were so

**Table 1. The Dewey Decimal Classification System**

000-099	Computer Science, Information, and General Works
100-199	Philosophy and Psychology
200-299	Religion
300-399	Social Sciences
400-499	Language
500-599	Natural Sciences and Mathematics
600-699	Technology
700-799	Arts and Recreation
800-899	Literature and Rhetoric
900-999	History, Geography, and Biography

enthusiastic about the system, they promoted him to be an assistant librarian before he graduated in 1874 and then supported his ongoing testing and implementation of it in their collection. They also helped him publish the first edition of his system, which launched his career.

As you might recall from your own early learning of the Dewey system, each of these ten main classes of knowledge (e.g., 500, Natural Sciences and Mathematics) has ten sections (e.g., 530, Physics; 590, Animals/Zoology). Each section is further subdivided through use of decimals (e.g., 599.8, Primates; 599.88, Apes). The more numbers after the decimal, the more focused the topic of the book. So, knowing just the division or section number for a topic can make even random shelf browsing easier and more targeted. One of the first DDC system lessons librarians teach students is how to figure out a topic's division or section number, and then, how to physically locate books in the collection for their consideration. Becoming familiar with how the DDC system works affords students serendipitous opportunities to discover new authors and more discrete dimensions of their topics simply by walking over to a shelf and pulling books shelved together in a section. Unlike Web searching, which can lead students astray or down proverbial rabbit holes, searching the library's physical collection to learn more

about a topic has the potential to keep students focused and ensure they secure pertinent, vetted resources for their research.

Dewey's system remains the most widely used in libraries around the world. In 1988, the OCLC, an international nonprofit library technology and research cooperative headquartered in the U.S., purchased the rights to the Dewey system and assumed responsibility for its maintenance as well as access by librarians. The OCLC works with the U.S. Library of Congress's Decimal Classification Division to determine which aspects of the DDC system need regular updating. Over the years, certain DDC system section numbers have been discontinued, refined, or rethought to accommodate innovations and discoveries as well as shifting perspectives on social and cultural topics. Some are surprised to learn that the Library of Congress (LOC), which has its own classification system that is larger (21 classes) and uses letters along with numbers (e.g., QL 739.8, Vertebrates), is involved in maintaining the currency of the DDC system. It is because the LOC is the nation's repository for most U.S. publications, responsible for developing a Cataloging in Publication (CIP) record for every book before it is published. (A book's copyright page includes the LOC's CIP data, which makes it easier for librarians, book sellers, and distributors to catalog a title into their databases.) Since the LOC's professionals must review each title and classify it for the LOC system, they are the first to detect any difficulties in fitting a book into the existing DDC and LOC systems. Any amendments to the DDC proposed by LOC staff are deliberated with the OCLC staff and their advisory boards before taking effect.

## **Problems with Dewey and His System**

For decades, teaching professionals have questioned using the DDC system with elementary-level students given how their knowledge of the world is relatively limited. The DDC system is

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based upon subject or disciplinary knowledge. Most of the ten classes include subtopics that are not always obvious (e.g., 600s, Technology includes the medical sciences and agriculture along with engineering and technology). While most school and public libraries post helpful charts elaborating upon the topics within each DDC class, those charts cannot contain all the subjects within a class, which leads to further confusion (despite librarians' ongoing DDC instruction) and to children's heavier reliance upon librarians for finding appropriate books. In an era of shrinking budgets for hiring library staff, librarians are seeking ways to organize their collections to be more self-service. This frees up time for teaching the critical literacy skills essential for 21st-century children to learn.

Another argument against keeping the DDC system in schools is its numbering scheme. Librarians find primary- and intermediate-level children struggle to fathom the significance of the decimals in the system or how to interpret them. These students often ignore the decimals entirely when scanning shelves. While they (usually) quickly grow in their ability to locate a book's given call number on a shelf, they tend not to readily understand why the decimals increase in size (e.g., 623.3 is shelved before 623.33) or why they are used in the first place.

Other librarians abandoning the DDC system point out that since it was designed for efficiency in finding books on shelves, with the rise of ebooks and electronic library catalogs, there is no longer as much of a need to teach children to recognize which topics are within which DDC class. Instructional emphasis today is placed upon mastering school library catalog searches according to research questions, topic/subtopics, genre, and/or author. The library catalog generates the call numbers for personally relevant books found in a search. If a student can find which books are most appropriate for the topic and can match

any given catalog number with the book on its shelf, that's what really matters. Learning the intricacies of Dewey's system no longer seems relevant, they argue.

Librarians in various settings continue to question whether the DDC system can ever sufficiently evolve for our modern-day needs and sensibilities. Despite the many changes made to the DDC system across its history (Fox, 2019; Sullivan, 2015), fundamental design flaws remain (Balas, 2021; Marrocolla, 2019; Olson, 2002). For example, Joseph (2021) notes how Black History is not catalogued with American History, and Women's Work is separate from Jobs. Academic librarian Hollie White (2018) observes how most sections in the 200s (Religion) concern aspects of Christianity (230-289). A non-Western religion does not appear until section 294 ("Religions of Indic Origin"). Considering how the DDC system is used in over 135 countries beyond the U.S., its heavily Euro-American organization by nature results in colonizing the knowledge base and values of the world's majority. "Crowding" all the world's non-Christian religions into a narrow cataloging space sends the message that all knowledge stems from only two sources—the "West and the Rest" (White, 2018). White's (2018) analyses of the Language (400s) and Literature (800s) sections showed a similar trend: European and American cultures predominate up until the near-end of each section (x90-x99). White calls for librarians to stop making micro-level changes to the DDC system in hope of forcing it to be more culturally inclusive and accurately representative of the world's knowledge. For White (2018) and others (Balas, 2021; Olson, 2022), only a macro-level overhaul of the DDC system can make it relevant for a global society.

