

The FLORIDA Reading JOURNAL

READING
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Places

In this issue...

Cutting Edge Reading Research

QR Codes and Reading

Supporting Reading Skills
Development - Summer Reading

Word Wallets and Other
Intervention Activities for Science
Vocabulary

Children's Book Award Results
and New Book List

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record assessment results remained the same or grew after participating in the summer reading program. Data retrieved from SRIs administered to students who were in second grades through fourth grades. Approximately 47% of participants and 49% of non-participants saw stability or gains in their SRI lexile scores.

Similar achievement was seen between male and female participants, and there were more male participants than female participants. Similarly, male and female non-participants showed similar results. This is important to note as reading is often viewed as a feminine activity and not of interest to many males (Scieszka, 2003). In this study, male students' interests were considered, and main characters in the texts used for group instruction were often male (Hansen & Zambo, 2010).

Although a significant difference was not found between treatment and control groups in this study, several aspects of the program appeared to be successful. Thirty-nine students participated regularly throughout the course of the summer with approximately 15 others attending sporadically. Attendance of students is important in summer programming as it provides participants with non-traditional instruction, an elevated level of engagement with literacy, and a positive influence on their reading abilities (Alexander et al., 2001; Bracey, 2002; Kim & White, 2011). Students were excited to attend the summer reading program, and each week they arrived early and ready to pick up where they left off the previous week. Students were reading and discussing what they read with their peers. Weekly library checkouts allowed students to select materials of their choice based on their interests leading to further engagement and confidence in reading (Gordon, 2008; Kim & White, 2011). These interests and continued engagement were often related to peer selections, book attractiveness, text appearance, author connections, and series involvement (Farris et al., 2009).

Future Planning

As programs similar to the one described continue to be developed with the hope of improving the reading skills of participants, there are several considerations that may assist with the program's success. For students to achieve their highest success in reading, it is imperative that learning opportunities be extended all year, and this means in many cases that school/home/community partnerships must be formed where all stakeholders are involved in the educational opportunities of the students (Alexander et al., 2001). A continued focus on the reading success of male students must also be considered. Including male role models as facilitators is a key component of males' reading success. Due to the lack of male teachers, especially in elementary schools, male community members can be recruited as facilitators in summer reading programs (Scieszka, 2003). Scieszka (2003) also supports the increased presence of positive male characters in the text being used as a way to further engage male readers that may not have a natural interest in reading. The addition of a parent or community component in a summer reading program may be an additional area of support that will benefit student in these efforts. Lever-Chain (2008) supports the inclusion of parental and community involvement in school programs as attitudes about reading are developed in the home even before students enter formal schooling.

To gain a full understanding of the effect a summer reading program may have on the reading achievement levels of students, further research is needed. A longitudinal study provided over the course of three summers with the same participating students will allow researchers to determine if a significant difference would occur over time. Additionally, the curriculum will need to be further developed, possibly focusing on the use of nonfiction text. This focus on nonfiction text can allow program facilitators the opportunity to engage students in nonfiction text which has

become a priority area especially in recent years.

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WHEN IT HURTS TO READ

Martha Limbocker, M.Ed.

INTRODUCTION

As a special education teacher, I've taught students diagnosed with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) for many years, in both public and private schools, and some of my students have been more memorable than others. In particular, I recall two seventh- and eighth-grade boys who looped with me in an affluent public middle school in Massachusetts. I was a special education teacher of a language-based reading and writing program for seventh- and eighth-graders. These students were cute and typical in many respects: they played football, teased girls, and texted during class. The boys were rough and tumble, citified, and couldn't care less about school.

In addition, these two boys came from broken families whose youthful parents were largely unprepared to make a living in the world. Both sets of parents were functionally illiterate, a shocking realization for me because the town was so upscale. As might be expected, these two boys had extreme difficulty with both expressive and receptive language. They couldn't read as well as they needed to in order to do grade-level work. And their written expression was even less. Not only was their handwriting illegible, but their thoughts were jumbled and sparsely composed as well.

At the time, my job was to help these boys pass state-mandated tests so they could receive their high school diplomas. No easy feat. I was handed a curriculum and told to teach them. But how? I wondered. What would capture their attention and sustain their interest? To me, this was an even bigger challenge. Thus

began my career challenge of teaching learning-disabled, non-readers to enjoy reading and to become life-long learners.

The purpose of this paper is to explore why students don't read. What motivates children to read? How can we teachers encourage students to read more? First, I will expand on the nature of non-reading among students. Next, I will explain why disinterest in reading exists. Then, I will discuss some possible solutions to the problem. And, finally, I will discuss some possible ways these solutions might be developed.

