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Chapter 06: The Reading Wars

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THE INSIDE, OUTSIDE, AND UPSIDE DOWNS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

From Poets and Pop-ups to
Princesses and Porridge

Jenifer Jasinski Schneider, Ph.D.

The Inside, Outside, and Upside Downs of Children's Literature: From Poets and Pop-ups to Princesses and Porridge

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HOT TOPICS AND CURIOUS QUANDARIES

SECTION 2

CHAPTER 06

THE READING WARS

(CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND THE INTERVENING EFFECTS OF SCHOOL AND POLITICS)

A child's literacy development and literary interests are interconnected. One doesn't precede the other; they work in tandem. In other words, children don't learn to read and then choose interesting books as a result; they learn to read because they have the right books and someone to guide and encourage them. Good reading begets reading. Sure, a child can learn some of the components of reading by completing worksheets and playing with phonics apps, but how do you define reading?

I can learn aspects of playing Cricket by watching YouTube videos and taking a vocabulary test on Cricket terms. But am I playing Cricket? If I swing the bat and toss the ball to myself in my living room, I might learn Cricket skills, but am I playing Cricket? I can only learn to play Cricket by playing the game—the real game. Yes, I need to learn skills and strategies for fielding and batting, but none of those are worthwhile if I don't feel like I'm getting better at Cricket. It's all about the game. Therefore, my development as a player is interconnected with my opportunities to play and my increasing acquisition of skills and strategies that motivate me to practice and succeed.

I can only learn to play Cricket by playing the game—the real game.

Just like with anything in life, the more one practices, the better one gets, especially with better coaching and training. More importantly, one must be motivated to perform and motivation comes from feelings of success, enjoyment, and accomplishment. The same is true for reading.

Motivation is a key factor in reading. Watch this video about a child who loved to read so much he used junk mail to practice reading (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/boy-asks-mailman-junk-mail-books-read_55b6b002e4b0224d88338ba4)

As revealed in the previous chapter, a child's literacy experiences at home can have a tremendous impact on the child's developmental and academic trajectory. Children can come to school with thousands of hours of literacy experiences or with very few. Children from high-poverty homes, where there is little food, inconsistent healthcare, and inadequate shelter, rarely have parents with the time and resources to provide thousands of hours of literacy experiences. This is one way poverty negatively impacts literacy rates. Similarly, children from affluent homes can come to school with extensive screen time, but they may have had very few hours of quality interactions around books. Fostering reading is a matter of time, attention, books, and knowing what to do.

I want to be perfectly clear—poor parents love their children. Poverty affects the amount of time, attention, and resources parents can devote to visits to the library, reading for pleasure, and monitoring literacy development. The effects of poverty have nothing to do with love, care, and concern. Affluent parents also love their children, but many people incorrectly assume that a reading app on a smartphone can replace lap time. It can't.

According to the International Reading Association (2005):

Based on the best research evidence, access to appropriate, high-quality early language and literacy experiences will enhance young children's development. The preschool curriculum, therefore, should emphasize a wide range of language and literacy experiences including, but not limited to, story reading, dramatic play, storytelling, and retelling.

School is important, and after 100+ years of systematic research, the field of literacy studies knows a lot about reading instruction and the role of children's literature. However, along the way, politics, funding, and the court of public opinion have had a tremendous impact on reading as well.

Good reading experiences beget good reading, but there are some kids who won't like to read no matter what you do. For those kids, read to them. It's better for a child to hear reading than to experience no reading at all.

In the following sections, I provide a quick review of some of the trends in reading instruction over the last 50 years. Why? Because the way in which your adult relatives were taught to read impacted the ways in which they shared books with you. The ways in which you were taught to read at home and school impacted your perceptions of reading and your exposure to books throughout your lifetime. And your experiences with books will impact your interactions with the next generation.

Beliefs and practices are inherited within families and further shaped by cultural expectations and social practices. School, as the ultimate shape-shifter, becomes an intervening factor.

What year were you born? As you read this section, place yourself and your parents/guardians in the context of the reading instruction they received and think about how you were taught to read at home and at school.

The Reading Wars

Although the field of reading has amassed a strong body of research about the reading process and the effects of instructional strategies, there is no single path to reading achievement and no single instructional approach to get there. As a result, researchers study approach reading from different theoretical orientations, resulting in different views about the impact of the cognitive, social, physical, emotional, cultural, and text-based components of reading. The result—the reading wars—a time when researchers duked it out over books, words, letters and sounds.

The Reading Wars

Reading Readiness and Phonics

Prior to the 1970s, most “reading” instruction occurred in the primary grades. Getting “ready” to read was the reading method of choice as young children were first taught the alphabet (Figure 6.1), then phonics, followed by sight words, phrases, and controlled sentences (Singer, 1970).

Figure 6.1

If you were in school in the 60s or 70s, you may have met Mister M with the munching mouth. The Letter People represent a systematic approach to teaching the alphabet letter names and corresponding sounds. A brief history of The Letter People is available at <http://www.retrojunk.com/article/show/1448/the-letter-people>.

There is nothing wrong with teaching the alphabet and phonics. In fact, they are necessary for solving unknown words. However, teaching the isolated parts before kids get the big picture of the whole book inhibits many kids from understanding how reading makes sense. Plus, learning to read doesn't work in isolated, sequential steps.

Beginning reading instruction in the United States varies along an historically related methodological continuum from emphasis upon decoding print to speech at one end of the continuum to stress upon meaning at the other end of the continuum. The methods involved in this continuum can be categorized into one or the other of the two major classes of learning theories, stimulus-response and cognitive or field theory models (Singer, 1970, p. 25).

A massive investigation of reading programs (Bond & Dykstra, 1967), often referred to as the First-Grade Reading Studies, led to a number of reports and projected paths for classroom practice based on stimulus-response or field theory reading models. Specifically, Bond and Dykstra identified five categories of instructional methods used across the 27 first-grade studies.

- **Conventional basal readers:** Popularized by William S. Gray, basal reading programs used individual student reading books, workbooks, and assessments. The readers were leveled based on increasing complexity of controlled vocabulary (Figure 6.2). Teachers often used flash cards and the look/say method to help students remember whole words (Figure 6.3);

Figure 6.2

Teachers used basal readers, workbook pages, and assessments to teach reading. My elementary school used the Holt Reading Series, and I specifically remember feeling happy when I moved through different levels. *People Need People* by Eldonna L. Everetts, 1973, Holt Basic Reading System Level 9, New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Copyright 1973 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Figure 6.3

Flash cards were a prevalent instructional material for teachers who used basal readers. Image retrieved from https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0817/7493/files/blog_vintage-flashcards.jpg?2371429416518442553.

- **Phonics-emphasis instructional systems:** Phonics methods focused on matching the letters of the alphabet with specific sounds. According to Bond and Dykstra (1967),

Phonics can be further classified as either synthetic or analytic. The synthetic method is based upon the belief that the child should be taught certain letter-sound relationships of word elements before beginning to read and then be taught to synthesize word elements learned into whole words...The analytic method is based upon the belief that children should be taught whole words and then, through various analytic techniques, be taught to apply letter combinations learned in familiar words to sounding out new words (p. 14).

Phonics-emphasis methods could include “a formidable program of drill on the sounds of letters and letter combinations organized into some kind of ‘system’ of phonics which was introduced at the beginning of instruction in reading, and usually continued through several elementary school grades” (Gates, 1961, p. 248). Phonics drill-type methods included the Carden method (1949) or the Hay-Wingo method (1954) (Figure 6.4). Less formal word analysis methods were also used.

- **Language Experience Approaches:** In the Language Experience Approach, teachers replaced published texts and controlled-vocabulary passages with their own reading materials that were created through collaborative writing and group dictation. These texts, which were composed in the classroom, were believed to be more motivating because they reflected the students’ interests and experiences. The texts were written using the children’s oral language levels; therefore, the children should be able to read the texts they wrote and they should be able to develop individualized sight vocabulary. It was expected that the children would learn about letters, syllables, and words through spelling and writing activities (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.4

Reading with Phonics by Julie Hay and Charles Wingo was a reading series using phonics lessons. The teacher’s edition included directions for teaching single sounds, blending, recognizing digraphs, diphthongs, and silent letters, and word lists for practice. Excerpt from *Reading with Phonics* by Julie Hay and Charles Wingo, 1954, Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott. Copyright 1954 by Julie Hay and Charles Wingo.