Many librarians' issues with Dewey's system run even deeper, however—to the man himself. Dewey cofounded the American Library Association (ALA) in 1876. He served as its treasurer from 1876-1877, 1878-1879, and 1880-1881, and then as its president in

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1890-1891 and again in 1892-1893 (American Library Association [ALA], n.d.). During an ALA trip to Alaska in 1905 with ALA employees, well-known librarians, and library directors, Dewey exhibited inappropriate physical behaviors toward at least four women that resulted in his being shunned by the ALA in 1906 for most of the rest of his life. (Wiegand [1996] points out in his biography of Dewey that Dewey was invited to ALA's 50th anniversary celebration in 1926, however.) These harassing behaviors toward women were not unusual for Dewey nor did they cease after he was dismissed by the ALA, based on at least one account of him paying to settle a 1929 lawsuit by a former female employee out of court (Beck, 1996). Moreover, in 1905, while serving as the New York State Librarian, Dewey was rebuked by its regents for his role in creating a published policy of excluding Jews as well as other ethnic and racial minorities from the Lake Placid Club resort that he owned in upstate New York. This rebuke forced Dewey to resign his New York State Librarian post later in 1905 (Wiegand, 1996).

Despite these and other very public facts about his obnoxious behavior (Ford, 2018), after his death in 1931, Dewey was revered for his numerous innovative contributions to librarianship and for professionalizing the field. The ALA even named their annual medal recognizing an outstanding librarian's leadership for Dewey. In 2019, however, a resolution was passed at the ALA annual conference to change the name of that medal in view of Dewey's actual, flawed character. The text of the resolution summarizes the history of Dewey's abuse and bigotry; it then avers how "it does not represent the stated fundamental values of ALA in equity, diversity, and inclusion" (ALA, 2019). In 2020, the medal was officially renamed and awarded as the ALA Medal of Excellence. In October 2020, the *ALA Dewey Decibel* podcast, started in 2016, changed its name to *Call Number*. Even the ALA appears to be finding ways to "ditch Dewey."

## Dewey Alternatives

For well over a decade, increasing numbers of public and school librarians—main users of the DDC system—have been rethinking their allegiance to it and/or seeking alternatives (Balas, 2021; Redihan, 2021). For both types of librarians, they see value in organizing their collections as bookstores do—by readers' interests (Kaplan et al., 2012). Many elementary and high school librarians who "ditch Dewey" have been adopting the Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC) classification system (Redihan, 2021) used by booksellers (e.g., Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Walmart). BISAC, developed and maintained by the Book Industry Study Group (BISG) (n.d.), categorizes titles in a layered fashion. There are 53 basic, high-level subject codes (e.g., Cooking, Juvenile Fiction, Juvenile Nonfiction, History, Psychology, Reference). Within each code, there are subcategories (e.g., Juvenile Fiction, Activity Books: Coloring) for grouping titles on the shelves to aid in browsing as well as for ease in locating books. Book distributors and Web-based school library catalog companies (e.g., Follett, Mackin) also use BISAC codes, which librarians can access when reorganizing their collections to make them more reader-friendly. BISAC codes also are included in the above-mentioned LOC CIP code data that appear on book copyright pages.

Librarians who switched to using BISAC codes or another reader-driven approach (e.g., METIS; see Kaplan et al., 2013) in reorganizing their collections consistently rave about the positive effects of their efforts. More commonly referred to now as *genrefication*, the process of rethinking the collection without the Dewey framework naturally leads to first reflecting upon who the students are as learners, as well as how they use the library. Since the collection is now displayed with subject or topic headings, librarians find children spend more time browsing the shelves and pulling books to

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look through. Circulation rates typically increase (Rodgers, 2018; Witteveen, 2019), often dramatically, and remain higher over time. Because such an organizational overhaul also requires being familiar with each book in the collection, librarians wind up weeding titles that do not circulate or that have become irrelevant to ensure everything on the shelves will be used. The weeding process highlights gaps in the holdings, which engenders deep discussions about curriculum with teachers, administrators, and other relevant stakeholders. Schools that genrefy find their professional teams communicate and collaborate routinely since genrefied collections are inherently dynamic in their labeling and organization. Student input on collection organization and development also is a key element to successful genrefication to ensure developmental appropriateness (Kaplan et al., 2013).

## School Library Classification Systems in the Future

What is perhaps the most striking aspect of rethinking use of the DDC system in a school library is determining why it might be necessary to change. The educator teams we know who genrefied their libraries are always quick to say that it is easy to get caught up in focusing on which new terms to use for the category labels, or how to color code the subject areas, or what new library programming will be possible. They caution any school considering this shift to first be clear about your deeper why—Who benefits? How? They also emphasize the need for the decision to be made not only by the school’s administration or the librarian. This type of reorganization is a collaborative endeavor. There’s a lot of work involved in weeding, analyzing books to determine their appropriate shelf section placement, and monitoring the initial setup to ensure it is workable for students. The curriculum connections and implications are significant, too. The symbiotic relationship of classroom teachers and

librarians becomes even more obvious as you envision and plan your specific reorganization design.