PROBLEM

It seems there are a number of reasons students of all abilities, not just those with learning differences, do not read. Reading is a flat, slow, and painstaking process for many, clearly an unappealing alternative to the flashing lights, sensational sounds and colors, and instant gratification that technology now provides.

For one thing, it seems that the reading done in school is irrelevant to many students. What is relevant or interesting to one person to read might not be to another. According to Moley, Bandré & George (2011), no two students have exactly the same reading abilities, nor are they alike in their level of physical, mental, emotional, and social development. Therefore, reading identical passages from a basal reader with an entire class could be quite demotivating because individuality is not taken into account.

Yet, as teachers, we're given a mandated curriculum of basal readers to use to teach reading. These basal readers include reading passages on preselected

topics that have been created by non-teachers (publishing companies). Basal readers provide prepared lessons, guided reading suggestions, worksheets, and tests. Most textbooks align with the Common Core test requirements to ensure students also get a dose of test preparation while they read.

There may be benefits to using basal readers. Using the same textbook for reading may help ensure each student receives consistent instruction. But in its consistency, the basal reader can quickly become one-size-fits-all. Its faithful use may appear to minimize bad teaching practices and help ensure teachers are all on the same page, literally. This behavioristic orientation to teaching puts the teacher in a passive role. The teacher receives and applies the reading knowledge as determined in advanced by the publishing companies in order to teach efficiently. But social efficiency deskills the teaching profession and, in turn, reduces student choice in all areas of education, including reading (Giroux, 1985).

Using the same reading textbooks can make teaching more consistent, more efficient, and predictable. But, according to Anyon (1980), there is a hidden agenda in school. The hidden agenda creates a social consequence for teaching reading in a predictable way. Our society reproduces itself, she argues, and our schools are one place where our values are reproduced and passed on. By relegating children to basal readers exclusively for their reading experiences, children may lose interest in reading altogether. A lack of reading motivation could be a price our society is paying for overlooking students' choice in their reading material.

CAUSES

One of the causes of lack of interest in reading is that reading is irrelevant to children. Children are active learners (Piaget, 1955). Based on his cognitive model of learning, Piaget believed the individual learner is an active constructor of knowledge, where the learner's own experiences and intellectual activities help him make meaning. Therefore, reading material that interests the individual learner has a better chance of capturing the child's attention and motivating him to read. Yet, by using basal readers, students' specific interests are disregarded and they are put in a passive role as learners. They are not allowed to follow individual reading interests, and as a result, reading becomes irrelevant to them.

Another cause of lack of reader motivation can be that teachers can feel pressured to teach in a way that isn't the most engaging or effective for students. Again, this is because many teachers are handed a curriculum and are told to teach it, while students are expected to learn it. There is no space for a child-centered approach to learning to read or reading for pleasure. As a consequence, students are left without reading choice and teachers are reduced to following generic reading programs. This cultural conformity stifles both teachers and students, and inhibits reader motivation.

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those who they consider to know nothing (Freire, 1998). With respect to reading, providing a set reading curriculum to students may give students the impression they know nothing and their opinions and tastes in reading don't count. It may undermine their self-confidence in selecting reading material and again, be quite demotivating.

Efficiency can be the cause of reader demotivation. While it's efficient to teach the same thing to each student, regardless of the students' interests, it's boring. School systems can try to keep teaching practices and reading curriculum consistent from grade to grade, year to year. But efficiency does not equate to motivation. In fact, efficiency can be quite dull.

Finally, another possible cause of reader demotivation is lack of encouragement and reading role models at home. While not directly within the control of school and teachers, families and home environments influence children's reading development. Reading is one activity where children follow examples set at home. If there is low literacy at home, then it would seem children would not be motivated to read.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

One alternative is to allow students to supplement school-mandated reading on a regular basis. Choice is quite motivating because children are meaning-makers and active learners. Students may feel more in control, more competent, and more motivated in school when they are able to express their preferences and make choices (Patall, 2011). This motivation carries over into reading when children are allowed to choose reading books in areas that interest them specifically. By being allowed and encouraged to read genres that interest them, students might read more.

Another idea is to devote part of a school day or week to literary cafés, where students can appreciate reading for pleasure. Students could visit a designated room in the school where they would be allowed to read books and magazines of their choosing for a set period of time. The atmosphere could be relaxed and inviting, with beanbag chairs, bottled water, and soft music playing, for instance. Children could learn to enjoy reading for pleasure in an

environment that simulated a coffee house or café. Comfort combined with student choice could help create a motivated student reader.