Figure 6.5

The Language Experience Approach was based on the development of student-created texts with the intention of helping students learn to read the words they knew and used. The method is described in *The Language Experience Approach to Reading* by Denise D. Nessel and Margaret B. Jones, 1981, New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Photo copyright 2009 by Jenifer Schneider. Click here to see other examples of the method (http://edp1f2012.blogspot.com/2012_03_01_archive.html).

- **Linguistic materials:** The role of grammar came into play as many educators promoted the relationship between reading, oral language, and the structure of sentences. In linguistic methods, lessons could include word recognition activities based on phoneme-grapheme analysis, writing tasks, and structural pattern analysis of reading passages (Figure 6.6).
- **i.t.a.:** Initial teaching alphabet materials were based on a special alphabet consisting of 44 characters representing the basic sound units of spoken English. Lower case letters were used to reduce the number of characters students needed to remember. The i.t.a. was used with the whole-word method, phonics methods, or language experience methods (Figure 6.7).

Based on the analysis of the First-Grade Studies, Dykstra (1968) concluded that early phonics instruction is highly related to early success in word recognition and spelling achievement. He stated, “there is some indication that the method by which phonics is taught may not be as important as the fact that direct attention is given to helping the pupil learn sound-symbol relationships” (p. 8). In addition, Dykstra stated that children needed to be taught the letters of the alphabet, and he claimed that reading materials needed some control of vocabulary in relation to sound-symbol correspondence. Interestingly, all of the focus on phonics did not translate into comprehension success; therefore, Dykstra stated that direct instruction in comprehension was essential as well.

Figure 6.6

Linguistic methods included a focus on grammar and the structure of language. Excerpt from *Patterns and Spelling in Writing* by Morton Botel, Cora Holsclaw, and Aileen Brothers, 1964, Chicago, IL: Follett Publishing Company. Copyright 1964 by Morton Botel, Cora Holsclaw, and Aileen Brothers.

Figure 6.7

A basic chart of the Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.). The i.t.a. included Roman and Latin characters and it was a semi-phonetic orthography of English mainly intended to make learning to read easier.

The First-Grade Studies were so important in the history of literacy research that John Readance and Diane Barone, editors of *Reading Research Quarterly*, reprinted The First-Grade Studies in 1997. As editors, they also invited retrospectives from Lyn Searfoss and P. David Pearson who are two influential researchers who were involved with the studies as doctoral students. Arlette Willis and Violet Harris were asked to provide their reflections on the First-Grade Studies and to specifically comment on the missing attention to marginalized students.

During this time, basal readers and phonics programs were widely used (Figure 6.8). In many schools, children were discouraged from reading whole books until component skills were mastered (Bissett, 1969). Teachers used basal readers that included stories with predictable vocabulary and formulaic plots. They also used leveled reading kits (SRA kits) with controlled reading passages and corresponding quizzes (Figure 6.9). Reading was broken into its component parts and children had to put the pieces together through workbook pages, oral language recitation, and leveled readers.

Reading to Learn

Once children entered the intermediate and middle grades, they were expected to already know “how to read” and instruction focused on processing content or “reading to learn.” In the intermediate grades, reading instruction focused on disciplinary information or content-area reading strategies such as pre-reading, using graphic organizers, and other techniques to help students read textbooks (Moore, Readence, & Rickelman, 1983; Smith & Feathers, 1983; Tierney, 1985).

When students entered high-school they moved into content-area courses and they were no longer “taught” to read. In fact, subject-area teachers resisted the idea that they should teach reading (Dupuis, Askov, & Lee, 1979; Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann, Dishner, 1985). Literature was for the library. Nonfiction picturebooks were practically non-existent in middle and high schools. Literature instruction was the work of English teachers but the materials were narrowly focused and often racist (Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.8

Mrs. Miles (in green) taught me to read in the first grade using reading groups, workbook pages, and SRA kits. She also sang to us, recited poetry every morning and afternoon, taught us how to make Rice Krispy treats, and she took us out to play.

Figure 6.9

The SRA Reading Laboratory kits were used extensively in schools. The materials included tests and color-coded levels. I remember working through the books and levels on my own. Image from <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/87/a7/aa/87a7aadf278dba630ddc441a1e226442.jpg>.

Figure 6.10

Literature collections and reading materials were limited in their representation of writers from different races, ethnicities, and genders. *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (3rd Ed.), 1975, New York, NY: Norton & Co. Copyright 1975 Norton & Co.

Don't you read differently depending on whether you are reading a novel vs. a science textbook vs. a global studies textbook? Of course you do. That's why disciplinary literacies are taught.

In fact, the NCTE was compelled to create a Task Force on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English that developed criteria for teaching materials in reading and literature (NCTE, 1970)

Specifically, educational materials now suffer from the following crucial deficiencies: (1) inadequate representation of literary works by members of non-white minorities in general anthologies, (2) representation of minority groups which is demeaning, insensitive, or unflattering to the culture, (3) inclusion of only popular and proven works by a limited number of "acceptable" writers, (4) biased commentaries which gloss over or flatly ignore the oppression suffered by non-white minority persons, and (5) other commentaries in anthologies which depict inaccurately the influence of non-white minority persons on literary, cultural, and historical developments in America. It is recommended that: (1) Literature anthologies commit themselves to fair and balanced inclusion of the work of non-white minority group members; (2) Illustrations and photographs present as accurate and balanced a picture of non-white minorities and their environments as is possible in the total context of the educational materials; (3) Dialect be appropriate to the setting and characters; and (4) Literary criticism draw as heavily as possible from the critical writers of non-white minorities.

NCTE's stand on the content of reading materials marked a shift in the recognition that reading instruction had to account for the reader's interests and life experiences.

Do you think these issues are from long ago? Think again. Look at these reading books, which were purchased by a school district in 2015 (Figure 6.11). Read the full story (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/09/11/lazy-lucy-and-other-painfully-offensive-racial-stereotypes-lead-a-school-district-to-recall-books/>).

Figure 6.11

Racist literature still exists. *An African Fable* by Reading Horizons Staff, 2012, North Salt Lake, Utah: Reading Horizons. Copyright 2012 by Reading Horizons.

Students with Learning Disabilities

For students with learning disabilities, reading instruction was frustrating and often inappropriate. In 1970, a special issue of *The Reading Teacher* focused on students with learning challenges but the contributors viewed the students as deficient with clinical pathologies. One contributor discussed children with “neurotic” factors, such as aggression and hostility, as the cause of reading failure (Abrams, 1970). She also described brain-damaged children as “hyperdistractable” with “severe deficiencies in both perceptual and conceptual skills” (Abrams, 1970, p. 300). Another contributor described children with dyslexia as ‘retarded readers’ as she suggested therapy groups in combination with reading groups (Edelstein, 1970). During this time period, students with learning disabilities were often considered to have “modality deficiencies, cognitive deficits, aptitude weaknesses, and varied verbal performance abilities,” requiring teachers and psychologists to use multiple forms of diagnostic assessment to determine the “ultimate truths about retarded readers” (Reed, 1970, p. 393).

If a child was treated as deficient, imagine the subsequent impact on school performance and self-perception. Since this time, researchers and educators have learned to look for assets and strengths, rather than deficits.

From Emergence to Adolescence

The practices of “reading readiness” were expanded in the 1980s when emergent literacy researchers recognized the contextual nature of reading as they observed children interact with books in classrooms rather than in controlled studies in a lab (Clay, 1972; Goodman, 1978). Researchers identified how children developed concepts about print (Clay, 1989) and literacy knowledge (e.g. Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Researchers recognized children’s reading mistakes as strategic indicators rather than random errors; and they gained insight into the child’s reading process by analyzing the miscues (Goodman, 1969; Goodman & Goodman, 1978) (Figure 6.12), conducting running records (Figure 6.13), and providing “diagnosis and early intervention” (Clay, 1985).

Note the shift in language from getting “ready” to read (learning the parts before the whole) toward the emergence or evolution of reading over time.

Marie Clay studied how children developed concepts about print and her materials helped teachers understand what children know and do while they read (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKo2cLjZMU>).

Researchers also developed theories of comprehension (Guthrie, 1980) that focused on the reader’s mental imagery and meaning-making strategies (Anderson & Pearson, 1984) as well as the relationship between reading and writing (Tierney & Pearson, 1983). The focus on comprehension moved teachers’ instruction beyond a narrow application of phonics lessons and precise word reading (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) and toward a focus on reader response (Beach, 1983). Researchers also documented the importance of parent interactions and family literacy events at home (Taylor, 1983).

There are many important scholarly contributions during this time period. For an excellent historical review of reading research over time, I suggest reading the many iterations of the *Handbook of Reading Research*:

Pearson, P. D., Barr, R., & Kamil, M. L. (1984). *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 1). London, England: Psychology Press.

Barr, R., Pearson, P. D., Kamil, M. L., & Mosenthal, P. B. (1996). *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 2). London, England: Psychology Press.

Kamil, M.L., Mosenthal, P.B., Pearson, P.D. & Barr, R. (2000). *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3). London, England: Psychology Press.

Kamil, M. L., Pearson, P. D., Moje, E. B., & Afflerbach, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 4). London, England: Routledge.

Simultaneous to a focus on the needs of the young child, reading researchers also directed attention to the different needs of intermediate and middle-grades readers (Atwell, 1987; Taylor & Frye, 1992), adolescent readers (Alvermann, 1987; Hynds, 1985), and adults (Gambrell & Heathington, 1981; Rasinski, 1989). Calling for teachers to learn from the students and to acknowledge the wealth of personal experiences readers bring into the classroom, researchers explored reading preferences (Fisher & Natarella, 1982; Terry, 1974) and students' personal responses to literature (e.g., Weaver, 1990). Researchers also investigated effective reading strategies for comprehending text (e.g., thematic organizers, prereading strategies) and for thinking about thinking (metacognition) (Alvarez & Risko, 1988; Olshavsky, 1976; Paris, Cross, & Lipson, 1984).

Whole Language

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Whole Language Movement (<http://www.ncte.org/wlu/beliefs>) gained momentum alongside a surge from children's literature advocates, redirecting the focus of reading instruction toward the *construction of meaning* rather than the breakdown and analysis of the alphabetic code and corresponding phonics instruction.

Children and youth began to read real literature (complete texts, not excerpts) in school. They read literature under the guidance of their teachers during small group reading instruction (Cullinan, 1987) (Figure 6.14) as well as during whole class explorations of genres, themes, and selected books [Huck, 1992 (Figure 6.15); Norton, 1992]. Whole language teachers repeatedly read big books and word charts to help students learn words and language structures (Martinez & Roser, 1985) (Figure 6.16). Researchers called for students to engage in leisure reading and to read widely (Krashen, 1993).

Borrowing from traditions in the library, K-12 teachers used book clubs to motivate reading and foster discussion (Eeds & Wells, 1989; Raphael & McMahon, 1994). Teachers focused on authors and illustrators by helping their students critically analyze texts and identify the author's values and underlying messages, as well as the voices that are not present in a text (Harris, 1992; Martinez & Teale, 1993; Short, 1995). In other words, the use of literature and the promotion of aesthetic reading, writing, and art-making were goals of many teachers from Kindergarten through high school (Applebee, 1993; Dutro & McIver, 2011).

During the 1980s and 1990s, thematic units were commonly used to integrate the curriculum and support the use of nonfiction texts in the content-areas (Lipson, Valencia, Wixson & Peters, 1993; Pappas, 1990). Teachers found information books to teach science, math, and social studies and they taught reading and writing in the service of disciplinary goals.

Figure 6.14

Literacy experts, such as Bernice Cullinan, helped teachers understand how to use real books to teach reading. Her book, which has successive editions, includes chapter contributions from leading literacy researchers. *Children's Literature in the Reading Program*, by Bernice Cullinan, 1987, Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Figure 6.15

Charlotte Huck and Doris Young Kuhn, first published their comprehensive overview of children's literature in 1961. They helped teachers find a place for children's literature across the curriculum, providing book suggestions and genre overviews. Although Charlotte Huck passed away, iterations of her book continue by her co-author, Barbara Kiefer. *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* by Charlotte S. Huck and Doris Young Kuhn, 1968, New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Figure 6.16

Whole language instruction prioritizes book reading and writing activities that have relevance to children's lives. Teachers use big books and charts for whole class instruction. Teachers reread texts frequently, helping children remember the words they read. Image retrieved from http://www.tunstallsteachingtidbits.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/IMG_4295.jpg.

Teachers also selected children's literature and elicited personal responses in connection to integrated explorations of disciplinary content.

Oftentimes, teachers focused on whole reading practices such as reading aloud, sustained silent reading, and building a love of reading at school and at home (e.g. Goodman, 1986) without attending to word study instruction or understanding the importance of students reading text accurately and within their instructional levels (reading between 90-94% accuracy). In doing so, many teachers moved away from systematic phonics instruction, word study, and comprehension strategies, allowing students to memorize texts without learning reading strategies. In other words, many teachers were too global in their approach, and the students who needed more explicit instruction in how written language works could not decipher the relevant strategies to develop as readers.

These issues (skill and drill vs. holistic approaches) were the basis of the reading wars (Chall, 1967; Goodman, 1969).

In contrast to my “anything goes” approach to the books people choose to read, when it comes to teaching reading, the text really matters. So does the instruction.

Second Language Learners

Within the years of the reading wars, a series of lawsuits regarding the education of language minority students was shaping public policy and classroom practice (Figure 6.17). Court rulings across the US mandated that schools

must provide instruction in English for students who spoke other languages because they were not yet proficient in English, and because they needed fluency in English to succeed in classrooms. In addition, courts ruled that schools must teach English Language Learners (ELL) the same academic content as their English proficient peers (Wright, 2010). Teaching reading to second language learners required extensive professional development and changes in teacher education across the US. What strategies did ELL students need to learn? What books would they read?

Figure 6.17

Remember Sylvia Mendez? *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh, 2014, New York, NY: Abrams. Copyright 2014 by Duncan Tonatiuh.

Balanced Literacy Solutions

An outcome of the reading wars was the purposeful selection of effective methods from phonics research coupled with best practices from whole language research to form a balanced approach. In other words, teachers needed to approach reading instruction with the global understanding of when, why, and how to teach different types of reading skills while understanding social and cultural factors involved in motivating and engaging readers (e.g., Stanovich, 1990). Proponents of balanced approaches recommended authentic reading and writing activities across the curriculum, and they recognized reading as a balance of skills and strategies across cueing systems (meaning, structure, visual).

Balanced literacy is a combination of activities that include language and word study as well as reading and writing for communicative purposes. For an overview of balanced literacy, read this brochure from the Ohio State University Literacy Collaborative (<http://www.lcosu.org/training/LCbrochure.pdf>).

Teachers were taught to assess students' reading abilities using miscue analysis and running records and then to select texts that were at the students' instructional levels (90-94% accuracy). By doing so, the text would not frustrate the reader, but the text was challenging enough to allow the teacher to teach the necessary skills or strategies (Pinnell, Lyons, Deford, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994). This means that teachers needed access to texts that were specifically created to increase in difficulty across levels of vocabulary, grammar, and content.

Leveled books, such as those that use Lexiles or grade level equivalents, are important materials for reading instruction. Leveled books are not, however, the best materials for reading aloud, parent/child reading, or reading for pleasure. Children need to read real children's literature on their own and with adults. They need to read books that interest them whether those are too easy, too hard, or just right. The controlled, leveled texts are for teaching.

By focusing on individual needs and students' strengths, teachers could provide differentiated instruction based on assessment data. This approach allowed teachers to address the needs of all students including second language learners as well as those students with reading disabilities.

Teachers provided explicit instruction in fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development while phonemic awareness and phonics instruction were taught as students engaged in reading and writing. Teachers also engaged in word study and the systematic exploration of word families. Literacy instruction followed a “gradual release of responsibility” model in which teachers moved from demonstration and explicit teaching to guided practice and independent problem solving (Campione, 1981; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Teachers also used a combination of leveled, specially-designed texts along with authentic children’s and young adult literature.

This is a completely different topic for another type of textbook, but students learn a lot about phonics and how language works when they write. During the ‘reading readiness’ years, students were not encouraged to write until they knew how to read. Just like baby reading is the beginning of “real” reading, scribbling is the beginning of writing.

The US Government Attempts to Settle the Reading Wars

In the late 1990s, the field of literacy studies and the use of children’s literature was drastically altered when Congress asked the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to work with the Department of Education to create a coalition of researchers to study reading instruction. The National Reading Panel reviewed published research dated from 1966 through 1999 to make determinations about reading instruction.

The Five Pillars of Reading

The National Reading Panel (NRP) (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) concluded that a combination of techniques is effective for teaching students to read. The following bulleted points highlight their major findings and are directly quoted from the NRP report (<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/research/supported/Pages/nrp.aspx>).

- **Phonemic awareness**—the knowledge that spoken words can be broken apart into smaller segments of sound known as phonemes. Children who are read to at home—especially material that rhymes—often develop the basis of phonemic awareness. Children who are not read to will probably need to be taught that words can be broken apart into smaller sounds.

Here’s where the importance of the library becomes clear. Families need access to books in the home. Support at home is also connected to a parent’s literacy level and ability to discuss language concepts with children.

- **Phonics**—the knowledge that letters of the alphabet represent phonemes, and that these sounds are blended together to form written words. Readers who are skilled in phonics can sound out words they haven't seen before, without first having to memorize them.

I think many people approach reading as a process of “sounding it out.” If sounding it out always works so well, what do you do with words like “the”? There is more to reading than sounding out. That’s what babies and toddlers learn when someone reads to them—they learn the big picture.

- **Fluency**—the ability to recognize words easily, read with greater speed, accuracy, and expression, and to better understand what is read. Children gain fluency by practicing reading until the process becomes automatic; guided oral repeated reading is one approach to helping children become fluent readers.

On the surface level, fluency practice makes sense—practice makes perfect. But what happens when students are forced to read the same passages over and over and over? That’s right—they become bored and they lose motivation because repetition for the sake of fluency is contrary to the communicative purposes of reading.

Here’s the problem. If researchers review studies in isolation, they lose sight of the big picture. Reading is more than sounding out words and reading quickly, it’s also about reading books that are interesting and important. Books that children and adolescents want to read over and over again.

- **Teaching vocabulary words**—teaching new words, either as they appear in text, or by introducing new words separately. This type of instruction also aids reading ability.

Absolutely—a strong vocabulary is necessary to understanding texts. But again, how many times in your life did you apply new vocabulary words that you wrote in English class. It doesn’t work that way. Students need experience with language and experiences within which to learn language.

- **Reading comprehension strategies**—techniques for helping individuals to understand what they read. Such techniques involve having students summarize what they’ve read, to gain a better understanding of the material.

Teaching comprehension strategies is a no-brainer. However, the texts students read have to be worth comprehending.

The NRP findings were (and are) problematic because the NRP only reviewed one type of research (quasi-experimental or experimental designs with controlled interventions). By ignoring qualitative research, the NRP overlooked more holistic approaches to reading methods including the effects of teachers reading aloud, the effect of students' independent reading of children's literature, and impact of students' responses to literature (e.g., Krashen, 1993; 2011).

For years, the tobacco industry denied that smoking causes cancer because research couldn't "prove" it (Brownell & Warner, 2009; Warner, 2005). Unfortunately, in the realm of scientific "rigor" the tobacco industry was technically correct, the only way to scientifically "prove" effects is to randomly place a representative sample of people into groups and conduct controlled experiments. Well, researchers couldn't randomly select participants (from all ethnicities, genders, and ages) and force people to smoke. So the tobacco industry manipulated science and public opinion. That is, until the results of other forms of research became overwhelming.

When the NRP chose to limit their review of reading studies to "scientifically-based research," they essentially ignored all forms of qualitative research and "kid watching" including teacher reports, interviews, observational studies, case studies, and surveys. They followed the model of big tobacco and created a very narrow version of reading-- one that could be systematized and teacher proofed and then published, marketed, and sold.

Children's literature went bye-bye and scripted reading lessons with controlled vocabulary came back. Oh, and NCLB also brought in high-stakes tests to hold everyone accountable for teaching with prescribed methods and controlled texts.

The NRP's findings were also problematic because its conception of reading did not correspond to the ways in which children's literature texts are written. Children's books are not written with phonics lessons in mind. Children's books are not written with controlled vocabulary (except for Dr. Seuss or the Berenstains, but those aren't meant for older students). Good writing is interesting writing. Therefore, the NRP report harkened back to phonics and basal reading programs.

Members of the NRP issued minority reports and published dissenting reviews of the data (Yatvin, 2000). Other literacy scholars condemned the findings as well (Allington, 2002). But to no avail.

Accountability and Scripted Instruction

Despite the criticism of the NRP, President George W. Bush acted upon the findings by signing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. Unfortunately, this law ushered in an era of rigid accountability and scripted instruction. Teachers were required to teach the 5 pillars of reading (whether students needed those forms of instruction or not). Reading materials and textbooks were revised to conform to the NRP findings and teachers were given scripts to follow.

Don't even get me started on the billions of dollars made by companies that produce the scripted textbooks, create the tests, and score them each year. Are you defined by your SAT score? Why are we defining kids by one test given on one day and then judging teachers based on the results of these tests as if families, reading materials, instructional resources, facilities, time, food, health, and wellness don't have any role in reading performance?

Children's literature became a peripheral instructional material. And most damagingly, school funding was tied to test performance. Accountability and standards are fine within a controlled context of sameness. But when students come from different homes, with different families, and different experiences and support, their teachers can't be held accountable for all of the differences between them. In addition, teachers have varying levels of skill and expertise. It is unethical to "use" students' scores to weed out bad teachers, and you can't hold students to the same standards when they have different teachers with varying levels of effectiveness.

But most importantly, real reading can't be measured by a multiple choice, standardized test. Reading assessment requires time and expert analysis as the teacher listens to and watches a child read. Reading behaviors are far too complex for standardization; and more authentic forms of assessment are far too expensive for massive testing. The result, President Bush asked teachers to teach to the test.

When it comes to our schools, dollars alone do not always make the difference. Funding is important, and so is reform. So we must tie funding to higher standards and accountability for results.

I believe in local control of schools. We should not, and we will not, run public schools from Washington, DC. Yet when the Federal Government spends tax dollars, we must insist on results. Children should be tested on basic reading and math skills every year between grades three and eight. Measuring is the only way to know whether all our children are learning. And I want to know, because I refuse to leave any child behind in America.

Critics of testing contend it distracts from learning. They talk about teaching to the test. But let's put that logic to the test. If you test a child on basic math and reading skills and you're teaching to the test, you're teaching math and reading. And that's the whole idea.
(President George W. Bush's Address Before a Joint Session of Congress, February 27, 2001)

In his edited book, *Literacy as a Civil Right* (2008), Stuart Greene used former Education Secretary Rod Paige's pervasive mantra "the achievement gap is the civil rights issue of our time" as an opportunity to reframe the discourse surrounding underachievement and low graduation rates for populations of African American, Latino/a, Native American, and Asian American students. Specifically, Greene wrote that the No Child Left Behind Act purported to eliminate the achievement gap through increased accountability and testing practices. Accountability, standards and grades were touted as vehicles for civil rights and educational equity, yet, the "move toward educational reform actually masks racist and deficit ideologies that have contributed to the failure of the very students it seeks to help" (Greene, 2008, p. 3). Greene and his contributing authors predicted, "as long as low-income, minority students are defined by the low-level skills required to succeed on standardized tests, the gap will increase between these schools and those serving middle-class White students" (p. 7).

Time and, ironically, additional testing, have brought to light this reality. After more than a decade of accountability and teaching to the test, the US literacy rates for minority students have not "closed" and the "gap" across racial or gender divides still exists. In fact, gaps are growing in areas such as technology usage and in mathematics. We haven't seen the huge reading gains as promised. For example, in the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Fourth and Eighth Grade Assessment, reading scores were not different at grade 4 and lower at grade 8 than in 2013. Female students had higher percentages at or above the Proficient level than male students at both grades. The stark discrepancies among racial groups continues to exist (http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2015/#reading?grade=4).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) measures student performance on reading, writing, math and other subject area tests. NAEP provides results about subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment, and reports these results for populations of students (e.g., fourth-graders) and subgroups of those populations (e.g., male students or Hispanic students).
(<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/faq.aspx>).

Large gaps still exist across student groups:

46% of White students were at or above Proficient / 79% at or above the Basic;
18% of Black students were at or above Proficient / 52% at or above Basic;
21% of Hispanic students were at or above Proficient / 55% at or above Basic;
57% of Asian students were at or above Proficient / 84% at or above Basic;
21% of American Indian/Alaska Native were at or above Proficient / 52% at or above Basic.

See for yourself. Explore the reading and math scores for different groups and regions. Click on this link and scroll to the bottom of the page where you can build custom data tables for reading and math scores across testing iterations and racial groups:

http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/executive-summary

If scientifically-based research was the gold standard, then the Department of Education and participating states who enacted high-stakes accountability requirements failed to meet their own standards by using faulty research designs. In other words, all teachers were asked to use the same instruction and all students were held to the same standards without controlling for all of the variables in students' lives or in their teachers' training.

Following NCLB legislation, President Obama's Race to the Top provided a successor regime of reading-instruction guidelines by funding grants for states to implement reforms. Aesthetic reading and visual creation continued to give way to formalized skills instruction as high-stakes testing persisted as the gold standard. As Allington and Pearson (2011) explained, high-stakes testing and accountability measures have resulted in a reduction in the amount of time children spend reading for meaning, a reduction in meaningful discussions about literature, and an overemphasis on scripted instruction.

Literacy scholars were outraged. Regardless of their position during the reading wars, no one wanted to see the de-professionalization of teachers and the mandates of scripted instruction.

From the moment the NRP report was published, individual teachers, school boards, and several education organizations swung into action to combat the stifling requirements of subsequent NCLB policies and the detrimental effects of high-stakes testing. For example, individual teachers published articles to discuss the impact of NCLB policies and practices and major research associations issued policy briefs, data, and position statements:

- The American Education Research Association issued a position statement against high-stakes testing based on recommendations from the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education. They questioned harmful measurement practices and flawed results based on one-test/one-time practices (<http://www.aera.net/AboutAERA/AERARulesPolicies/AERAPolicyStatements/PositionStatementonHighStakesTesting/tabid/11083/Default.aspx>).
- The International Literacy Association (formerly the International Reading Association) issued a position statement about evidence-based reading instruction and how reading could or should be “measured” (http://www.reading.org/Libraries/position-statements-and-resolutions/ps1055_evidence_based.pdf).
- The International Literacy Association also issued position statements about early reading instruction, adolescent reading and other facets of literacy education (<http://literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/high-stakes-assessments-position-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=4>).
- The National Council for Teachers of English issued a call to action and position statement: *What We Know About Adolescent Literacy and Ways to Support Teachers in Meeting Students' Needs*. They specifically decried the labeling of adolescent readers as “struggling” and the systematic use of phonics in secondary classrooms. They made specific recommendations for students and teachers based on a more comprehensive review of the research (<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/adolescentliteracy>).

By attempting to “end” the reading wars, the government created a new war of aggression against teachers, students, administrators, researchers, and scholars who know there isn’t one way to teach reading to all students. They also made the testing industry a lot of money.

If there was “one” way to teach reading, it would have been invented. Heck, I would have invented it. Then I would be rich! There is no magic recipe. Remember Hooked on Phonics?

The US Governors Attempt to Settle the New Reading Wars

The NCLB raised “standards” but not necessarily literacy rates. In addition, individual states were allowed to use their own tests and measures to document “annual yearly progress”. Working as an association of governors and school administrators, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative was meant to refocus the vision for public schools and prepare students for the workforce and college. The CCSS were intended to create more cohesive goals across the country including elements of standardization for comparison.

If success is measured by different assessments, then the Department of Education can't make causal claims. Again, the rules of good measurement were not applied.

Common Core State Standards, Close Reading, and the Text Complexity Canon

With the implementation of the CCSS in 2014 (National Governors Association, 2010), the role of literature and the arts was again uncertain.

The CCSS focused on close reading, which is a method of paying very close attention to the text. As stated in the CCSS, students should “read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it” (p. 10).

In particular, the CCSS recommend the use of “mentor texts” (i.e., the systematic study of literary models) as a way to increase students’ awareness of text structures, organizational patterns, and authorial strategies (Clark, Jones, & Reutzel, 2013). Mentor texts provide teachers with literary “exemplars” that help them teach students how to comprehend text as well as how to compose text (National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

The good news is that the use of “mentor texts” puts an emphasis back on children’s literature and high-quality writing. The bad news is that many current recommendations for the use of mentor texts suggest a static interpretation of literature as mere words on a page. In fact, the CCSS have identified a specific set of books to serve as mentor texts based primarily on their linguistic complexity rather than literary value or students’ interest levels (See Appendix B, National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Come on, you know better than this. What motivates reading? Apply what you’ve learned so far. Linguistic complexity will not entice youth to read. Neither will literary value. Reading happens when the right book is put in the right reader’s hands at the right time and with the right support. There is no magic list of books that works for all kids.

Similarly, teachers' use of mentor texts to guide literacy instruction is often isolated from the process of artistic creation. For example, Clark, Jones, and Reutzel (2013) state, "teachers need to scaffold young students' text structure knowledge development by using well-structured exemplar texts... [that] make use of signal or clue words and other text features" (p. 266). Researchers, such as Donovan and Smolkin (2011) have also created developmental sequences for tracking writing progression based on text analysis. None of these models mention drawing nor do they integrate art.

Do not get me started on the role of drawing and art! Writing comes from drawing. They are semiotically linked. Some youth think in images and they create through visual modes. Any developmental sequence that excludes drawing or art is narrow and incomplete.

Granted, the mechanics of text creation are essential skills for students (Graham, McKeown, Kihara, & Harris, 2012), yet, in order for youth to understand how texts work, they must also appreciate the aesthetics.

Motivation, Purpose, and the Return to Children's Literature

The "research-based strategies" recommended by the NRP didn't work as anticipated. Guess what? Ninth graders don't need phonics instruction and all readers need texts that match their interests and abilities (Dennis, 2013).

The CCSS are an improvement to previous policies because, rather than dictating instructional strategies with blanket mandates, the CCSS offer standards as a guidepost without prescribing the instructional methods to get there. Teachers and school districts are implementing the Common Core (some states are doing their own versions), and as a field, we are starting to show some early signs of instructional relief and potential recovery. Some school boards, principals, and parents are starting to reject excessive testing (Emma, 2015; Wallace, 2015). Children's literature markets are picking up (Bluestone, 2015) and students are starting to read books in school. Teachers are returning to children's literature as models for teaching reading and writing (Louie & Sierschynski, 2015).

Think about the best teachers you have ever had. What made them unique and interesting? I'm confident it wasn't their ability to administer tests. I'm confident their teaching expertise wasn't scripted in a teacher's manual.

I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that the literacy world was upended by the National Reading Panel. Their recommendations were shortsighted and based on a skewed selection of research. Literacy is more than a gathering of sub-skills. And it definitely involves the appropriate selection of text. The combination of the NRP and NCLB pushed children's literature to the periphery of reading instruction.

With all of the poking and prodding we have done to students to make sure they know how to read, it's understandable that many of them stop reading. A focus on decontextualized skills negates the purpose of reading; and the removal of interesting literature demotivates readers. We lost all of the benefits of whole language and phonics instruction. As Gallagher (2009) describes it, schools are committing "readicide."

To combat destructive testing and instructional practices, Richard Allington and Rachael Gabriel (2012) remind teachers, librarians, and parents of six elements of effective reading instruction:

- Every child reads something he or she chooses.
- Every child reads accurately.
- Every child reads something he or she understands.
- Every child writes about something personally meaningful.
- Every child talks with peers about reading and writing.
- Every child listens to a fluent adult read aloud.

Click here for the complete article that includes brief summaries of research to support each point: (<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/Every-Child,-Every-Day.aspx>)

In addition, effective reading education in the adolescent years is marked by different challenges than teaching beginning reading. According to Biancarosa and Snow (2004), there are two reasons for the difficulty in teaching adolescent reading, "first, secondary school literacy skills are more complex, more embedded in subject matters, and more multiply determined; second, adolescents are not as universally motivated to read better or as interested in school-based reading as kindergarteners" (p. 1).

To combat the challenges of working with adolescents, the National Council of Teachers of English (2004) asserts that all students, regardless of reading ability, need opportunities to read and respond to literature beyond basal readers and other programmed materials. In addition, students should use adolescent literature throughout the reading and writing curriculum, and as part of their content-area studies.

Given that leisure reading has been on the decline, the International Reading Association (2014), in collaboration with the National Council of Teachers of English and the Canadian Children's Book Centre issued a joint position statement calling for teachers to facilitate leisure reading in students' lives, support students' reading choices, and provide daily opportunities for leisure reading in school. In particular, teachers should "model fiction and nonfiction book selection, conference with students during Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), and hold students accountable for their reading (Reutzel, Fawson, & Smith, 2008)" (IRA, 2014). In particular, the International Literacy Association recommends the following principles to support leisure reading.

Principle I: Readers should choose their own reading materials (Krashen, 2011). Students are better able to choose engaging and appropriate reading materials when teachers and family members scaffold their selection of leisure reading materials (Reutzel, Jones, & Newman, 2010; Sanden, 2014).

Principle II: The benefits to students' fluency, comprehension, and motivation from engaging in leisure reading are increased when teachers scaffold school-based leisure reading by incorporating reflection, response, and sharing in a wide range of ways that are not evaluated (Parr & Maguiness, 2005; Pilgreen, 2000; Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Walker, 2013) and when students' home environments support their self-selected reading (Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, & Schmidt, 2000).

If youth actually make it to, and through, high school as engaged, well-read readers, they have extraordinary choices when it comes to books. That's why many adults are drawn to Young Adult (YA) literature; YA literature includes complex plots and exceptional writing. As Madeleine L'Engle once said:

You have to write the book that wants to be written. And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then you write it for children.
— Madeleine L'Engle

The Role of the School Library and Programs to Promote Reading

With our attention back on books, in this section I provide an overview of the school library and supportive reading programs that work in connection to school reading instruction. I also invited Kathleen Edwards, an amazing school librarian at Berkeley Preparatory School in Tampa, FL, to share her perspectives about the inner workings of the library as well. I have observed Kathleen's work in two other school settings and she exemplifies the best in school librarianship. Fortunately, she currently works in a school that appreciates her knowledge and funds her ideas and best practices.

I am painfully aware that most school libraries, if they exist, are underfunded and under-resourced. However, I am choosing to focus on best practices because you should understand what youth need from a school library. Although many of the following ideas can be implemented for free, you should understand that schools need funding.

Library Spaces

Just like public libraries and bookstores, school libraries have specific uses and corresponding spaces (Video Series 6.1). The librarian makes choices about space planning, materials, organization, and programming—all within the constraints of physical boundaries and finances.

View this interactive map of a school library to learn about space planning and design.

Video 6.1.1 Interactive school library video series: The Rudolph Library introduction
<http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/j1b7w>

Video 6.1.2 Interactive school library video series: The Rudolph Library Teaching area
<http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/ogxtt>

Video 6.1.3 Interactive school library video series: The Rudolph Library Computer Stations
<http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/qbm2m>

Video 6.1.4 Interactive school library video series: The Rudolph Library read around the world
<http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/s7hyu>

Video 6.1.5 Interactive school library video series: The Rudolph Library Storytime area
<http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/jgue8>

Video 6.1.6 Interactive school library video series: The Rudolph Library collections development
<http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/o63fo>

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Library programming is similar to preparing a banquet table. One would want to have many enticing selections to delight the guests. As a Librarian, I want to prepare a banquet of reading pleasure for students. Our passion is promoting the joy of reading. The physical space of the library is one of enchantment. The library staff work within the physical space to promote gathering, reading, creativity, and community. It is a space where all members of the learning community should feel welcomed and enriched. It is a cozy and inviting space.

It is possible to maintain this inviting atmosphere while at the same time providing the latest in digital tools. In my library, we have a research area with 11 computers for student use. Our 4th and 5th grade students bring their iPads to library to read and do research. We have a teaching area with a screen and projector and we also have a large TV in the story time area. I use technology to integrate multimedia content. For example, I may share a story about moles then I will show a short video on the star nosed mole to enrich the story. I also use rocking chairs for students in library. The children benefit from having the motion so that they are not sitting still for long periods.

Ideally, the library should have enough space to house reading nooks and projects that the children may want to explore. My students enjoy setting up a tent in October with a fake campfire. We dim the lights and create night sounds in the library. We put on glow stick bracelets. Then we share campfire stories to celebrate fall. After doing this activity one fall, the students were quite reluctant to see the tent come down. So I said, “What can we create to be our next cozy story time setting?” The students decided that we would create an igloo for winter. They brought in shoeboxes that we covered with heavy-duty white paper. We explored igloo construction in the online encyclopedias and in books then we created our igloo. The children came to library during recess or DEAR time (Drop Everything and Read) to sit in the igloo and read. Children love cozy reading spaces and they especially enjoy designing and creating them. Library programming is about creating magic in the lives of children.

Our library is staffed with one full time librarian, one full time assistant, and one part time assistant. This level of staffing allows us to work closely with our students to ensure that every student is connected with just-right reads. We will often work individually with a student to browse the shelves, explore the card catalog, and databases such as Novelist K through 8 in search of their next great read. Our students can email a request for a reference session or just come to the library during the day with teacher permission.

- Kathleen Edwards

Collection Development

In contemporary schools, librarians create programs that promote reading, acquiring appropriate materials for diverse learners.

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The library staff in the Rudolph Library all participate in collection development. One library assistant enjoys reading journal reviews and developing suggested lists based on the reviews from *Kirkus*, *Booklist*, and *School Library Journal*. I add books based on curriculum needs for units of study in the classrooms. Teachers ask me to purchase books relating to social studies, science and language arts content. A second library assistant also works in the science lab. She helps develop the library collection by making suggestions for science units. I use two online databases to help make selections. They are Novelist K through 8 and the Children's Literature Database. We pay an annual fee for access to each of these. I order from Follett, Amazon, Inkwood Books in Tampa, and Barnes & Noble. Follett is a well-known vendor for books for school libraries. I also encourage my students to use Novelist K through 8 and to let me know if they would like for me to purchase books that they have discovered in Novelist that are not in our collection. Novelist is a readers' advisory platform. Parents, teachers and students can use it to explore book recommendations by genre and age level.

Our students enjoy over 5,000 eBook titles through a platform called MyOn. We do not pay for this platform. The Children's Board of Hillsborough County (<http://www.childrensboard.org/>) along with The Tampa Hillsborough Public Library Cooperative (<http://www.hcplc.org/>) partnered to bring this eBook platform to the Tampa Bay area. We are able to access and use this platform, which provides eBook access to students in PreK through 8 any time/anywhere.

-Kathleen Edwards

Budget

In spite of documented evidence of success, school libraries have historically experienced reductions in funding alongside changes in school reading curricula that correspond to government mandates and assessment practices (Ellis, 1963). For the most part, school administrators must understand the role of the library or they tend to cut services (Lance & Kachel, 2013). The librarian must work with the principal to educate the administrator about library services. The school librarian must demonstrate her or his value through visible programming and instructional support. Library budgets vary widely depending on the school's resources and number of students.

“Our current annual budget is approximately \$26,000 for a library that serves 400 students. Budget categories include materials and supplies, subscriptions, library books, audio visual supplies and expense and miscellaneous. This budget ensures that we can maintain a collection in both print and online that is considered exemplary. Additionally, we have two rolling accounts that help fund library programming. They are our book fairs account and the Birthday Book Club account.

Book Promotion through Story Time and Book Talks

Story time is an important opportunity for young children to learn about the library collection through interesting examples. Librarians choose books that are best read aloud and they often incorporate dramatic play, movement, and visual components to the stories.

“Story times for the emerging reader are fun and engaging. We have a special place in our library that is designated as the story time area. This year we added a large screen television so that short videos or pictures that enrich the story may be viewed. We could also use this display and teach the children a song or poem. Another favorite of our young students are the felt storyboard stories such as the *Three Little Pigs*, *Rapunzel*, and *There was An Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*. Sometimes the children take turns adding the felt pieces to the story as I tell it. The children are delighted with the Folkmanis puppets in the library. Petey the Pack Rat is a big hit with PreK as Petey will wear a banner with the letter of the week that they are learning and he will bring interesting items in his backpack for the children to view. Sometimes, Petey may also have a treat in his pack for the children. He had huckleberry gummy bears to go with a story set in Montana where the characters eat huckleberries.

For older students, school librarians often create booktalks to advertise particular books. Booktalks can create a lot of interest in a new book; and they give the librarian an opportunity to provide individual guidance to help students select the “right” book to read (Everhart, 2013).

Check out these links to booktalks:

SchoolTube Booktalks http://www.schooltube.com/channel/scholastic_booktalks/;

Book Winks <http://www.podfeed.net/podcast/Bookwink,+video+booktalks+for+kids/10030>;

Digital Book Talks <http://www.digitalbooktalk.net/>;

JLG's Book Talks To Go <http://www.slj.com/category/collection-development/jlg-booktalks/#>.

Classroom Support

School librarians also work with classroom teachers to support the reading curriculum. According to Lance and Kachel (2013) “when administrators believe students receive excellent library instruction in inquiry-based learning, students are consistently more likely to score advanced and less likely to score below basic on both reading and writing tests” (p. 12). In other studies, the school library is a consistent factor in standards-based assessment and library media specialists have a quantifiable, positive impact on student achievement (Francis & Lance, 2011).

“I work closely with classroom teachers to support the curriculum taught in the social studies, language arts, and science curriculum. Each month, I meet with a liaison from each grade level team to plan ahead. One of my main focuses is to ensure that our students learn to use online databases and to cite their sources properly when doing research. Research skills that are taught outside of the curriculum are not retained and have little meaning to children. It is essential that these skills are taught within the units of study in the classroom. For example, students learn that multiple sources often need to be consulted when answering essential questions. Our students are taught that pictures taken from the Internet must also be cited. They are taught to search for photos through Creative Commons as well as through databases such as Britannica Image Quest.

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For example, our units of study with library collaboration are as follows:

2nd grade: country and biography units;

3rd grade: planet unit and Florida Studies;

4th grade: Colonial America;

5th grade: Immigration unit.

For the 3rd grade Florida Studies unit, the library collaborates by preparing the children for their visit to the Ringling Estate in Sarasota, FL (<https://www.ringling.org/history-ringling>). We have a circus poster contest and award prizes that are purchased at the Museum store. Also for the Florida Studies unit, the Library coordinates a visit by the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) whereby two members of FPAN come to our school campus and teach the children to toss arrows using a tool called the atlatl that was used by the Timucua Indians. This is a big hit each year. I also prepare 3rd grade for their visit to the Henry B. Plant Museum (<http://www.ut.edu/plantmuseum/>) by hosting a visit with local author Robin Gonzalez who wrote *Maggie and Max at the Museum*. We also read Robin's book, *If Our Hotel Could Talk*, to learn about the history and architecture of the Plant Museum.

Pleasure Reading Programs

Hopefully, leisure reading and SSR (sustained silent reading) are making a comeback in schools. Many of these programs are administered and promoted by library media specialists. Therefore, the school librarian/media specialist plays a key role in helping students find motivating books for sustained leisure reading. To do so, the librarian needs a budget to maintain a current and motivating collection of books and she or he needs the time to create programs that encourage and support reading.

Sustained Silent Reading

“Sustained Silent Reading” (SSR) is an umbrella term that teachers and librarians use to give students time to read for pleasure in school. The parameters of reading vary, but the intention is the same—get kids reading books.

DEAR Day: Drop Everything And Read!

"D.E.A.R. programs have been held nationwide on April 12th in honor of Beverly Cleary's birthday, since she first wrote about D.E.A.R. in *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (pages 40-41) (Figure 6.18). Inspired by letters from readers sharing their enthusiasm for the D.E.A.R. activities implemented in their schools, Mrs. Cleary decided to give the same experience to Ramona and her classmates. As D.E.A.R. has grown in popularity and scope, the program has expanded to span the entire month of April . . . offering classrooms and communities additional time to celebrate!" (<http://www.dropeverythingandread.com/NationalDEARday.html>)

Figure 6.18

April 12th is Beverly Cleary's birthday and national DEAR day. She is the author of *Ramona Quimby*, *Henry Huggins*, *Dear Mr. Henshaw*, *Ralph S. Mouse* and so many more (<http://www.beverlycleary.com/characters.aspx#Ramona>). *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* by Beverly Cleary, 1981/1982, New York, NY: Dell. Cover art copyright by Joanne Scribner.

Below I have listed the various names of “sustained silent reading” programs. These alternative titles demonstrate the teachers’ and librarians’ awareness of the importance of the right book for the right reader as well as the benefits of encouragement, enjoyment, and time. Essentially, teachers give students uninterrupted time in class (10-30 minutes) and students can read books of their choice.

BARF: Be A Reader Freak

DEAR: Drop Everything and Read

DIRT: Daily Independent Reading Time

ELVIS: Everybody Loves Very Interesting Stories

FUR: Free Uninterrupted Reading

GRAB: Go Read A Book

KBAR: Kick Back and Read

OTTER: Our Time to Enjoy Reading

SQUIRT: Super Quiet Uninterrupted Reading Time

SSR: Sustained Silent Reading

SURF: Silent Uninterrupted Reading Fun

USSR: Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading

WEB: Wonderfully Entertaining Books

ZYLAR: Zip Your Lip And Read

For more information about independent reading programs in classrooms, visit the ILA website (<http://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2016/02/18/making-independent-reading-work>).

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Book Fairs, Book Orders, & Book Clubs

You may remember book fairs. The library shuts down for a week and big carts roll in with the latest books for sale. Students shop for books before and after school. You may also remember book orders. Teachers send home a little newspaper that advertises the latest books. Students check off the books they want and the teacher/librarian collects money and places the order. Within days, the books arrive for distribution.

Book fairs and book order programs serve as fundraisers for the school or school library. However, the success of these initiatives requires school populations of families who can afford to spend money on books. For many families, books are a luxury. To get books in the hands of children, other programs take alternative routes to reach children.

Each year we have two book fairs. One is in the fall after Thanksgiving and the other is in early May. Our combined book fair profits total approximately \$7,000.

We currently use Scholastic for our book fair. The profits from the fairs are used to fund author visits throughout the year.

Our Birthday Book Club is a voluntary program in which students come to the library on or near their birthday to pick a new book out of the Birthday Book Closet. The closet includes the books that we have already purchased, but have not yet circulated. A plate is put in the front of the book indicating that the book was purchased for the library in honor of that student. The student is the first one to check it out and read it. Then they return it to the collection. A customary donation is \$20 to \$25 dollars for birthday book club. In schools with fewer resources, any donation amount would be acceptable.

Author/Illustrator Visits

Students enjoy meeting authors and illustrators in person. During school visits, the authors or illustrators typically present hour-long sessions to groups of children. The authors and illustrators show images of their work, discuss their creation process, and provide the students with insights about their books. The sessions end with autographs and/or question and answers. Many school library budgets have diminished with regard to school appearances, but there are librarians who make these events a priority. Author/illustrators can charge \$250-\$3000, depending on the person's popularity. The school must also pay for transportation and accommodation.

The USF CLICK Conference borrowed the idea of author/illustrator school visits and expanded the concept to create a centralized author visit opportunity for local schools. Rather than paying for one author, schools send students to the CLICK conference to hear several authors/illustrators. In addition, the children break into small groups to participate in writing, reading, drawing, and performance activities in connection to books ([https://www.facebook.com ClickChildrensLiteratureCollectionOfKnowHow/](https://www.facebook.com/ClickChildrensLiteratureCollectionOfKnowHow/)).

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Author visits are an excellent avenue for fully engaging students with high quality literature. We invite authors, illustrators, and master storytellers to visit our school. We fund these visits through book fair earnings as well as through our Birthday Book Club program. Additionally, we have collaborated with a local independent bookstore to bring authors for school visits. The bookstore arranges for authors to come visit the school and we pre-sell the books to our students. Presentations are done in large groups as well as small break-out sessions whereby students may learn a specific skill such as how to begin to develop a character for a book. The energy generated by these visits propels students to read more as well as to create stories of their own.

Battle of the Books

Each year the Florida Association for Media in Education and the Office of Library Media selects 15 titles for grades 3rd through 5th and 15 titles for grades 6th through 8th. These titles are the Sunshine State Young Reader Award nominees. Students read the books and can vote on their favorite. In the Battle of the Books Program, students compete in teams answering questions about the book titles.

“At Berkeley, we select 5 titles for each grade 3 through 5. Students in those grades become an expert on one of the titles. They read their selected book and fill out a journal on the characters, setting, and key events. At winter break, we have class battles and the team that wins for each class then battles the other teams in that grade for a grade winning team. Additionally, students who wish to read all 15 titles can try out for the team that will battle other independent schools in the Tampa Bay Area. Berkeley hosts this event each year in May.

Mock Caldecott

The Caldecott Medal is awarded each year in January for the best American picture book published the year before. The award is given by the American Library Association. Mock Caldecott is a library program whereby students read and review approximately 20 potentially nominated books and vote on whether the book would be a winner, an honor book, or left out of the running. I begin in advance of the students by reading book reviews as well as several Caldecott blogs which attempt to predict the winners. I develop the list of 20 books that will be previewed. I have done this activity with students in grades 2 through 5 and it is well received. Students learn about the medal including the history of how the medal came to be. They learn that the American Library Association has a committee each year to review the nominated books and decide on which book receives the medal and which books will be given the status of honor books. Students review the visual elements of art and types of art mediums prior to reading the books. We use a graphic organizer form that students fill out as they read a book. These forms are tallied to make our predictions. This activity is done for about a month to six weeks prior to the actual award announcements. Students engage with the books deeply learning how written word and picture come together artfully to create the story. They learn about art mediums and reflect on why the illustrator may have chosen that particular medium to bring out the story.

Reading Incentive Programs

Reading incentive programs, such as Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader, are commonly used to promote independent reading or family reading time. Students are required to create reading logs, obtain parent signatures, or take tests. **I am not a fan.** For children who do not love to read, these programs are not conducive to fostering a love of reading. In fact, these programs often cause struggles in families when children are forced to read for so many minutes or from color-coded books. In addition, children who love to read are often forced to read books on a certain level or in their color code. Sometimes children want to read books that are off the grid—and they should. Reading incentive programs are counter-intuitive to the purpose of reading. More importantly, research indicates they do not improve reading scores or motivation to read (Huang, 2012). Kathleen has a different opinion, and her school uses an incentive program as an option.

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Reading Counts is an optional reading incentive program whereby students read books then take a 10 question quiz on the book. They earn points for successfully passing quizzes. Reading related prizes are awarded for certain attained point levels for students who score 85% or above. At 175 points, we award a book as a prize. Students are able to select a paperback for their prize. We have some on hand or will special order for them provided that the book falls within our price point range. At 250 points (200 for 2nd grade and 225 for 3rd grade), students are awarded the Reading Counts hat, which is designed by the rising 5th grade at the end of the school year.

Middle and High School Libraries

Middle and high school libraries share many of the same characteristics and qualities as the elementary school library. The main difference is the developmental level of the youth and a change in their reading interests and literacy skills. For example, libraries for adolescents will feature young adult and classic literature as well as collections of literary criticism.

Upper-level librarians must also address collections development and pleasure reading programs in relation to their adolescent population. The librarian must be able to select and recommend books that the students will want to read. This means the library staff must interact with the students and get to know them as individuals.

A major focus of the middle or high school library is research. The library must have updated computers and relevant databases to provide students with access to the materials they need. The librarian also works with classroom teachers to provide research skills training and instructional support relevant to the content. Often, student volunteers work in middle or high school libraries by operating the circulation desk and recommending books to other students. They also shelve books, maintain order in the library and perform special projects for the library staff.

The middle and high school library has a different look and feel than an elementary library. It is accessible and comfortable. But it is more suited to adolescents' tastes and desires to work in small groups, hide out in isolated coves, and lounge in comfortable chairs. The library space will often feature student work and special projects as middle and high school libraries are a central hub and study space for students (Video 6.2).

Video 6.2 Secondary School Library <http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/sfnp6>

Other Public and Private Programs to Promote Reading

Outside of the school library, there are many other initiatives that promote reading and intend to provide students with the right books.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Have you heard about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library? Inspired by her father who couldn't read, Dolly Parton created a program to send a book a month to every child in her home county in Tennessee (<https://imaginationlibrary.com/>). The library has grown to include duplicate programs around the world, and Dolly's charity has given away more than 70 million books. Dolly Parton had a great idea that emerged from her personal experiences. How have your experiences with books impacted your life? How can your business or industry impact the lives of young readers?

Book Mobiles

Book mobiles have existed since the creation of free libraries and the invention of vehicles to transport books. In the US, Mary Titcombe is credited with the first book mobile. For a history on book mobiles, watch this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm7qDYyrETA>).

Luis Soriano, an elementary teacher in Columbia's Magdalena Province, uses two donkeys to travel to children's homes delivering books. You may have heard about the Donkey Library or BiblioBurro. His story was featured in a documentary (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/biblioburro/>). Luis brings books to children in the hopes that reading and education can combat drugs and poverty. Luis created his own unique version of a book mobile.

Book mobiles are still used across the US. Bess the Book Bus (<http://bessthebookbus.org/>) is a mobile literacy outreach program dedicated to distributing books to underprivileged children and fostering a love of reading (Figure 6.19).

Jennifer Frances named the program after her grandmother, Nana Bess, who taught her the joy of reading. Jennifer fills her mini-bus with enough donations to travel throughout the US to freely share books with children (Figure 6.20). Sponsors generously support her vision for widespread free reading (Video 6.3).

Figure 6.19

Jennifer Frances, founder of Bess the Book Bus, stocks her bus shelves with hundreds of books, which she gives away to underprivileged children. Photo copyright 2015 by Jenifer Schneider.

Figure 6.20

Bess the Book Bus travels all over the US, distributing books to children who don't own many, if any, of their own. Photo copyright 2015 by Jenifer Schneider.

Video 6.3 Bess The Book Bus <http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/yiq4t>

RIF

RIF is a book distribution and reading motivation program. Founded by Margaret McNamara in 1966, Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving low-income and disadvantaged youth through literacy initiatives. According to the RIF website, RIF prepares and motivates children to read by “delivering free books and literacy resources to those children and families who need them most. We inspire children to be lifelong readers through the power of choice. RIF provides new, free books for children to choose from and make their own” (<http://www.rif.org/us/about-rif.htm>). Focused on children from birth to age eight, RIF provides 15 million new, free books to 4 million children in all 50 states each year. RIF works through schools, community centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, migrant communities, churches, hospitals, and clinics.

Reading Rainbow

Reading Rainbow (<https://www.readingrainbow.com/>) is a television show focused on reading books. The show, which aired on PBS from 1983 until 2009, featured short stories about literacy events (literary field trips), people (and kids) making a difference, and the show always included a celebrity read aloud. Once the show ended, LeVar Burton, the host, created RRRKIDZ. The website features old Reading Rainbow videos, teacher resources, community initiatives, and the Skybrary, which is an interactive library of books and videos available through a subscription service.

Interventions and Intended Consequences

In this chapter, I summarized a series of political, educational, and cultural events that derived from a desire to increase US literacy rates. Undergirding these broad, sweeping efforts is the concept of the right book for the right reader at the right time with the “right” instruction. But there is no “right” way. The debate over the best methods to teach reading continues; however, reading specialists understand the individualized nature of teaching and they have a repertoire of strategies that support literacy development. The people who have spent their lives studying reading know what to do and they will continue to work to help every student because teaching and learning are evolutionary processes.

There are clear benefits to a populace when children and adolescents know how to read and when they can read for pleasure and for information. But what happens when the kids choose books that adults don’t like? In the remaining chapters of this book, I will explore some of the issues related to books, choice, and audience.