Although enthusiasm for genrefying school libraries is growing, you will discover there are many educators who are not ready to “ditch Dewey” altogether (Sams, 2022). They argue that learning the Dewey system teaches children how to organize and classify information into digestible chunks. It also helps them learn how researchers do their work by asking broad questions and then narrowing their focus. Too, since most high schools and public libraries still use the DDC system, not learning how to navigate it while in elementary or high school could negatively affect students’ future learning success. Further, while the BISAC coding system is growing in library popularity, there is a need for more systematic research into its use with diverse reader populations of all ages (Martínez-Ávila et al., 2014).

As you and your colleagues work together to decide whether to genrefy your library, we hope you will consult the resources we include in the “Learn More, Do More” section as you explore options. We also hope you will reach out and share your learning journey with us.

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## Learn More, Do More

### OCLC

<https://www.oclc.org/en/home.html>

Though founded in 1967 as the Ohio College Library Center, the OCLC today is an international nonprofit cooperative representing millions of library and information specialists. OCLC's members are dedicated to ensuring consistency and reliability in how information is catalogued and shared around the world. You might be familiar with their work if your college or university library used the OCLC's WorldCat database, the leading (and largest) worldwide public access catalog. In addition to maintaining and updating the Dewey Decimal Catalog system, the OCLC conducts research and advocates for libraries and librarians as well as the right to literacy globally.

### 025.431: The Dewey Blog

<https://ddc.typepad.com>

Subtitled *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the Dewey Decimal Classification® System But Were Afraid to Ask . . .*, this blog by staff of the OCLC is where librarians head when they want to interrogate the DDC system. The blog's title is an "inside joke" for librarians: 025.431 is the cataloging number used for any books about the DDC system. What you will find here are entertaining and informative posts by librarians about both struggles and successes in updating or interpreting the DDC system's codes for today's readers.

## Picturebook Biography

*The Efficient, Inventive (Often Annoying) Melvil Dewey*. Alexis O'Neill, illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham (Calkins Creek, 2020).

We are including this picturebook biography (suitable for 2nd through 4th grades) for your

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consideration because of its balanced approach in describing Dewey and how he lived. O’Neill and Fotheringham colorfully capture what it must have felt like to be in Dewey’s orbit—being fascinated by his endless new ideas (e.g., simplifying the American English spelling system, inventing the vertical hanging file) and energy for bringing them to scale, yet shaking your head in dismay each time his character flaws caused great hurt to those he loved and knew.

## ***Blogs and Videos About Ditching Dewey/Genrefying (or Not)***

### ***METIS: School Library Cataloging***

<https://schoollibrarycataloging.weebly.com/metis.html>

### ***Are You Ready to Ditch the Dewey?***

<http://librarybookdiva.blogspot.com>

### ***Genrefying Reedy High School’s Library***

<https://www.reedylibrary.com/2021/12/03/genrefying-reedylibrary-part-2-nonfiction/?fbclid=IwAR1eP55KQgku4z1AWbSwveeRrDBPPGGBXMSpdRBELDDaALy-PDbrB7qI6bY>

### ***Ditching Dewey***

<https://dontyoushushme.com/2020/12/04/ditching-dewey-1-dear-dewey-its-not-me-its-you>

### ***Ditching Dewey: Choosing Genre Categories***

[www.mightylittlelibrarian.com/?p=1037](http://www.mightylittlelibrarian.com/?p=1037)

### ***Ditching the Dewey: Future Ready Schools***

<https://youtu.be/I8PexdJqr4o>

### ***Teaching Dewey***

[https://mrslibrarianish.com/?page\\_id=95](https://mrslibrarianish.com/?page_id=95)

### ***Why the Dewey System Is Still***

#### ***Relevant Today***

<https://ip.com/blog/dewey-decimal-system-still-relevant>

## **About the Authors**

Marie Ann Donovan is an associate professor of Education at DePaul University in Chicago. She teaches preservice teacher courses in reading instruction and children’s literature. Thwarted when young in pursuing a career in library science (due to severe dust allergies), she devotes time to hanging out with librarians, publishers, and children in pursuit of Their Next Good Read. She researches adult learning and prior learning assessment of practicing educators.

Mary Yockey is the director of the Library Media Center at Clifford Crone Middle School in Naperville/Indian Prairie School District 204. After enjoying a career in the publishing industry and as a bookseller, she shifted gears and earned her master’s degree in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She develops school, district, and community literature programs on global awareness, social justice issues, and discovering Your Next Good Read. She also leads a technology-rich program exploring STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) in the context of literacy and literature.



## IRC Awards & Grants

Are you interested in learning how to nominate individuals from your area for IRC awards or how to benefit from grant money that is available each year for various educational activities? To find out more about these IRC Awards and Grants, please visit the IRC website at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

**Barack Obama Library Award.** This award is a classroom library, valued at over \$1000, which was created in 2006 through a generous gift to the IRC from (then) Senator Obama. This collection is comprised of carefully selected literature that is “culturally relevant” for African-American readers and targets students in the middle-school (5th-8th) grade range. The award will go to a teacher in a predetermined IRC Region. Each year, the region will be announced on the IRC Website. Nominations are due by November 1st.

**Family Literacy Award.** This award recognizes an IRC member who promotes and supports parent involvement in children’s reading. Proposals should be postmarked by November 1st.

**Gene Cramer ICARE for Reading Award.** The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education recognizes an educator who has performed in an outstanding manner to show concern for the affective domain and who has performed lifelong reading habits among students. The Nomination Form is due by November 1st.

**Hall of Fame Award.** The IRC has designed the Hall of Fame to recognize significant contributions to reading or reading education. The award will be given at the annual conference. The immediate Past President shall receive the nomination forms and final determination will be made by the Executive Committee no later than 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting. Deadline: All Nomination Forms must be received by November 1st.

**International Grant.** The International Committee of the Illinois Reading Council has created a grant to promote literacy projects internationally. The maximum amount per grant is \$1,000. The application deadline is May 1st.

**IRC Service Award.** The IRC will present the IRC Service Award (formerly known as the Certificate of Recognition) at the annual statewide conference. Certificates are awarded to the most deserving individuals who meet the criteria listed. Deadline: All Nomination Forms must be received by November 1st.

**Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award.** This award recognizes outstanding teachers who make contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities. Application Form, letters of recommendation, and your philosophy statement are due by November 1st.

**Literacy Support Grant.** The Illinois Reading Council will award financial grants to local and special interest councils and individual council members for the purpose of promoting literacy development in the school and community, and/or providing professional development opportunities related to the improvement of reading and writing instruction. Application deadline will be May 1st.

**Prairie State Award for Excellence in Writing for Children.** This award recognizes an Illinois Children’s Young Adult Author whose body of work demonstrates excellence, engenders a love of literature, and embraces an important part of the mission of the Illinois Reading Council—to promote lifelong literacy. All Nomination Packets must be postmarked by June 15th.

**Static Stick Decal Design Contest.** Students in grades 4, 5, or 6 are encouraged to create an original design promoting reading. The winning design is printed on static stick decals. Entries must be postmarked no later than January 15th.

# Authors, Books, and Beyond

Christie Angleton

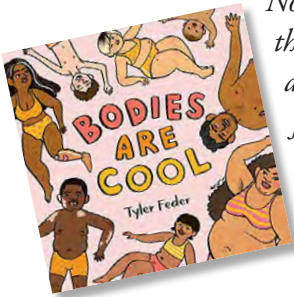
## About this Column

This column includes book explorations, author conversations, and everything in between with a critical lens.

## A Conversation with Tyler Feder

Tyler Feder is the author/illustrator of the picturebook *Bodies Are Cool* and the graphic memoir *Dancing at the Pity Party*. I spoke with Tyler about her writing, her artwork, and what she has coming up next.

**Christie Angleton (she/her/hers):** *Okay, so let me just get my fan-girling out of the way. I'm a big fan of your work! I've been following you on Instagram for many years. I'm an Early Childhood Literacy faculty member down at Illinois State in Normal—so not too far from you there in Chicago! My research is all around inclusive picturebooks for kiddos, and I've been in love with Bodies Are Cool since I first saw the cover. So I just had to talk with you! This is such a treat!*



**Tyler Feder:** That's so kind of you to say!

**CA:** *So let's start by talking about Bodies Are Cool. I use it in my teacher prep classes, and I have a 12-year-old human child living with me and just the other day I heard them say, "Oh, my body really is cool."*

**TF:** Oh gosh, that's so wonderful!



**Tyler Feder**

**CA:** *My students are big fans of the book. So tell me about the process of creating Bodies Are Cool. It's so awesome!*

**TF:** I come from an extremely diet-y family. Both of my sisters have had pretty severe disorders. My grandma had an eating disorder that she didn't really have a name for at the time. It was when she was a kid, but she never really ate normally, and my family and I were talking to her about her childhood one time, and she was talking about how she was very thin and her mom would tell her that she was ugly because at that time, being larger was preferred. And it doesn't matter what body type is preferred, it's still a problem. So, in the last several years, I've really gotten into body positivity and fat positivity and body liberation and all that stuff. And I can see how much it has improved my life as an adult, and how it could have changed my whole life as an adolescent and teenager. I mean, when I was like 5 years old, my parents would say, if you put a slice of cheese on your sandwich, it's adding a layer of fat. I don't blame them. That was the culture that they lived in.

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They only wanted us to not have difficulties. My mom was chubby when she was a kid, and she was teased for that. So I'm not upset with my parents. It's just that society is messed up. For this book specifically, I was remembering this moment with my dad when I was very little, probably like kindergarten or something, and I was in the basement with him, and he was doing his little workout routine that he made up. He was doing arm circles, that type of thing, and he was doing sit-ups, and he told me that he wanted his stomach to be hard. I didn't understand that as a kid. I was like, why wouldn't you want it to be soft? It's so nice to be soft. I like to lay my head on him when we are snuggling on the couch. And so with this book, I was thinking about that time when we're little, and bodies are just what they are. I thought, if we can just keep kids there, they'll grow up and, ideally, not hate themselves and also not be judgmental about other people that will lead to those people hating themselves. They will just make everyone better.

**CA:** *So, then, how did the book come to be?*

**TF:** I pitched this idea to the editor that I'd been working with for *Dancing at the Pity Party* [Tyler's graphic memoir], and she was into it. I just went for it. I just was like, let's show as many kinds of bodies as we can, and all of them happy, and all of them dressed equally cute (laughs). No one's singled out for anything.

**CA:** *I love that. It's just so empowering. It does make me want to ask you, have you gotten any pushback about the book? I know that's kind of a leading question (laughs)!*

**TF:** The feedback has been very split, but the split is like the majority is really nice and so meaningful to me. A lot of people are putting pictures and videos of their babies reading it. I mean, what more could you ask for? Especially after doing a book about my mom dying, where

all the mail I've gotten from readers has been these sad stories which I'm also very happy and feel lucky to receive. But it's just a nice bonus to get these cute, sweet stories. But then, you know, this is not a type of book that is easily digestible for every type of person. Primarily the negative pushback I've gotten has been from TERFs [trans exclusionary radical feminists: women who claim to be advocates for female empowerment but who exclude trans women from their advocacy] and all the obnoxious anti-trans people. There has been a little bit of, like, why are you showing kids it's okay to be fat? But I find that the majority of the anti-fat stuff is also coming from TERFs.

**CA:** *Let the record show that I am very visibly rolling my eyes (laughs).*

**TF:** When the book first came out, I was getting these comments on my Instagram, and I would try to respond. I was like, "If I say the right thing, maybe I can get them to change their minds." I mean, this is such an optimistic way of thinking! I was just like, this book isn't talking about sex. It's not talking about health. All it's talking about is that everyone is different, and we should treat people with empathy. I'm sure that everyone can agree that empathy is good, but it's just like talking to a wall with these people. It's like they just have their talking points that they're going to spout out. And so I just resorted to doing a lot of reporting and blocking, which sucks. But I would rather have those people not like me, I guess. I'm hoping people who were kind of in the middle about the book or body positivity, maybe I can push them to the good side. But it's hard when it's not doing what they want you to do.

**CA:** *Yeah. So, at the risk of sounding sort of ageist, I suppose, do you find it to be kind of generational because that's kind of been my experience when people are either pro or feel a little weird about it.*

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**TF:** You know, that's a good question. I think it's not always in a format where I can see how old someone is a lot of the time. It's people where their profile picture is a graphic or something, not their actual photo. But I do find that a lot of the TERFs come from the UK. It's a hotbed for anti-trans stuff.

**CA:** *I imagine so, with J.K. Rowling over there leading the charge.*

**TF:** Yes, but I think it's been like that long before her. I've talked to some friends there, and I think it's a big sentiment there. It's a lot different from the U.S., which is kind of surprising. I guess I think of the U.S. and the UK as being sort of similar, in general. I mean, I've never seen people so adamantly anti-trans as in the UK. Both men and women are just mad about it, trans folx, nonbinary people, fat people. It's a pain, and I wish I could just press a button and change all their minds. But ideally, I can just make the environment around them trans and body friendly, and they just have to deal with that (laughs).

**CA:** *One of the classes I teach is an early literacy and language class. It focuses on kiddos from birth to age 5, and one of the projects my students do is to put together literacy bags and send them home with kids. One of the students put together a bag about healthy bodies, and she included Bodies Are Cool. I was hoping she wouldn't have to deal with any negative feedback, and it was so funny because the parent pushback was because of the nudity (laughs)! I kept thinking, no one is nude in that book! There are a couple of babies without diapers, I guess. But they're babies. It reminded me of that story of Maurice Sendak's, In the Night Kitchen, where the main character is naked in part of the book; and librarians were using Wite-Out to draw little underpants on the kid!*

**TF:** Oh, my gosh, I didn't know that story (laughs)!

**CA:** *My student asked if she should give them diapers. I said, "No! We should be seeing everything as it was intended. All the bodies are cool!"*

**TF:** I have seen some people who are like, I love this book, but I did color over the babies on that page (laughs). There was actually a review from a teacher or librarian somewhere, [which] was a positive review, but they said some kids might get distracted by the naked baby, so they took a marker and drew a diaper in (laughs). It's fine with me. I'm not crusading for naked babies or anything! It is kind of funny to hear that.

**CA:** *Well, it's kind of nice, you know. This is what I love about books like this because conversations happen organically that you might not know how to start, or you might not even think to start. So, for me, with my student, we talked about how bodies are constantly sexualized in our society, and so we have this moral panic about a baby with no diaper or a mommy breastfeeding, or whatever. This is all a result of this sexualization that is normalized. And it was such a productive and important conversation that I don't know that we would have had otherwise. I mean, I have soapboxes galore (laughs), but I don't know that I would necessarily stand up in front of my classes and specifically say, "Let's talk about how everything is mega-sexualized in our culture!" But I think that's what good books do. They make us have conversations.*

**TF:** Yes! That's so true. And so kind of you to say.

**CA:** *From my experience, the response to the book has been on a kind of generational divide. Maybe people from my parents' generation or your parents' generation just don't get it, right? They don't really get what the book is trying to do. But kids think it's awesome. So let's just go with that (laughs)!*

**TF:** Yeah, when adults are like, I don't like this but my kids enjoy it. I'm just like, who cares? It's not for you. It's for the kids!

**CA:** *Exactly!*

**TF:** I've heard from some parents that they feel like the book gives kids a safe environment to stare. Because the book has all these different people who they might have seen only once or twice in real life, or maybe have never seen, and they can ask questions and look for a really long time, and there's no one there to be uncomfortable. So it gives kids practice before they see those people in real life.

**CA:** *That's such a cool thing to hear and something I hadn't really considered. Yeah, that's awesome! And I think it just contributes so much to just normalizing the kinds of bodies we aren't used to seeing in the media.*

**TF:** Yeah, that's kind of what we're up against. We need to normalize people with different body types and different abilities. The book just creates spaces for that. I think that's really powerful. That's why I don't want there to be any people on any page where it's like, that one person is the focus. It's just like, oh, here's a person in a power wheelchair. There's someone else who's not. And they're all just doing the same kinds of things. We're all doing the same kinds of things. We're all the same!

**CA:** *I really like that there's so much going on in each spread. You can really linger and spend time appreciating all the different things that are there. For me, I've found that I'm reading it aloud to a class, and I notice something new that I've missed before. And I have to stop, maybe mid-sentence, to think about it and look closely. But I think that's another hallmark of a really great book. You want to spend time with it, you want to linger and explore; a one-and-done situation isn't nearly enough. And that feels really good, it feels really*

*powerful and empowering to kids who look like this character or believe the same things as that character, or have a loved one who looks like this, or uses a wheelchair, or whatever it is. It's just really lovely. I can't stop gushing (laughs)!*

**TF:** I had a parent e-mail me and tell about how they took their kid to the airport, and it was really the kid's first big outing because of Covid, and the kid was so excited to see all the different people in the airport because of the book. The kid was like, look at all these bodies! And that's a big part of the reason I wanted the art to be so detailed. When I was pitching it to the publisher, I mentioned *Where's Waldo?* to help them get the idea. Obviously, my book's not that intense, but there are lots of things to look at. I remember before I could read, and even when I could read, I would still look at books just for the pictures quite a lot. I wanted this to be like that. I mean, the writing is important too, but I think of little kids who can't read yet, or even babies, they can still get a lot out of it just from looking at the pictures.

**CA:** *That's something I say to my students often because of the young age group we learn about. Kids aren't reading conventionally yet, but I try to help the students see that we're reading pictures all the time. You know, when I look at my phone, I don't need to decode the word Instagram to know what that icon means. We're constantly reading pictures, and it absolutely counts as reading. And so kids are reading images; they're reading pictures. But it's hard for adults to think that way because they can read printed text. And it's empowering to kids who might say, "Well, I can't read." Then we say, "Yes you can! You're reading the pictures! You're making meaning. You're reading!"*

**TF:** Wow, I really like that! Reading the pictures.

**CA:** *So let's talk about Pity Party.*

**TF:** Sure, yeah!



**CA:** *This book is really lovely. I've had it on my TBR basically since it came out, so I read it since I knew I'd be talking with you (laughs). It's so very lovely, and now I'm just going to try not to do all the things you say at the end of the book not to do (laughs).*

**TF:** No, no! You've done all the right things so far.

**CA:** *Whew, I'm glad! The book somehow manages to be joyful, I think, even though it is very sad. When I described it to my partner that way, they were like, "What?" I said, "Just read it, and you'll understand!" I know that sounds weird. I know that's a tricky way of describing it, but I couldn't think of anything better to say. It's very cathartic and just very beautiful and sad, but like in a good way, and joyful.*

**TF:** Yeah, I feel like a lot of media about death is sort of one-note. Sad. And that just wasn't my experience with losing my mom. I mean, obviously it was a lot of sad, but even the day she died, we laughed. We didn't laugh because she died, but there's always going to be weird little things that are funny or silly. And also, making a book about my mom, it can't be fully negative because there's so much joy in my experience of her as a person. I really wanted the audience to get to know her as a person in the beginning of the book. So, then, when she did die, it wouldn't just be a plot point, I guess. It would be a real experience of losing someone.

**CA:** *Yeah, it was like you were just introducing her at the beginning of the book, helping us get to know her. I was like, "Oh my gosh! I could be friends with her!" And you were like, "She's such a dork!" And I thought, "Oh no! Am I a dork?" And my kid was sitting right there and just said, "Yeah, you are" (laughs).*

**TF:** (laughs) Oh, I fully am [a dork] because of her. My dad was a cool kid growing up, and my mom was not. And I take after my mom (laughs).

**CA:** *I love that because there's somebody for everybody, you know?*

**TF:** That's right. Yeah, they were fully an opposites attract kind of thing. I was talking about them in therapy one time, just describing their personalities and stuff, and my therapist was like, "Oh, so your mom is a cat, and your dad is a dog." And I was like, "Yes!" No one's ever said it so succinctly before. That's exactly right.

**CA:** *Isn't it funny when you get those kinds of metaphors or those labels and you're like, "Oh, this is what I've been searching for, this description." I think that's something that's really moving about the book too. I hope this doesn't sound glib, but I appreciate that you acknowledge that sometimes you got irritated. I appreciate the candor of that—that it was sometimes annoying that your mom was sick and that you had to take care of her. Because I think sometimes it's a lot, you know. Things are hard. But, ultimately, being irritated doesn't change the way you feel about that person. It's very relatable.*

**TF:** Yeah. It's like you're irritated at the situation, not the person.

**CA:** *I think that's really powerful. Even if the situation is not the same, I can relate to the feeling. We need to see that more in literature, I think, because sometimes we don't know what we need to see about ourselves until we see it. I had several moments like that when I was reading. I found myself nodding right along. That's what makes books so powerful.*

**TF:** I totally feel the same way. I just recently read *The Dead Moms Club* by Kate Spencer. It's a memoir. It's not a graphic memoir, but

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it's one that came out before my book did. It came out when I was working on the book, and I wouldn't let myself read it while I was working on the book because I was really scared I might plagiarize it by accident because it would just be, like, in my head (laughs). So I finally read it, and it has a very similar vibe to my book. It was like, this is hard but it's also complicated and funny. It's so helpful to read about someone who's feeling something that you're feeling, even if the situation isn't exactly the same.

**CA:** *It's interesting thinking about how reading and writing are not that different in terms of processes. But, then, it is different when you're trying to do things, and how things hit you, and what you receive and what you put out into the world. It feels collective, you know?*

**TF:** Yes, absolutely.

**CA:** *So what's next for you? Anything in the works that you want to talk about?*

**TF:** Yeah, I just finished working on a book with my sister Cody. It's called *Are You Mad at Me?* It's about an ostrich named Opal, and she has anxiety. We don't talk about anxiety as a medical condition. In the book, we call it "the noodles" because when she gets anxious, her neck gets all noodly, and her family calls it the noodles, you know, affectionately. And so she has to go on this little journey where she is meeting lots of different animals, and she keeps thinking that they're mad at her because of different things that they do or say. But every time, it turns out there's an animal-related reason they are acting that way. So, like, she tries to say hi to her friend who's a cheetah, and the friend doesn't say hi back. It turns out it's just because she was running so fast that she couldn't see Opal. There's a bat who's nocturnal, so that's why he was grumpy. That kind of thing. My sisters and I are real bad people pleasers. We're all working on it. Cody and I,

in particular, both have anxiety. So this was like our way of trying to help really little kids who might feel the same way that we did. I mean, we have stories of how we were really anxious when we were in elementary school, and it's just as real now as it was then. It's just that the things we were anxious about were different, but the feeling is still the same. A big one was worrying that people were mad at us. So we're trying to show kids that it's not always the way we might think.

**CA:** *I'm thrilled for this! I'm so excited because I think we need more books about mental health for kids. But the problem is that a lot of them are really very didactic and very like, you know, a lot.*

**TF:** Yeah, this is just a story about animals. It's not about mental health in all caps, but that's technically what it's about.

**CA:** *Yeah, and kids feel that, right? They can sense that. And you know, in early childhood especially, I think social-emotional learning is just this very buzzy thing that everyone is supposed to be doing right now. But it's not always easy to know how to do that other than right in the moment. So, again, having books can be a jumping off point for these important conversations. It's easy to say we all feel noodly sometimes. I can't wait to read it! Do you have a publication date?*

**TF:** We just have a season right now, which is fall of next year, but as soon as I have an actual date, I will be shouting it from the rooftops!

**CA:** *I can't wait to tell my students! They'll be so excited. And they'll be so jealous that I'm even talking with you (laughs)!*

**TF:** That's so kind. I really appreciate everything nice that you said. This is so lovely.

**CA:** *Well, thank you so much for talking with me. It's been so delightful!*

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## About the Author

Christie Angleton is an assistant professor of Early Childhood Literacy Education in the School of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University. Her research focuses on critical literacy pedagogy in teacher preparation and diverse children's literature as a vehicle for social justice. She may be reached at [clangl1@ilstu.edu](mailto:clangl1@ilstu.edu).



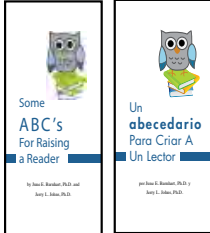
Brad Betz, "Girl on a Train"



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# ***Calls for Contributions for Future Issues of the Illinois Reading Council Journal***

The *Illinois Reading Council Journal* seeks manuscripts dealing with topics, issues, and events of interest to educators involved in literacy programs at all levels of education.

## **About The Review Process**

The complete review process takes approximately 10 to 16 weeks. Upon receipt of a manuscript, an initial review will be conducted and feedback sent to the author. Manuscripts accepted for peer review will be evaluated by at least two reviewers who are uninformed as to the identity of the author. The editor will compile notes from the reviewers and send feedback to the author, including whether the article has been accepted for publication and any requests for revision. Manuscripts are evaluated in terms of interest, quality of writing, appropriate documentation of ideas, uniqueness, and needs of the journal. Research articles should include a clear description of the methodology and should be written in a style that will be readable by classroom teachers. The final decision for acceptance of manuscripts resides with the editor. Please review articles in the journal before submitting manuscripts for consideration. Any questions about the submission process should be directed to Roxanne Owens, *IRCJ* Editor, by e-mail at [ircjournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:ircjournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

## **Short Submissions**

For each issue, short items such as original poems, cartoons, artwork, or personal anecdotes may appear throughout the journal. Such submissions should be one-half page to one page in length, double-spaced, and word-processed. Front and back cover art is also accepted. The editor selects these items.

If you have questions about the submission process, please e-mail Roxanne Owens, *IRCJ* Editor, at [IRCJournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:IRCJournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

## ***IRCJ* Submission Guidelines**

Article submissions should be eight to 25 double-spaced pages, including references. Please prepare and submit your manuscript consistent with the following guidelines.

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- *File Type:* Save the manuscript as a MS *Word* document .doc or docx. (MS *Word* is used to provide in-text comments and revisions, so please do not submit pdf., .pages or .rtf.)
- *File Name:* This should conform to the following format:  
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Additional questions can be sent to

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b. \_\_\_\_ no

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- d. \_\_\_\_ assessment
- e. \_\_\_\_ children's literature
- f. \_\_\_\_ comprehension
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- j. \_\_\_\_ multilingual/multicultural
- k. \_\_\_\_ newspapers in education
- l. \_\_\_\_ parents and reading
- m. \_\_\_\_ reading for gifted students
- n. \_\_\_\_ research
- o. \_\_\_\_ study skills
- p. \_\_\_\_ teacher education
- q. \_\_\_\_ technology in reading
- r. \_\_\_\_ Title I/remedial reading
- s. \_\_\_\_ young adult literature
- t. \_\_\_\_ young authors/writing

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- c. \_\_\_\_ 40-54
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- c. \_\_\_\_ 15-29
- d. \_\_\_\_ 30 and over

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The annual membership of \$45 includes membership in the Illinois Reading Council **and** a local or special interest council. The annual preservice teacher membership is \$25 for one who has not been certified in the teaching profession and is working toward an initial teaching certificate. Please select the council(s) you wish to join from the list below. Residence in any of the designated council counties you join is not required. If you join more than one local or special interest council at this time, each additional council is \$15. Preservice teachers pay \$5 for each additional council. IRC Membership comes with online access to the webinars, book clubs, *IRC Journal*, and more. The *IRC Journal* and other membership benefits will also be sent by email to you. If you wish to purchase a print journal, it is an additional \$20 per year. Follow the steps on the front of this form.

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<p>___ <b>Northern Illinois Reading Council</b> - (Boone, DeKalb, Winnebago, Eastern Lee &amp; Ogle)</p> <p>___ <b>Northwestern Illinois Reading Council</b> - (Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll)</p> <p>___ <b>Sauk Valley Reading Council</b> - (Eastern Whiteside &amp; Henry, Western Lee, Ogle, &amp; Bureau)</p> <p>___ <b>Starved Rock Reading Council</b> - (LaSalle, Grundy, Kendall, Livingston, Eastern Bureau)</p>	<p>___ <b>Black Hawk Reading Council</b> - (Rock Island, Mercer, Western Henry &amp; Whiteside)</p> <p>___ <b>Illinois Valley Reading Council</b> - (Stark, Putnam, Marshall, Peoria, Woodford, Tazewell, Eastern Fulton, Mason)</p> <p>___ <b>Mississippi Valley Reading Council</b> - (Adams, Brown, Pike, Scott, Greene, Calhoun)</p> <p>___ <b>Western Illinois Reading Council</b> - (Henderson, Warren, Knox, McDonough, Hancock, Schuyler, Western Fulton)</p>	<p>___ <b>East Central-EIU Reading Council</b> - (Moultrie, Shelby, Cumberland, Coles, Clark, Edgar, Douglas)</p> <p>___ <b>Illini Reading Council</b> - (Champaign, Piatt, Southern Ford)</p> <p>___ <b>Vermilion Valley Reading Council</b> - (Vermilion)</p>
REGION 2	REGION 5	REGION 8
<p>___ <b>Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA)</b> - (Chicago Area - Cook County within the Chicago city limits)</p> <p>___ <b>Lake Area Reading Council</b> - (Western Lake, McHenry, Northwestern Cook)</p> <p>___ <b>Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA)</b> - (Eastern Lake, Northern Cook)</p>	<p>___ <b>South Suburban Reading Council</b> - (Those parts of Cook Co. bounded on west by Will-Cook Rd., north by 115th St., and/or Chicago City limits)</p> <p>___ <b>Two Rivers Reading Council</b> - (Kankakee, Iroquois, Northern Ford)</p> <p>___ <b>Will County Reading Council</b> - (Will)</p>	<p>___ <b>Lewis and Clark Reading Council</b> - (Macoupin, Jersey, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, Washington, Clinton)</p> <p>___ <b>National Road Reading Council</b> - (Bond, Effingham, Fayette, Marion)</p>
REGION 3	REGION 6	REGION 9
<p>___ <b>Fox Valley Reading Council</b> - (Kane)</p> <p>___ <b>Prairie Area Reading Council</b> - (Western DuPage County)</p> <p>___ <b>West Suburban Reading Council</b> - (DuPage County east of Route 83 and those parts of Cook County west of Austin Boulevard excluding all areas within the Chicago city limits)</p>	<p>___ <b>Central Illinois Reading Council</b> - (Logan, Menard, Cass, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Montgomery)</p> <p>___ <b>Macon County Reading Council</b> - (Macon)</p> <p>___ <b>MID-State Reading Council</b> - (McLean, DeWitt)</p>	<p>___ <b>South Eastern Reading Council</b> - (Lawrence, Richland, Crawford, Jasper, Edwards, Clay, Wabash, Wayne, White)</p> <p>___ <b>Southern Illinois Reading Council</b> - (Jefferson, Randolph, Perry, Franklin, Williamson, Saline, Gallatin, Union, Johnson, Pope, Alexander, Hardin, Pulaski, Massac, Jackson, Hamilton)</p>
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		<p>___ <b>CIRP</b> - (College Instructors of Reading Professionals)</p> <p>___ <b>ICARE</b> - (Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education)</p> <p>___ <b>ILLC</b> - (Illinois Language and Literacy Council)</p> <p>___ <b>ITA</b> - (Illinois Title I Association)</p> <p>___ <b>SRL</b> - (Secondary Reading League)</p>

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