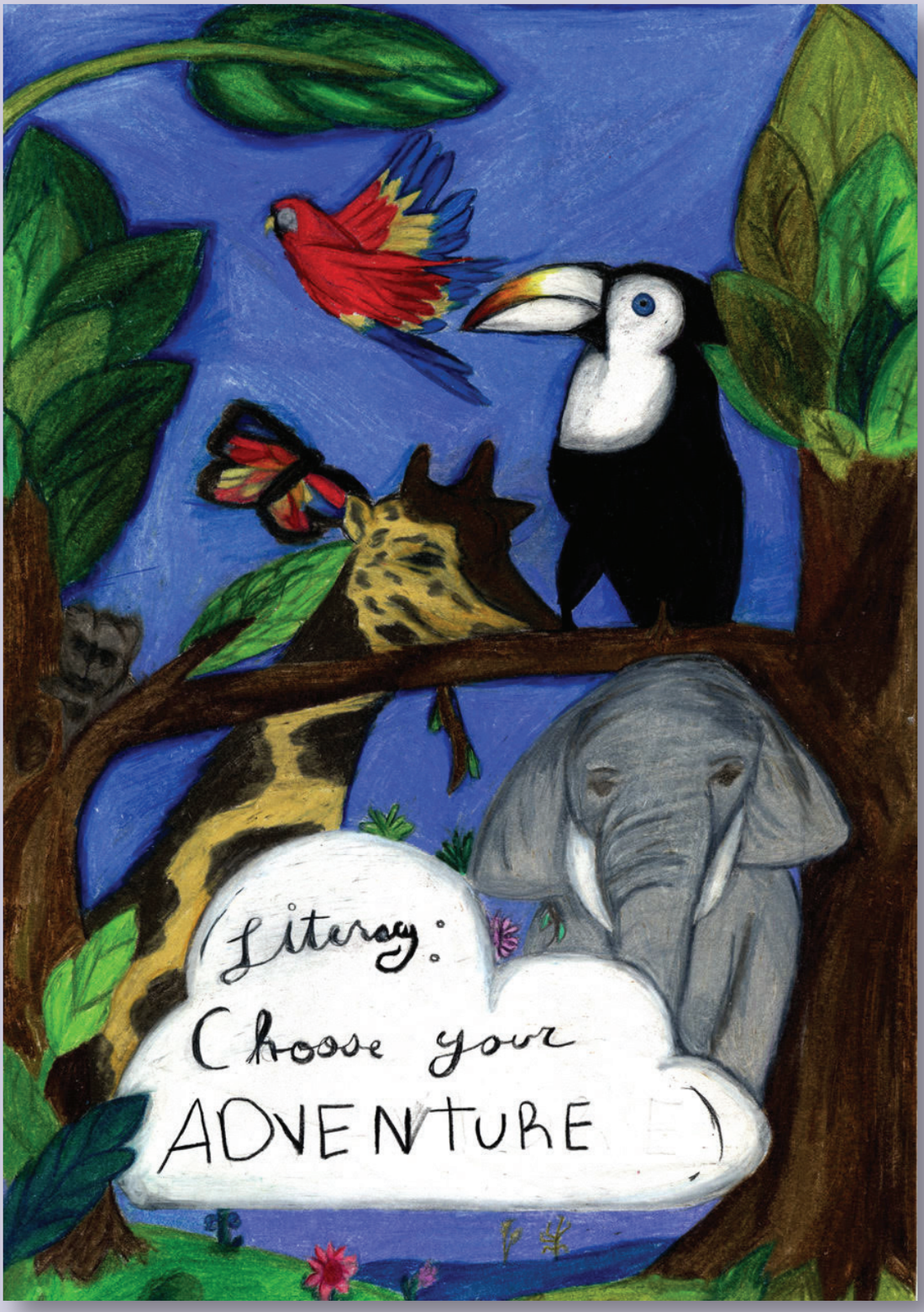
THE FLORIDA LITERACY JOURNAL



A Publication of the Florida Literacy Association
Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 2021

Message from FLA President, Michael Petty

Welcome to 2022! May this year bring hope and good health to all!

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to introduce this first edition of the *Florida Literacy Journal* for the New Year! The Journal is an important avenue for helping FLA fulfill its mission to promote quality literacy instruction, clarify educational issues for decision makers, support research in literacy, and advocate life-long reading. We know that as you explore the articles in the Journal you will find those that relate to each facet of the mission. We are extremely grateful to those who contributed to this edition and to our editors, Dr. Elsie L. Olan and Dr. Rebecca Powell who organized this edition into the valuable resource that it is for educators.

As 2021-2022 president of FLA, I would like to personally invite you to renew your membership in our organization if you haven't yet done so for this year, or become more active if you are already a member. You may sign up or renew at: http://flareads.org/membership/. Please feel free to email me at michael.petty@floridaea.org if you are interested in serving on our board! We are always looking for dedicated educators to help us work towards our mission. In addition, we hope that you will participate in the activities of your local literacy council if you have one in your area – you will definitely grow professionally and your participation will help others do the same.

I would, also, like to take this time to thank you for the work you do every day for our students, profession, and community. Whether you are a teacher (veteran or new), university professor, literacy or instructional coach, school or district administrator, parent, media specialist, school counselor, or pre-service teacher (or even another wonderful role!), we know that your work positively influences the lives of the students in our state. Thank you for dedicating yourself to serving students – you truly touch the future. As we look toward that future, we know there will be successes and challenges along the way. As members of a vibrant professional organization, it is good to know that we can celebrate our successes with one another and we can face the challenges together as we work to provide the best education possible for our kids. Best wishes as you begin 2022! Enjoy this issue of the *Florida Literacy Journal*. We hope that you will learn something new and that the articles will cause you to reflect upon your practice as a literacy educator.

Have a wonderful year and thanks for all you do!

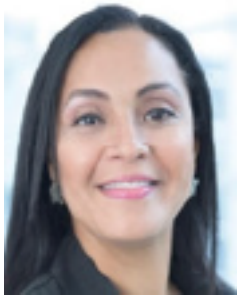
Sincerely,
Michael Petty, 2021-2022 FLA President

Message from FLJ Editors

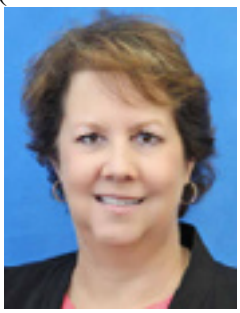
As we continue to venture during these unprecedented times, we examine critical issues in this edition of the *Florida Literacy Journal*. Articles in this issue explore teaching and race, using culturally relevant texts, transdisciplinary literacy, Florida's B.E.S.T. standards, exploring critical issues in children's literature, critical thinking instructional strategies, and literacy instruction and intervention across the curriculum. As we envision the future, it is time for us to share transformative classroom practices and for teachers to have a voice in educational research and decision-making. As you explore these articles, we hope that you will ponder how, if at all, these initiatives and trends influence, affect, or alter your classroom practices. As Editors of the *FLJ*, we take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to authors who have chosen *FLJ* to disseminate their research and practice. Further, we would like to thank Joyce Warner, our vice-chair and publications chair, reviewers, and other supporting staff for the success of this journal. We are more than happy to receive contributions for our next issue from teachers, doctoral candidates, teacher-educator researchers, advocates of teaching and learning, and scholars to ensure the consistency and the success of the *Florida Literacy Journal*.

Wishing health and safety to all,

Elsie Lindy Olan
(University of Central Florida)



Rebecca Lovering Powell
(Florida Southern College)



EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

The Power of Perseverance and Literacy: Inquiry During Unprecedented Times

Volume 2, No. 2, Winter 2021

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The editors invite submissions of manuscripts for The Florida Literacy Journal, the refereed journal of the Florida Literacy Association. We invite submissions geared toward improving literacy instruction and innovation at all levels with a firm grounding in current theory and research. Suggested topics include literacy project descriptions, research or theoretical pieces with pedagogical implications, or issue-centered pieces addressing timely literacy topics of local, state or national interest. Preference is given to articles that most directly impact Florida learners. While theoretical and research articles are invited, please keep in mind that this is a journal primarily for FLA members, who are predominantly practicing teachers and literacy specialists. We encourage articles from PK-12 and adult-level practitioners, literacy researchers and doctoral students, as well as articles written by other experts in the field.

The Florida Literacy Journal's audience is largely composed of PK-12 practitioners in the state of Florida. The FLJ editors are interested in exploring topics of interest to Florida educators and valuable in their daily literacy practices. We welcome submissions from researchers as well as PK-12 teachers. The thematic calls listed below are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely meant to be helpful to authors as they consider topics for publication. Please review the submission guidelines before submitting a manuscript.
Submission Guidelines are online at: http://flareads.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FLJ-CallForSubmissions2020.pdf

APA 7th edition in the Call for Manuscript
Guidelines https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html.

Ongoing Annual Theme: Florida Standards in Action
FLJ has an ongoing interest in submissions related to the implementation of the Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards. Manuscripts that highlight how individual teachers have adapted their instruction to integrate the arts, technology, and the content areas are of particular interest. We also have interest in articles that discuss how districts have addressed the challenges and lessons learned related to the implementation of Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards

Ongoing Call for Book Reviews
FLJ has an ongoing interest in reviews of professional texts related to teaching and the themed calls for 2022-23. Reviews should be between 750-1000 words and should offer an overview of the book, not a detailed synopsis or an in-depth essay. Examples of published book reviews can be found in previous editions of FLJ.

Publication Themes for 2022 soon to be announced on the FLA website!
http://flareads.org/publications/

"I See Myself": Strategies That Engage Students in Reading Culturally Relevant Texts

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Abstract

It is well documented that reading engagement is critical as students develop their literacy abilities. Reading culturally relevant texts that allow students to make connections to their own lives can increase engagement. This article presents strategies that allow students opportunities to read culturally relevant texts in the context of providing choice and social interactions, two salient factors of motivating students to want to read. The authors drew from their classroom experiences and expertise to develop these strategies which are low-cost and easy to implement.
Keywords: motivation, engagement, culturally relevant texts, choice, social interactions

There is an exorbitant number of students who do not enjoy reading. Only 33% of fourth-grade students who completed the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Florida strongly agreed that one of their favorite activities is reading (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). This is concerning as interest in reading is positively related to reading achievement (Becker, McElvany & Kortenbruck, 2010; Wigfield, Galdstone, & Turci, 2016). In fact, one study found that fourth graders' interest in reading was positively related to their sixth-grade reading achievement (Becker et al., 2010). This finding is critical for educators to consider as reading motivation usually plummets as students get older (Wigfield et al., 2016). Students who view reading as an enjoyable activity tend to read more often and, as a result, further develop their reading skills (Allington, 2014). Therefore it is imperative that educators employ strategies which motivate students to want to read.

Motivation encompasses students' dispositions toward reading as well as their goals, values, and beliefs about reading (Guthrie, Klauda, & Hoa, 2013). For the purposes of this article, we focus on intrinsic motivation or the enjoyment and interest in reading (Guthrie et al., 2013), as opposed to extrinsic motivation that includes receiving rewards or incentives for reading (e.g. Dojo points, candy). Reading engagement, on the other hand, refers to students' involvement in reading, and, for the purposes of this article, we focus specifically on students' behavioral engagement in which they display prolonged attention when absorbed in a book (Barber & Klauda, 2020). As you can see, motivation and engagement are intertwined; if a reader is motivated to want to read, he is more likely to be engaged in the act of reading.

The Need for Culturally Relevant Texts

One way to increase students' reading engagement is to provide them with opportunities to read culturally relevant texts. Ebe (2010) notes that culturally relevant texts are those that remind students of their own lives and experiences to make meaning. This couples with Bishop's (1990) seminal work focused on providing books that serve as mirrors for students, particularly those who are culturally diverse and do not often see themselves reflected in what they read. Further, Guthrie and colleagues state highly motivated readers tend to enjoy authors who are "personally relevant and linked to their knowledge of the world" (2007, p. 306). When determining if a text is culturally relevant, a teacher or student can answer the following questions on a rubric (Ebe, 2010):

Are the characters in the story like you and your family?

Have you ever lived in or visited places like those in the story?

Could this story take place this year?

How close do you think the main characters are to you in age?

Does the story have main characters who are boys (for boy readers)? Girls (for girl readers?)

Do the characters talk like you and your family?

How often do you read stories like this one?

Have you ever had an experience like one described in this story? (p. 198).

Ebe (2010) used this rubric to determine participants' reading engagement and found that after "hearing about characters that mirrored their backgrounds and experiences, students were willing to share their own stories" (p. 43). Further, participants chose to reread the culturally relevant texts on their own and share them with peers and family members.

Feger (2006) became intentional in including culturally relevant texts into her classroom after noticing that students in mainstream classes had access to literature that related to their lives and interests; she wanted to offer the same opportunities to her students who were English Language Learners. She discovered that the more she embedded culturally relevant texts into the curriculum, the more her students' reading engagement increased. In another study, Stuart and Volk (2002) found that students' engagement increased when interacting with culturally relevant children's literature in a reading club setting. Similarly, Ma'ayan (2010) conducted research on a withdrawn, low achieving student who read culturally relevant texts and engaged in discussions with her peers, connecting the books' contents to her own life. While the participant noted that she enjoyed reading these texts, the researcher observed the participant become more confident and readily discuss how the text resonated with her life. Ma'ayan stated that providing time for students to share how their experiences connect with a text during literacy instruction is "the first step in conquering pervasive disengagement of students" (2010, p. 654).

It is evident that reading culturally relevant texts is crucial to students' reading engagement. In this article, we describe low-cost strategies that can be implemented in the classroom as students read texts that are culturally relevant. The strategies stem from purposeful efforts to engage students in reading; observations and anecdotal notes were used to note their success (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We group the strategies by two main categories that appear in motivation and engagement research: choice and social interaction.

Strategies That Provide Choice

Like many of us, children value the opportunity to choose how and what they read. Research demonstrates that choice is critical for students to become engaged in reading as they expend more effort in comprehending the text's contents (Neugebauer & Gilmour, 2020; Turner & Paris, 1995). In one study, participants' perceived autonomy as they self-selected books to read predicted their reading comprehension over the course of four months. Additionally, data revealed that participants who valued choice when reading were more intrinsically motivated (Guthrie et al., 2007). Another study placed participants in either a control group where teachers used a direct instructional reading program or an intervention group in which the same program was supplemented with activities such as daily independent reading of self-selected books (Reis, McCoach, Coyne, Schreiber, Eckert, & Gubbins, 2007). Results indicated that students in the intervention group scored statistically significantly higher than control students in both oral reading fluency and reading attitudes. Wigfield and colleagues warn, "If teachers restrict students' choice of reading topics or materials too much, they risk stifling intrinsic motivation and autonomy" (2016, p. 191). Next, we discuss strategies that embed choice during literacy instruction: Flashlight Friday, Book Tasting, Digital Book Tasting, and Floating While Reading.

Flashlight Friday

Flashlight Friday is a weekly routine that encourages students to independently read using their own flashlights in a darkened classroom. Students read one or more handpicked, culturally relevant books in a self-selected place where they can concentrate and become absorbed in reading (e.g., under a desk, on a beanbag). The students' book choices should allow students to read uninterruptedly for an appropriate amount of time that matches their reading stamina. For example, if 15 minutes is allotted, students should have enough texts to read so that so that there is no need to spend time looking for a new book. One of the co-authors used this strategy in her classroom (see Figure 1) and noted that students looked forward to Flashlight Friday each week; in fact, even the most reluctant readers became intrigued with their books, with just a slight change of the environment and choice of what to read.

Book Tasting

Book Tasting, modified from Southard (n.d.), metaphorically describes the exploration of books that are grade appropriate and span a variety of genres. In honoring the name of this motivational strategy, the library or classroom is designed as a restaurant to complete a "book tasting" experience. Multiple tables are used to showcase a variety of genres, and books representative of each genre are placed in labeled bins for students to explore or "taste" (see Figure 2). Students travel in assigned groups from table to table, exploring books that they find culturally relevant. After students briefly view the pictures and examine the contents of books at each table, they record their thoughts about one or two culturally relevant texts on a survey (see Figure 3). This becomes beneficial data for teachers as they apply their students' book preferences to a revised set-up of their classroom library that allows students choice in what they read.

Digital Book Tasting

Like the Book Tasting strategy, this strategy allows students to explore a wide variety of books digitally using Epic (https://www.getepic.com/). This website provides a virtual library designed for students to easily use; it is set up like a traditional library in which the books are organized by genre and reading level. Students can control the settings in how they would like to view their books. For instance, if students desire to read nonfiction books, they can adjust the settings to only showcase that genre by typing the request in the search bar. As students browse the online books, they can place books that they find culturally relevant into their personal libraries. The books are then conveniently saved in their Epic accounts. The teacher additionally has access to view what books students have loaded into their libraries to use as informative data in determining which kinds of books they are likely to choose during independent reading time. Another notable feature of this digital library is that it generates and customizes each student's reading experience based on the books they continually select. Algorithmically resembling a media streaming service, Epic utilizes enticing phrases such as, "because you read _____," to suggest a diverse collection of books that are like the ones that students previously read (see Figure 4). The essential purpose of this feature is to embrace sustained reading in the variety of engaging topics they discover.

Floating While Reading

Transform the classroom and create a "Beach Read Day" with pool floats and beach themed items (see Figure 5). During independent reading time, students self-select a culturally relevant book to read on a float of their choice to boost motivation and engagement. A co-author implemented this strategy in her classroom with the help of local donations and shopping

discounted sections. Materials can be shared with the grade level team so that numerous students benefit from reading culturally relevant books of their choice in a creative atmosphere.

Strategies That Provide Social Interaction

Social interaction is another important concept to consider as students read culturally relevant texts. