INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION
SECONDARY READING INTEREST GROUP

THE EXCHANGE

Volume 25, Issue 2
April, 2013

President's Message . . .

by Kelly Gallagher, SRIG President

Dear Secondary Reading Community,

Despite the number of valid concerns regarding the CCSS—Do the grade-by-grade progressions make sense? Do the standards undervalue the importance prior knowledge plays in making sense of difficult text? Will students be over-tested? How will they be assessed? Will these assessments drive better instruction?—there is no denying that the CCSS are a marked improvement over the literacy expectations of the No Child Left Behind era. The CCSS strive for deeper learning. They ask students to read closely. They emphasize writing in all content areas. Simply put, if my students could read and write in the manner called for in these standards, I'd be very happy. This is why, despite some of these very real concerns, I agree with P. David Pearson, who recently said the CCSS are "still the best game in town."

As we gear up for the CCSS, being part of this Secondary Reading Interest Group has been very helpful. This SRIG affords us the opportunity to learn from one another, both through this newsletter as well as through attendance at the annual conference itself. In this issue of *The Exchange*, for example, you will find the following:

- In "The Power of Practice and Transfer: Leveraging the CCSS for Literacy," Jeff Wilhelm, professor of English at Boise State University and the author of several books on adolescent literacy, explores the contexts and processes for teaching the five kinds of knowledge and the five kinds of composing necessary to successfully read or write anything. Jeff argues that all reading and writing is motivated by purpose and context, and that understanding both purpose and context "is a prerequisite kind of knowledge to motivate reading and writing." Kids learn better when they are in inquiry mode, Jeff argues, and I'm sure you'll find his article to be timely and thought provoking.
- In "Moving Beyond the Same Old, Same Old: Cultivating Student Curiosity," Kathy Moore, Curriculum Coordinator for the San Ramon Valley School District in California, explores the kind of thinking we need to cultivate from our students to better prepare them for the literacy demands of the CCSS and beyond. Kathy argues that our job "is to live wide-awake lives," and she suggests ways to produce students who are "thoughtful, involved, informed, emphatic contributors to the human race."
- In "Overcoming Summer Reading Loss: One School's Approach," Kristie Schmidt, an English teacher at Valley Regional High School in Deep River, Connecticut describes how she gets both teachers and students involved in designing interesting summer reading assignments for all students (not just the honors-track kids). Kristie understands that the key to building readers is to encourage our students to read *throughout* the year.

This issue of *The Exchange* also serves as a sneak preview of this year's Secondary Reading Interest Group's IRA session, entitled, "Teaching the Reading and Composing of Texts to Meet and Exceed the CCSS." Our three presenters, Julie Meltzer, Jeff Wilhelm, and myself will explore how the CCSS present an opportunity to deepen our students' reading and writing abilities (see page 7 of this newsletter for a preview). This session will be held from 3:00-5:45 on Saturday, April 20, 2013 in room 001A of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. I hope you can join us for what promises to be a thoughtful session. I look forward to seeing you in San Antonio! Spread the word.

Kelly

Contact Kelly at kellygallagher.org or via Twitter: @KellyGToGo.

Inside this issue:

The Power of Practice and Transfer: Leveraging the CCSS for Literacy

by Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, Boise State University

No matter what you think of the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (and I do have some critiques, mostly regarding what they omit), they contain some good news for teachers dedicated to fostering student reading and writing: the CCSS emphasize the capacity to read and particularly to compose a variety of clear and comprehensive informational texts that can do meaningful work in the world, convincing arguments about issues that matter, and compelling narratives that foster an understanding of oneself, others, and the world rather than the "formulaic writing and . . . thinking" rewarded by so many current standards and standards-based assessments (Hillocks, 2002, p. 200).

But this emphasis offers a significant challenge to teachers: what passes as traditional approaches to teaching writing aren't nearly sufficient to meet these new standards. An even bigger challenge: every teacher across content areas and grade levels must become a teacher of reading and writing, speaking and listening, to meet the CCSS anchor standards. Many teachers will need help in knowing how to proceed in meeting this challenge.

The problem, simply put: Many teachers, particularly in content areas, don't construe of their job as teaching literacy or even as cultivating strategies for doing the discipline, but instead as purveying information about the content area. Many don't know how to teach strategies of reading, composing and learning. And even those familiar with traditional instructional practices aren't poised to help students develop all of the kinds of knowledge writers need–in large measure because the focus of instruction is on composing particular assignments rather than on developing robust conceptual and strategic knowledge that transfer to new composing situations. Even progressive notions of the writing/composing process underemphasize the kinds and amount of practice students need to develop facility meeting the demands of sophisticated informational, argumentative and narrative text structures. Progressive approaches also underestimate the kinds of reflective "composing to transfer" necessary to develop the meta-cognitive capacities necessary to meet the CCSS, to succeed on the next generation of assessments, and to foster transfer of what is learned to new situations.

Getting beyond the formulas: teaching towards true expertise

Over the past several years, my National Writing Project colleagues Michael W. Smith, Jim Fredricksen and I have been working on a robust approach to teaching informational, argument and narrative texts that help students to read and compose such texts, and that use speaking and listening as part of the process. We describe our approach in detail in our new books: *Get it Done: Writing and analyzing informational texts to make things happen*, Wilhelm, Smith and Fredricksen, 2013; *O, yeah?!: Putting argument to work both in school and out*, Smith, Wilhelm and Fredricksen, 2013; and *So, what's the story?: Teaching narrative to understand ourselves, others, and the world*, Fredricksen, Wilhelm, Smith, 2013.

Here's the gist of our approach: Teachers of writing in any subject area must help students develop the five kinds of knowledge that expert writers need and employ by regularly engaging their students in five kinds of composing - basically the writing process as typically construed but with a special emphasis on what can be called "composing to practice" and "composing to transfer." This approach has the benefits of using instruction in literacy strategies to help students learn and use generative content (certainly a selling point to content area teachers), as well as meeting the "correspondence concept" of helping students to use literacy as disciplinary experts do to engage in real-world problem-solving, to pursue rigorous inquiry, and to represent and share content area knowledge. The approach also helps students to more wide-awake competence in reading and evaluating the kinds of specific text structures they are helped to compose.

We argue that if our students are to meet or even exceed the CCSS, they need far more than the knowledge of formulas. The seminal work of George Hillocks (1986a, 1986b) provides a useful framework for understanding just what more is involved.

Composing to plan: developing knowledge of purpose and context

Hillocks emphasizes that all composing (as well as all reading) is motivated by a purpose and is situated in both an immediate context and a wider context (Hillocks, 1995). Those contexts have dramatic effects on what and how one writes. The CCSS document concurs that students who are college and career ready have to "adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline" (p. 7).

Knowledge of purpose and context is a prerequisite kind of knowledge to motivated reading and writing. Inquiry approaches, in which units of instruction are framed as problems to be solved, provide knowledge of purpose and context. Students know why they are reading and writing, what they will produce as a result, and how the meanings they will construct and the texts they will compose will count for them personally, in terms of the unit, for their classmates, and out in the world.

For example, I am currently teaching a unit on *Romeo and Juliet* framed by the essential question: "What makes and breaks relationships?" Asking this question suggests not only that we'll have to do a lot of reading and thinking about relationships, but suggests the other texts and data we will consider as part of this unit: love songs, love poems, fables about relationships, short stories, informational articles about friendship and other kinds of relationships, as well as photos, artwork and YouTube videos and other popular culture treatments exploring the topic. The question also focuses our attention not only on Romeo and Juliet, but Romeo and Friar Lawrence, Juliet and her nurse, Juliet and her family, Lord and Lady Capulet, and many other relationships in the play. This essential question also clearly leads to the composing of an argument of judgment that will answer the question. We are focused on mining the texts we read, as well as our own experience, in service of getting the stuff to write our argument. Answering the question will provide useful concepts and strategies within the unit, but also in our lives as we navigate many different kinds of relationships with others.

If, however, I wanted my students to compose not an argument but a different kind of text as a culminating project, I could simply reframe the question, and thus the problem to be solved, to lead in that direction. So, for instance, the essential question "What is a good relationship?" would lead to an extended definition. "What are the most important differences between good and poor relationships?" leads to comparing and contrast-

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by Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, Boise State University *continued from page 2*

ing. "What kinds of healthy relationships are there?" requires a classification. "What could society do to promote good relationships?" results in a problem-solution paper or an argument of policy.

More composing to plan: Learning how to get the stuff/Procedural knowledge of substance

As noted by many researchers, activity in American schools tends to emphasize transmitting information and helping students develop and articulate declarative knowledge. But the CCSS emphasize procedural knowledge. Take a look at the verbs that introduce the anchor standards for writing: write, write, write, produce, develop, use, conduct, gather, draw, write. If the CCSS emphasized declarative knowledge, the anchor standards would instead be introduced with verbs like recognize, identify, and repeat.

Once writers have a purpose and "context of use" for their learning and composing, the next step is obviously to find and develop the data they will use in their writing. This is what Hillocks calls the essence of inquiry: knowing how to get the stuff to write about. As a researcher and writer myself, I know that much of my effort is in formulating a problem to solve, reading widely to find out what is already known, and then developing methods to get the data I need to address that problem and enter a conversational niche with new data and a fresh perspective. I typically spend about 80% of my time on any writing project on what I and my co-authors call "composing to plan" – developing a compelling question to answer, understanding the context of the problem and the audience who would be interested in what we will write, creating and using appropriate methods to get the necessary data. These processes are required by the CCSS emphasis on student research.

Composing to practice: learning to shape material into powerful texts/procedural knowledge of form

Once I have collected my data and have the stuff to write about, I spend significant time selecting the data that tells the most compelling, on-point and useful story to my audience. I then spend time shaping the data into the conventional forms that will do the work. Perhaps the resulting text has the overall structure of an argument of judgment, with embedded classifications, comparisons and definitions, leading to a concluding argument of policy about what teachers and schools should do. This is how we structured and shaped our research on boys and literacy when we reported it in *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys* (Smith and Wilhelm, 2002).

This shaping and representing of material into recognized thought patterns is what we call "composing to practice," and it develops procedural knowledge of form – i.e. learning how to shape and express material into conventional text structures in order to achieve particular meanings and effects, a special emphasis of the CCSS anchor standards. As an experienced writer, I do lots of practicing shaping my data when I am writing something new. Our students, who may have little or no experience with the crux moves of argument (e.g. citing data, forming warrants that provide evidentiary reasoning) or the crux moves of defining (e.g. articulating criteria for being in a class and the unique features of the individual that differentiate it from the rest of the class) will need much more extensive practice.

Cognitive scientists have long recognized that declarative knowledge is learned best through the development and use of procedural knowledge, and that learning in this way turns information into generative and usable concepts. In other words, you cannot think like a mathematician, knowing how to find the salient quantitative details, translating and shaping these into the right operations to solve a particular problem, unless you learn your math facts and can infer proper operations for particular problems. Declarative knowledge is developed, consolidated, and made conceptual as you do so. Likewise, you can't write an argument unless you understand what counts as data and deeply understand that data. You likewise must learn how to cite data and reason about it to connect it to your claim – putting that data into the shape of an argument by adding evidentiary reasoning. You develop declarative knowledge and make it more conceptual, generative and usable as you operate on it.

The importance of practicing how to find, cite, analyze, interpret, express and represent material into the logic of chronology (in narrative), of categorization (in informational texts), and of evidentiary reasoning (in argument) has been underestimated. In fact, we think that practice has been undervalued and underused in instruction in the writing process and in problem-solving of all kinds.

Let's take the example of a basketball coach. The coach will spend the majority of time during a season reviewing player skills, drilling and practicing what needs to be learned, reviewing and applying all manner of plays and strategies. There will be scrimmages to approximate the game situation and performance. Then finally the season begins, but practice and revisions continue. In my own life, I'm a competitive Nordic marathon skier. When I look at my workout logs throughout a season, I'm skiing about 1800 kilometers each year for about 200 kilometers of racing. So 90% of my time is spent practicing technique, developing endurance and the like. If I add my weight training and off-season training, my planning and practicing is about 99% of my time compared to my actual racing performance time.

Drafting and Finalizing: consolidating the five kinds of knowledge

It's well understood that expert writers spend time drafting ideas, revising their compositions in big ways by deleting, adding, changing and moving segments of texts - often to change the global structuring of that text to hone its meaning and effect, as well as editing, proofreading and amending their work on the local phrase and sentence levels.

In our approach, we support writers through this process and spend special attention on a few grammatical moves that are rewarded as particularly useful and powerful in the context of specific text structures. Drafting and finalizing are kinds of composing that integrate and consolidate all five kinds of knowledge, as declarative knowledge of substance and of form are used by the author, but also by peer editors who name what has been articulated, test achievement against critical standards, and discuss how substance has been shaped to achieve certain ends.

Composing to transfer: Continued consolidation and integration of all five kinds of knowledge

Finally, students need to be provided with extensive opportunities to compose to transfer. As we've argued elsewhere (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006, 2010), we believe the issue of transfer is perhaps the

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by Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, Boise State University *continued from page 3*

single most important issue we need to address as teachers. We need always to think about how today's activity prepares students for the next class, the next unit, work in other subjects, composing outside school, their educational futures, and their lives outside school. We think that teachers assume transfer will occur. The research base says otherwise. Perkins and Salomon (1988) argue that if we want students to apply what they learn in new contexts that differ from the ones in which they initially learned the material, we have to give them conscious control over what they have learned. They call this *high-road transfer* and emphasize that naming is part of conscious competence. As a consequence, we think it's crucially important for teachers to give students the daily opportunity to reflect on and name what they are learning and how they are progressing (e.g. through formative assessments), and afterwards to reflect deeply on what they composed and to articulate the procedural knowledge they employed so that they can transfer that knowledge to their subsequent learning and writing. In fact, the requirement to reflect and provide process descriptions of one's problem-solving and composing is a feature of the draft performance items on the Smarter Balanced test and many other of the next generation of international assessments.

Conclusion: The power of practice

In David Shenk's book *The Genius in all of Us* (2010) he provides substantial reviews from the recent research in cognitive science and neuroscience. His point can be summarized thus: Talent does not exist *a priori*, it is developed through a process of extensive practice. Expertise is a specific response to environmental demands and is the result of "deliberate practice," nurturance, and reflection over time.

This is great news because it means that all of our students can become more expert composers and readers of informational, argument and narrative texts ***if*** we provide purposeful contexts for composing and using these texts, lots of practice and assistance over time for planning and forming them, and lots of feedback that covers the five kinds of knowledge and the five kinds of composing.

The famous Anders Ericsson research (e.g. Ericsson & Lehman, 1996, and made famous by Malcolm Gladwell) established that 10,000 hours of focused, deliberate practice is necessary to gain expertise, based partly on his finding that practice animates neurons, and builds neural pathways through the brain, which builds ever-evolving new capacities. He also found that 3,000 hours of focused practice, practice that explicitly pushes one's capacities in the direction of expertise, is necessary to competence with any complex repertoire of skills, like those required for reading and writing. Are our students getting 3,000 hours of practice in reading and writing during their schooling? We don't think so.

To summarize Ericsson: Talent is the result of acquired skill. Skill acquisition requires taking a long and incremental view, constant practice, reflection, and the willingness to take risks and innovate. Think of the lessons of this research for us as teachers, and also for our students. Think of the promise of the CCSS if teachers K-12 work on the same few generative anchor standards for reading and composing informational, argument and narrative text throughout the twelve years of a students' schooling, putting their own teacherly insights and innovations to play in service of this project.

In this regard, it's important to note that the CCSS are part of a systemic and international educational movement, but they are only one part. They provide solid and generative goals, but not the contexts for reaching them, nor the necessary methods and materials for achieving them. This is what must be determined by professional teachers in the contexts of their own classrooms, where we will all need to cultivate motivation, provide assistance and prodigious amounts of guided practice, and engage our students in experiencing the rewards that come from visible signs of actual accomplishment and from doing significant work together (this last section adapted from Wilhelm, Smith and Fredricksen, 2013, pp. 193-194).

In summary, if students are to meet the CCSS anchor standards, to become college and career-ready (and citizenship-ready) writers, we need to get to work. We think that our own research (and that of many others like Hillocks) shows that the best way of ensuring that this will happen is by developing all five kinds of knowledge by engaging students in all five kinds of composing, particularly composing to practice and to transfer.

Jeff will provide a highly interactive workshop on how to teach the reading and writing of arguments and informational texts like summarizing and defining using the five kinds of knowledge and composing as teaching heuristics at this year's SRIG at IRA, to be held Saturday, April 20, 2013 from 3:00 to 5:45 p.m.

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Moving Beyond the Same Old, Same Old: Cultivating Student Curiosity

by Kathy Moore

This morning, flying across the country to an education conference, I'm eavesdropping on the conversation between my two seatmates – strangers an hour ago, now steeped in a conversation about life and learning. He's talking about transistors and electronics, and she's asking probing questions, thinking in metaphor, and making broad connections to the way the brain works. He's drawing models in her notebook as he talks, then she takes the page, and continues to question, covering the page with words. It's a fascinating conversation and I'm suddenly grateful for this uncomfortable seat on this long flight.

Their conversation takes me back to the learning that I experienced at another conference I attended earlier this year. That was a gathering of more than 1,300 university professors and educational researchers from around the globe. The sessions offered a broad range of topics and disciplines, and although I am a literacy specialist, I found myself drawn to sessions outside of my field, outside my comfort zone. Curiosity is a powerful motivator.

At this conference, Sandy Gillis of Simon Fraser University in Canada taught a session on image and insight. There were only a handful of us in the room; Gillis sat in a circle with the participants, a marker in her hand, a white board beside her. Over the next two hours, she guided us through the process of solving mathematical puzzles, paying attention to the moment we discovered a pattern, or solved a problem, noting that we each felt a physical, visceral response in that moment. The puzzles grew increasingly difficult, but we continued through the process until we reached that moment of insight necessary for authentic learning to take place, a practice that has grown much less evident in public school classrooms over the past decade or so.

The following day, one of the sessions I attended featured a review of literature dealing with the process of concept mapping in mathematics, presented by Vito Ferrante of the University of San Francisco. He shared the pedagogical differences between expert and student generated concept maps, illustrating the research that shows how learning sticks when students make connections themselves. A concept map is a visual organization and representation of knowledge, showing the relationships among ideas. This is certainly not new thinking, but one that I've been exploring lately as I wrestle with the instructional shifts necessary to make the new standards, invoked by the language of the Common Core, meaningful and worth the effort for teachers. These shifts require a bit of faith – they veer us off course from the comfortable realm of the traditional classroom to the more uncharted terrain of inquiry and discovery learning.

These conference sessions got me thinking about the graphic organizers (a form of ready-made concept map) that we often give to students to scaffold their learning. I was considering how they might in fact be detrimental to the learning process, limiting understanding and disallowing insight. This thinking supports work I did last year with elementary math teachers where we were introducing students to the idea of equation without numbers based on the eight mathematical practices in the Common Core State Standards. At first we gave the students this type of organizer, _____ + _____ = _____. In the second go round, when we instead gave them a blank sheet of paper, they began adding many variables and doing much more sophisticated work than just filling in the blanks (for example, a fourth grader wrote "rythem [sic] + sound + mucseles [sic] + mind + tap shoes – music = acapella (tap dancing without music. You ARE the music)." Students were experiencing the relationships among variables in a math sentence prior to working with the numbers, a process that supports understanding beyond rote memorization.

Back to the conference. When it ended, while waiting in line for the shuttle, I was eavesdropping on a different conversation between two college professors from the Midwest. I was struck by their passion and their intellect. One of the professors was holding a book, and I strained to see the title, which turned out to be *Creating Innovators* by Tony Wagner. If someone so smart and so passionate was reading that book, I thought, it certainly merited a look. Based on her unspoken recommendation, I bought it the next day.

Moving Beyond the Same Old, Same Old: Cultivating Student Curiosity

by Kathy Moore

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That, I think, is education in its truest form. We're curious, we pay attention to the world, we act, we learn, we grow.

These days, all across the U.S. we're working hard at making sense of the Common Core. I'm heartened by the lively conversation around instruction and student learning, but at the same time, I'm wary. There is much room for misinterpretation and misappropriation. The challenge for all of us will lie in how to foster curiosity, how to teach the art of paying attention, how to inspire students to act with intention, how to encourage them to be responsible for their own learning, and how to support an environment where we all continue growing as learners.

It is by no means an easy task, but it is crucial.

In the Wagner book, he explores many interesting questions and shares stories of the paths that led innovators to innovation. For me, one of the most innovative concepts is Wagner's placement of QR (Quick Response) Codes throughout the text. There are numerous embedded codes linked to supplemental information, beginning with a short video clip of Thomas Friedman and ending with a link to a regularly updated website of information beyond publication of the book. I started thinking about the changing face of literacy, our broadened definitions of text, and the power that we could give students by introducing them to the idea of creating codes and embedding them into their work; for example, an argumentative essay with embedded statistics, articles, videos to substantiate their claims, much as Wagner does in his book.

Recently, I was working with a group of eighth grade teachers. They teach the book *Whirligig* at the end of the year, and they were thinking about how to make their teaching more aligned to the standards. We had done some work with concept mapping, and they started exploring ways that they could incorporate that into their teaching – perhaps growing a concept map together as a class, or maybe by letting the students explore their thinking and the connections that occur to them as they move through the text. They could start with a character, or a theme, a question, or anything else that they were interested in exploring. The teachers were having the same kind of insight in their collaboration as the afternoon wore on that I experienced in Sandy Gillis's session at the education conference. They started concept mapping their own thinking and the room was filled with energy and wonder.

At some point, I mentioned the Wagner book and I explained a little bit about the thinking I had been doing with embedding QR codes into student work. A proverbial light bulb went off in Jordan's head and she blurted out, "They could add these to their concept maps *if they want*. "Two great things were happening in that moment:

1) A group of teachers were actively engaged in the kind of work that they should be doing with students - learning based on inquiry, discovery, insight, synthesis, analysis, exploration…

   and

2) "…*if they want*," Jordan said, supporting that foundational idea of choice as a motivator, and of doing the work that authentically supports learning, rather than doing an activity to simply perform on a test or meet a teacher requirement for a grade.

The work we've done with the standards to date highlights the radical shift in instructional practices that *all* teachers are being asked to make. We're asking teachers to see themselves as scholars and researchers; in order to move their students to higher levels of thinking, they must engage in higher order thinking as well. This is less about materials and more (much more) about instruction. It requires time for thoughtful collaboration and inquiry.

Recently our district office received a box of materials that purport to support common core. Reading through the texts, it looks a lot like the same old same old to me. I noticed several short reading passages followed by a page of questions, with little effort to introduce higher order thinking or collaboration. As an educator, this worries me. Business as usual will not help our students become thoughtful, involved, informed, empathetic contributors to the human race.

These are exciting times in education. Our job is to live wide-awake lives, to pay attention (perhaps to eavesdrop), and to teach our students to do the same.

Kathy Moore's passion is literacy; she serves as the Curriculum Coordinator in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District and as a staff developer throughout the greater Bay Area. Kathy also teaches teen fiction writing workshops and is an instructor and research adviser at St. Mary's College of California.

prediction for April 2013

58th Annual IRA Convention: Making a Difference

April 19-22, 2013
San Antonio, TX

The Secondary Reading Interest Group will sponsor the following session:

Saturday, April 20, 2013 3:00 PM - 5:45 PM

Teaching the Reading and Composing of Texts to Meet and Exceed the CCSS

The new Common Core State Standards focus on teaching students to read and write about texts of "adequate range and complexity" (Coleman and Pimental, *Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3-12*). In short, in a world of increased literacy demands, students will be required to deepen their reading and writing skills to help position them for college and/or career readiness. To reach this deeper level of reading and writing complexity, many students will need careful and purposeful instruction. This presentation will address methods teachers can utilize to help secondary students to meet the rigorous reading and writing demands of the Common Core State Standards.

Teaching the Reading and Composing of Informational/Explanatory Texts/Jeff Wilhelm, Idaho State University, Boise, Idaho

In this interactive session, Jeff Wilhelm will explore the contexts and processes for teaching the five kinds of knowledge and the five kinds of composing necessary to successfully read or compose anything. This model will be applied directly to the teaching of informational/explanatory texts, both in general, and in the specific case of summary. Special attention will be given to how this model will help students make the critical moves required by the conventions of specific text types to meet and exceed the CCSS standards for reading and writing informational texts as well as CCSS for literacy in the disciplines.

Strategies for Teaching the Reading and Composing of Narrative Texts/Kelly Gallagher, Magnolia High School, Anaheim, California

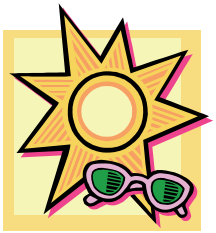
In this session, Kelly Gallagher will explore the importance of teaching students to critically read narrative texts, as well as strategies for improving students' abilities to write in this discourse as well. In an age where students are increasingly being asked to read and write critically about expository texts, this session will examine why it remains important that students are still given opportunities to sharpen what Judith Langer calls "literary thinking." This session will explore why literature and poetry should remain a priority in the language arts classroom, and participants will explore specific strategies to help students read and write deeply in this strand.

Research Roundup: What Are We Learning About Strategy, Research and Design to Successfully Teach Secondary Learners to Read and Write Complex Text/Julie Meltzer, Public Consulting Group, Boston, Massachusetts

For many secondary students, the CCSS will require them to read and write in much more sophisticated ways than is typically now the case. In this short research roundup, Julie Meltzer will share what researchers around the country are discovering as key to successfully supporting students to read and write in the ways described in the CCSS and how organizations, districts and curriculum developers are changing the way curriculum, instruction and assessment are designed and implemented to support these changes. What is research suggesting that teachers really need to know and do to meet this challenge of truly preparing students for college, careers, and life-long learning? The presentation will conclude with a brief discussion of Carol Dweck's research on mindset and how the mindsets of teachers and students may be a critical ingredient for success.

Overcoming Summer Reading Loss: One School's Approach

by Kristie Schmidt



Summer reading program

Schools grappling with loss of learning over the summer have often turned to summer reading requirements as a preventative measure. In our school, the program is also used to meet NEASC requirements for oral presentations. Ten years ago, we took a hard look at our summer reading approach and its inadequacies, ranging from finding a suitable reading and engagement level for all students to honoring student choice to the logistics of teachers in all disciplines evaluating student success. If we really wanted all students to read, to become lifelong learners via reading and to see adults in the building as readers, we needed to revamp our program. Thus was born our student-faculty Summer Reading Committee.

Our program is a Board of Education graduation requirement attached to .25 credits each year and students must pass all four years. To ensure that all students could succeed, we recruited voracious readers, grades 9-12, but also boys and reluctant readers. A diversity of reading interests and abilities serves the committee best. (After 10 years of refining this program, we now have to turn students away.) Student members satisfy their graduation requirements through their activities on the committee (nominating, vetting, and writing promos for books) and do not have to "report out" the second and third day of school as do non-committee member students. The new program requires students to read one book from the required list and one book of choice (at the student's appropriate reading level based on their English class level. We do not subscribe to any leveling programs). Post the new program and its requirements, we face very few students who need credit recovery, but we allow them to do so by reporting to any adult member of the committee during the school year. New students who arrive at school no earlier than two weeks before it begins have their requirement waived.

To emphasize the role of reading in adult staff lives, we typically have on the volunteer committee our computer tech, the administrative assistant to the athletic department, and a guidance counselor in addition to English teachers and the librarian. Everyone on the committee says it is their favorite and most enjoyable committee (we do provide snacks). Over the years we have included math and social studies teachers and we always open book nominations to all staff via email should they not be able to commit for the committee's duration. We still struggle to have a consistent male presence. Our school staff is predominantly female, even in the math and science departments (which certainly has its benefits, just not providing literate male role models).

Students and teachers work side by side once a week for an hour after school from late January to early May in order to form a final list of approximately 25 to 30 book choices. Student members must bring two nominations to the initial meetings. Students are required to attend a minimum of six meetings to assure credit. The final list spans varied time periods, cultures, geography, author gender, male and female student appeal, and a multitude of different subject areas and reading levels. We keep a spreadsheet to keep track and share this criteria early on with all members in print throughout the vetting process. Every book must be vetted by at least two students and one adult before adoption. Every committee member's vote is equal; no adult outranks a student member. In fact, our printed list of committee members in our summer reading booklet (see link below) does not designate student or staff.

When it comes to mature issues of profanity or sex or violence, the committee decides collectively whether the book's overall value, its message, its impact, is worth potentially fighting for. We have successfully included books on issues such as drug use (*Tweak* by Nic Sheff) and binge drinking in college (*Smashed* by Karen Zoilkas). Students have continued conversations about these books in their health classes and with their parents long after their summer reading presentations. Upon occasion, we have designated a book of a sensitive nature for juniors and seniors only, *Our Guys: The Glen Ridge Rape and the Secret Life of the Perfect Suburb.*

One area we continue to revisit is how to best assess the program. We have changed our assessments over the years, always requiring a visual element to the required book presentation but that visual element has evolved from a menu of choices including grab bags of artifacts to timelines to Guides for the Uniformed to iMovie trailers. Conscious of trying to prevent student cheating (sharing of projects or copying a timeline provided in the book) we are also particularly careful about choosing books that are not easily Sparknoted. But what can one do to combat Amazon reviews that give all away?

Another lingering problem is how to deal with classics for which information online is so accessible, as well as trying to prevent students from simply accessing movie adaptations instead of reading. A few years ago, we added a movie/book comparison with very specific instructions. We have chosen popular movies keeping accessibility in mind (recent ones include *Shutter Island* and *Moneyball*).

Our latest innovation is a collaboration with the local library. They offer a book discussion during the summer for one of our titles (one year *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot). Students earn a certificate testifying to their satisfaction of the credit requirements. They present that certificate to their advisory/homeroom teacher and then only have to present their book of choice. This new opportunity has driven teen attendance to the local library.

Overcoming Summer Reading Loss: One School's Approach

by Kristie Schmidt *continued from page 8*

In September, we ask all advisory teachers to provide us with a tally of books read from the required list and titles of choice books. This data enables us to see what genres are most/least popular and gives us potential titles for the next year. We have come to value niche books, of only 5-10 readers, but love knowing that even those few readers found something of interest. To date, no book has been unread. And that is the greatest validation of all.

Kristie Schmidt (kschmidt@vrhs.com) is an English teacher at Valley Regional High School in Deep River, CT. She and her English colleague, Carolyn Crehan (ccrehan@vrhs.com.) alternate chairing the Summer Reading Committee.

Booklet: http://www.region4schools.com:8080/vr/documents/2012%20Summer%20Reading%20Booklet.pdf.

Rubric: http://www.region4schools.com:8080/vr/documents/summer%20reading%20rubric.pdf

What are we learning as we implement the Common Core State Standards for ELA & Literacy?

by Dr. Julie Meltzer

Dr. Julie Meltzer, president-elect of the Secondary Reading Interest Group, will be presenting with Jeff Wilhelm and Kelly Gallagher at the IRA convention in San Antonio. Below, she shares some thoughts on her upcoming session:

In my session *Research Roundup: What are we learning about strategy, research and design to successfully teach secondary learners to read and write complex text* I want to provide some insights into what educators around the country are doing to support students to be successful as readers and writers with demands specified in the Common Core State Standards. I am particularly interested in how curriculum, instruction and assessment *design* is changing as educators grapple with how to scaffold students to higher levels as readers and writers. Teachers who are working together and can claim ongoing success with underprepared high school students or with English learners make me hopeful, as do the contexts within which they teach. As the field continues to grapple with changing paradigms, I am delighted when I find passionate educators working systemically to make a difference. The effect of their collective efforts is so much more than what can be accomplished by excellent teachers in isolation.

Currently I am interested in how D.T Conley's definition of college and career readiness: content knowledge, cognitive skills (e.g. problem solving, research), non-cognitive skills (e.g., perseverance, collaboration) and real life application (including understanding and the ability to negotiate the context of higher education) – are reflected in the CCSS. I am focusing on programs and approaches that are combining these to good effect.

I am also intrigued by how Carol Dweck's work on mindsets intersects with content literacy teaching and learning. I think that in the area of literacy, closely held identities as "good" or "bad" readers and/or writers can determine much about how well students do and how hard they try. We have all seen how resistance by students who are convinced they read and/or write poorly can undermine even a determined teacher's ability to stick to high expectations and to help students reach high levels of success. When students hold a fixed mindset of themselves as "unable" this can also undermine a student's confidence and sense of efficacy to the point where the student can lose the ability to reach his or her potential. In these cases, we need more guidance about what we can do to interrupt what can be a destructive spiral for both teachers and students. I believe that Dweck's work offers some much needed insight.

The scope of the current CCSS mandate is quite large and demands our work to be intentional and explicit, collaborative and calibrated. It is true that excellent teachers have always supported students to grow as readers, writers and thinkers. However, this new context is quite different than what we have ever before attempted to do. I am very concerned by what I see as "tweaking" and attempts to suggest that the CCSS is basically "what we already do."

I am also dismayed by the multiple levels of misinterpretation and crystallization that are already occurring as to what the CCSS mean or do not mean. I do not claim to understand all of the Common Core State Standards, their implications or how to implement them. As I learn more about the CCSS and work with educators and researchers throughout the country, I continue to be impressed by the depth and breadth of the CCSS ELA & Literacy standards.

However, while there may be many paths to helping students address the standards, there are clearly types of curriculum and instruction – and assessment – that are NOT aligned with the standards. Chief among these is the reduction of reading and writing to formulas or the assertion that the progress one makes as a middle or high school reader or writer is linear and can be completely defined and measured through a progression of discrete skills.

Inherent in the standards – and what behooves us as educators – is for students to regularly read books and texts worth reading and respond to questions worth asking. We want students to have frequent opportunities to talk and think together aloud and in writing about ideas developed through in-depth experiences with reading and writing a wide variety of literary and informational texts. Our ultimate goal is for students to grow into clear, competent communicators who have something to say. The intent of the standards is that this type of teaching and learning would *routinely* occur within and across content areas. It is our responsibility to ensure this is the case.

This is easier said than done, of course! Yet educators throughout the country are working together to figure out how to do it. In the ses-

What are we learning as we implement the Common Core State Standards for ELA & Literacy?

by Dr. Julie Meltzer *continued from page 10*

sion, I intend to bring you some of the early results we are seeing from CCSS implementation as well as some of the more interesting approaches teachers are using throughout the country.

I am hopeful that we will be able to take on the collective challenge of supporting the vast majority of our students to be able to use reading and writing as a means to grow into themselves as they take their places as citizens of the world. I look forward to sharing what the research is suggesting and to hearing about how you are aligning teaching and learning with the CCSS – and what happens when you do!

For further reading:

Conley, D. T. (2010). ***College and Career Ready: Helping all Students Succeed Beyond High School***. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dweck, C. S. (2006). ***Mindset.*** New York: Random House

Dr. Julie Meltzer.....

Dr. Julie Meltzer.....

Dr. Julie Meltzer is Strategic Education Advisor for Public Consulting Group. Julie is currently supporting or leading projects related to improving literacy and learning and implementing the Common Core State Standards in Maine, Florida, and Indiana. A sought-after keynote speaker, author, reviewer, conference presenter, and workshop leader, Julie consistently seeks to help educators effectively apply promising research-based practices to support the literacy development and learning needs of students in grades K-12. As director of the Adolescent Literacy Project at the LAB at Brown University, Julie developed the Adolescent Literacy Support Framework (2002, 2009). In 2006, she developed the *Taking Action* Literacy Leadership Model with Dr. Judith Irvin of Florida State University as part of a Carnegie funded initiative. She is coauthor of *Taking Action on Adolescent Literacy: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders* (ASCD, 2007), *Meeting the Challenge of Adolescent Literacy* (IRA, 2009), and *Taking the Lead on Adolescent Literacy: Action Steps for School-Wide Success* (Corwin, 2010); author of *Adolescent Literacy Resources: Linking Research and Practice* (Education Alliance, 2002); and coeditor of *Thinkquiry Toolkit I: Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Development Across the Content Areas* (PCG, 2011). She has developed many resources for professional development and technical assistance, including content for several professional development websites. Julie was a member of the literacy faculty for New Leaders and serves on the research review team for the National Academy Foundation. She can be reached at jmeltzer@pcgus.com.

Canadian Network of IRA Councils (CNIRAC)
&
Canadian Special Interest Group (C-SIG)

You are cordially invited to

The Fifteenth Annual Canadian Reception

at the 58th Annual Convention of the
International Reading Association

Saturday, April 20, 2013
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Salon A
San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter Hotel
101 Bowie Street, San Antonio, TX 78205

Light Refreshments & Cash Bar

Sponsored by:

Canadian Publishing Companies
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Hosted by:

Canadian Network of IRA Reading Councils (CNIRAC)
Canadian Special Interest Group on Literacy (CSIG-L)
Secondary Reading Interest Group (SRIG)

Regular Meeting of the Secondary Reading Interest Group of the IRA

May 2, 2012
9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
Chicago, Illinois

Call to Order: Lori DiGisi, President, convened the regular meeting of the Secondary Reading Interest Group of the IRA on May 2, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. in Chicago, Illinois.

Old Business
Reports: Readings of the Treasurer's report and Secretary's minutes of the May 10, 2011 meeting were accepted and approved. Reports were made available for those interested.

Introduction of 2011-2012 Officers:

- President – Lori DiGisi
- President Elect – Kelly Gallagher
- Secretary – Kathy Galvin
- Treasurer – Rita Noon
- Past President – MaryAnn Liberati (in absentia)
- Past President – Cynthia Greenleaf (advising)

New Business
Installation of 2012-2013 Officers introduced by Lori DiGisi:

- President – Kelly Gallagher
- President Elect – Julie Meltzer
- Secretary – Kathy Galvin
- Treasurer – Rita Noon

Close of Business

SRIG Session: "Beyond the Common Core Reading Standards: Pathways to Lifelong Literacy"
Lori DiGisi - Facilitator

Cris Tovani
"Workshop Model is Still a Way to Assess, Adjust, and Engage"
C. Tovani shared how she uses a workshop model to support and scaffold her most struggling readers. Tovani modeled how she is able to give students "real time" feedback so they can re-enter the learning process. Using formative assessment data she collects during the work time, Tovani shared how she uses students' thinking to plan her next day's mini-lesson. Participants saw examples of student work and saw how to begin managing the demands of differentiation.

Carol Booth Olson
"Helping Secondary English Learners Meet the common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards: A Cognitive Strategies Approach to Writing Text-Based Analytical Essays on Theme"
C. Booth Olson focused on a nationally-recognized reading/writing intervention designed to help English Learners in a large, urban school district develop interpretive reading and analytical writing abilities by exposing them to the cognitive strategies that research indicates experienced readers access when they construct meaning from and with texts. Booth Olson also focused on helping students deepen their interpretative reading and analytical writing skills as called for in the Common Core Standards.

Kelly Gallagher
"Beyond the Common Core Reading Standards: Pathways to Lifelong Literacy"
K. Gallagher discussed how the Common Core Standards clearly delineate the academic and functional reading expectations at each grade level; yet virtually ignore recreational reading – the kind of reading educators want all students to be doing years after graduation. He focused on three key factors to building and fostering lifelong recreational reading habits in the age of the Common Core Standards. These key factors include: Motivation, Access to Interesting Books, and the Negative Effects Grading Has on Building Recreational Readers.

Drawing for Prizes

Adjournment: President Kelly Gallagher adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Galvin, Secretary

Stay part of the Secondary Reading Community . . . Renew today!!

Membership Matters — With increasing attention to concerns about adolescent literacy achievement, brought about by student performance on high profile tests like the PISA and NAEP and recent broadly disseminated reports on the literacy learning needs of adolescents, we have been given an unprecedented opportunity. The Secondary Reading Interest Group can work within IRA to build a stronger presence for secondary literacy concerns, stronger representation of these concerns and interests on the conference programs, and more attention to older students' needs in general.

As your president, I would like to encourage you to build this effort. You may not be aware that IRA awards time on the national conference based on the size of special interest groups. The more members we have, the longer the time given over to our program, and the greater the size of the meeting room assigned. To be counted, SRIG members must also be current in their IRA membership.

I would like to ask you to please take a moment to check on your IRA membership and renew it if necessary. In addition, please feel welcome to pass this newsletter on to others in your professional circles who may be interested in joining our Secondary Reading Interest Group. A membership form for the SRIG is included on the back page of every newsletter. Help build a stronger presence for secondary literacy and adolescent learners within IRA!

Our $10 yearly dues help to defray costs for newsletter preparation and mailing, for meeting expenses, and for occasional actions taken by the membership.

The Mission of the Secondary Reading Interest Group is to:

- encourage the study of the reading process at the secondary level;
- encourage research and evaluation relating to secondary reading programs;
- act as a clearinghouse on secondary reading;
- provide a network among secondary educators; and

The Philosophy of the Secondary Reading Interest Group is based on the belief that:

- reading is a process;
- literacy has value beyond economic benefits; and
- we have the resources to make significant and lasting changes in reading today.

IRA Secondary Reading Interest Group — Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____State_____Zip_____

Home Phone: ( )_____Fax_____ E-mail: _____

School Affiliation: _____

__School Reading Specialist (__middle __high) __College Professor __District Reading Specialist

__Classroom Teacher (__middle __high) __School Administrator __Other _____

IRA Membership #_____ Expiration Date _____ Renewal ___ New Member ___

Paid: Check ____ (made out to SRIG) Cash ____ **Mail to : Rita Noon, 2083 Lac Du Mont, Haslett, MI 48840**

Receipt

Received from:_____ Amount: $10.00

For membership in IRA Secondary Reading Interest Group (SRIG)

From: May 20____ to May 20____ Paid: Check____ Cash____

Rita Noon, Treasurer/Membership Chairperson

A Special Interest Group of the
INTERNATIONAL Reading Association