Another idea might be to focus less on reading skills and more on projects that require authentic reading (and writing), so reading skills can be taught in context. Whitehead would call this the "joy of discovery," where children discover for themselves the gratification and usefulness of authentic reading. An example of a reading project is writing a book review for a magazine or newspaper rather than a book report for the teacher. Another idea might be to write a class book and read it to a younger grade. Or students could write a puppet show based on a book they've read. They could create the puppets, the scene on a stage, and write a script based on a book of their choosing. Students must be made to feel they are studying something real, "not merely executing intellectual minuets" (Whitehead, 1929).

CONCLUSION

Clearly, students like to have a choice in what they do. In school, this is true for reading especially. Schools should allow teacher to exercise their professional judgment and students to follow their passions. When children are encouraged and intrinsically rewarded to read what delights and interest them, it is hoped they will read more. By trying some of these ideas to supplement school-mandated reading curriculum, teachers may ignite a love of reading in students who otherwise might not be interested.

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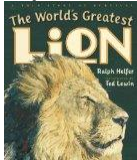
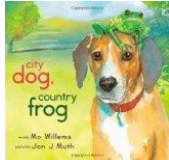
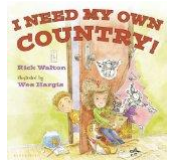
**CHILDREN'S
BOOK
AWARD**



BEE A READER!

Amanda Clabeaux & Barbara Burns

As you may know, the Children's Book Award Winners for 2013-2014 were:

<p><i>The World's Greatest Lion</i> Ralph Helfer</p> 	<p><i>City Dog, Country Frog</i> Mo Willems</p> 	<p><i>I Need My Own Country</i> Rick Walton</p> 
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The 2014-2015 Florida Reading Association's Children's Book Award Nominees are:

<p><i>No Pirates Allowed Said Library Lou</i> Ronda Gowler Greene</p> 	<p><i>The Black Rabbit</i> Philippa Leathers</p> 	<p><i>Who Goes There?</i> Karma Wilson</p> 
<p><i>Interrupting Chicken</i> David Ezra Stein</p> 	<p><i>A Butterfly Called Hope</i> Mary Alice Monroe</p> 	<p><i>Prairie Chicken Little</i> Jackie Mims Hopkins</p> 
<p><i>Balloon Trees</i> Danna Smith</p> 	<p><i>Lucky Ducklings</i> Eva Moore</p> 	<p><i>Voting for this year's books can be submitted at the Children's Book Award web site any time up to April 15, 2015. Book labels and voting stickers are available at http://www.flreads.org.</i></p>

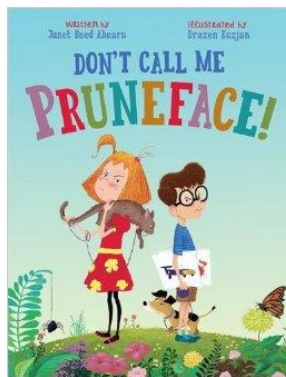
Bullying in Children's Literature: Resources for the Classroom

Book Reviews: Literature
Notable Books for Children and Young Adults
Ruth McKoy Lowery &
Suzanne Coatoam Chapman
University of Florida

School bullying among children and adolescents has drawn international attention in recent years. According to Garby (2013), all but one state have instituted harsher anti-bullying laws. Many school districts across the nation have enacted zero-tolerance policies for bullying and other aggressive behaviors (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). When considering an act of bullying, many may think of it as a binary relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. However, research has found that the effects of bullying are also seen in observers of bullying and those identified as "bully-victims" (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurst, 2009).

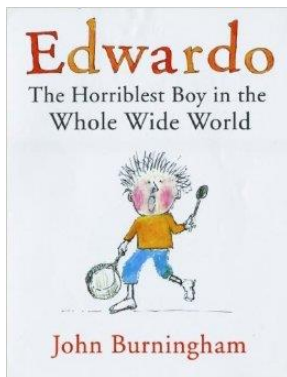
Bully-victims are "those who bully and have been bullied" (Espelage & Swearer, 2003, p. 373) and have been identified as students most at risk of developing deep anger and depression. It is important that the focus on bullying moves beyond the relationship between the bully and the victim to include what bullying does to the observer and factors that may contribute to the development of bullying behaviors. Garby (2013) determines that bullying goes beyond the school to include the home and community. As educators, we must consider *all* of those affected by bullying in order to establish a better prevention and intervention strategies and ascertain a safer educational environment (Goryl, Neilsen-Hewett, & Sweller, 2013).

The books selected for this column are intended to spark discussions on bullying with young children. Children's literature is a powerful tool that can serve as an inexpensive catalyst for conversations about bullying (Moulton, Heath, Prater, & Dyches, 2011). Sell (2002) posits, "Literature can function as a significant and democratic channel of human interactivity" (p. 1). Teachers can identify and manage students' behaviors to prevent development of bullying in the early years (Goryl et al., 2013). Most of the books selected are recent publications but we included a few "favorites" that have been integrated in classroom discussions.



Book Reviews:
Don't Call Me Prune Face! by Janet Reed Ahearn, illustrated by Drazen Kozjan. New York, NY: Disney Hyperion, 2010.
Paul tries to befriend his new neighbor,

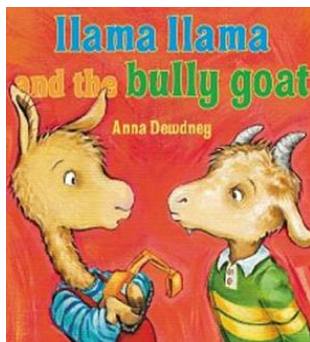
Prudence, who walks her cat on a leash. Yet, Prudence is "strange." She hurls insults at Paul and teases him because he wears glasses. Prudence makes up insulting names about Paul and his dog. As her name-calling escalates, Paul retaliates and calls her "Pruneface." He finally musters up the courage to tell her to stop picking on him, and the two soon become friends. Ahearn's story is a good discussion starter to help young children see how hurtful name-calling can be. Students can also discuss what steps to take when the adults they talk to seem to do nothing to alleviate the negative situation.



Edwardo: The Horriblest Boy in the Whole Wide World by John Burningham. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Edwardo is continually criticized by adults around him for being messy, nasty, and cruel. He is dubbed the

“horriblest boy in the whole world”. Edwardo becomes messier, nastier, and crueler. When the adults start praising him regardless of his behavior, Edwardo changes his behavior for the better. Although this story is simple, the message is strong. It illustrates the effects of both positive and negative reinforcements and their consequences. Teachers can lead students to understand that students who are “acting out” may themselves be experiencing hidden inner turmoil. Their actions could be a cry for help to change their present situation.

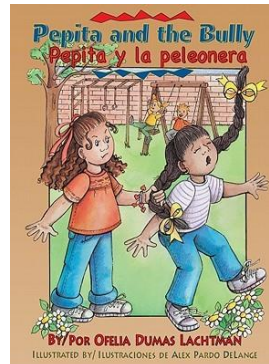


Llama Llama and the Bully Goat by Anna Dewdney. New York, NY: Viking, 2013.

Llama Llama and his friends have fun in school, writing, counting and drawing among other learning

activities. As the friends sing together during circle time, Gilroy Goat makes fun of them. On the playground, Gilroy kicks sand at his classmates, throws toys around, and refuses to cooperate. The classmates banded together and reported Gilroy to the teacher. Gilroy is punished and soon changes his behavior. Soon he and Llama Llama become friends and all is forgiven. Told through simple poetic lines, this

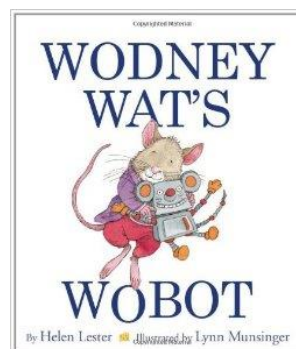
story shows children different situations they will be confronted with, and how to handle and combat bullying. Young children can strategize about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors.



Pepita and The Bully by Ofelia Dumas Lachtman, illustrated by Alex Pardo Delange. Houston, TX: Pinata, 2011.

After three days of persistent bullying at school, Pepita decides that she did not want to go back. Her tormentor, Babette, teases Pepita

about her name, pulls her braids and makes fun of her dog. When Pepita complains to the adults, they encourage her to be nice to Babette. She tries initially but when Babette continues to be mean, Pepita retaliates and quickly realizes that Babette cannot handle being bullied. The story can be used to talk about being a bully and being bullied, how one person experiences both. The story is the sixth book in a series about Pepita and is written in both English and Spanish. It is a great bilingual story to read aloud with a group of students.

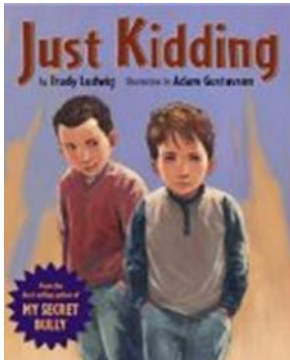


Wodney Wat's Wobot, by Helen Lester, illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2011.

Lester's latest book is a beautiful sequel to *Hooway for Wodney Wat* (1999). Rodney, or

Wodney, still struggles with pronouncing his “R’s”. He gets a beautiful surprise for his birthday, a robot that repeats everything Rodney says and corrects his “r” sounds too. When Camilla Capybara, the meanest rodent in

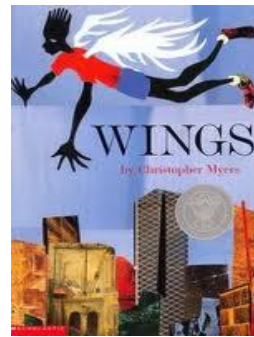
the school, reappears and resumes harassing her classmates, the robot proves invaluable to Wodney and his friends. This story can be used as a standalone text or paired with the first book. Teachers can use it to help student work through how to deal with bullying.



Just Kidding by Trudy Ludwig, illustrated by Adam Gustavson. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle, 2006.

Vince persistently teases D. J. at school but is quick to offer an “I was just kidding” defense when he knows

he has gone too far. With the help of his father, older brother and teacher, D. J. learns to face Vince and handle the problem. This story is a good example to help young children understand how words can indeed hurt. It also highlights that they can confide in the adults around them and that these adults can help them get through whatever difficulties they experience. The book includes a bullying-prevention outline that educators and parents, and discussion prompts for extended discussions.



Wings by Christopher Myers. New York, NY: Scholastic, 2000.

Ikarus Jackson arrives in a new neighborhood. He has long wings and can fly across the sky. Others don't understand his wings and ridicule him for

his differences. Ikarus is so saddened that his wings are almost unable to fly. A young girl, also a victim of bullying, yearns to speak up for Ikarus. She courageously stands up and shouts to everyone about the beauty of his wings. Through this, she finds her voice and Ikarus finds a friend. Christopher Myers does a wonderful job of describing the feelings of loneliness and depression experienced by those who are bullied and those who witness bullying. This story illuminates how adults can indirectly promote bullying by their actions and thoughtfully celebrates diversity in a non-patronizing approach.



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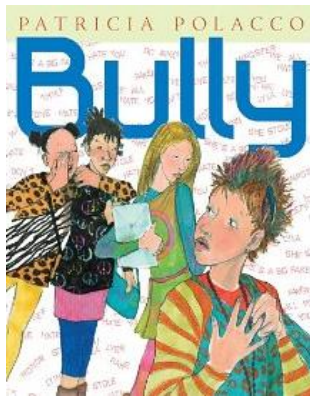
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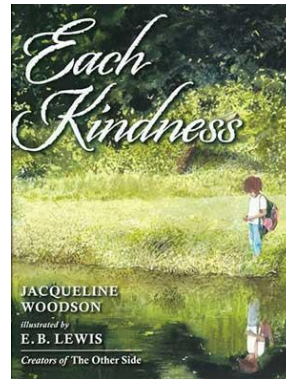
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Bully by Patricia Polacco. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2012.

Patricia Polacco tells the story of Lyla, a sixth-grader who befriends Jamie, a new boy at school. Lyla tries out for the cheerleading team

and is befriended by Gage, the most popular girl in school. Their relationship quickly sours as Lyla witnesses Gage posting nasty messages on classmates' Facebook pages. Gage later makes Lyla the target of her assault by framing her for stealing the school's standardized test and posting mean messages on social media sites. Jamie defends Lyla by telling the administrators the truth about Gage's actions. This book is an exceptional resource for teachers interested in engaging in an analysis of hurtful behaviors. Polacco does an extraordinary job of capturing adolescent interactions in a way that does not seem contrived or forced. The story is timely in its coverage of cyberbullying and the negative results.



Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E. B. Lewis.

New York, NY: Nancy Paulsen, 2012.

Each Kindness presents a powerful story of how peer pressure can influence negative behavior. Maya arrives

at her new school and sits beside Chloe, who at first offers a welcoming smile. Maya is bubbly and anxious to make friends but she is shunned by her classmates because she wears secondhand clothes and seems to be poor. Fearing her best friends' reaction, Chloe refuses to befriend Maya. When their teacher teaches them about simple acts of kindness, Chloe vows to be a better "friend" to Maya. However, Maya's family has moved away and now Chloe will never get the chance to make amends. Woodson presents a realistic scenario that we don't always get the opportunity to make things right. However, we can learn from the experience and make better choices in the future. Chloe's remorsefulness can serve as a powerful springboard for student discussions.



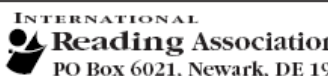
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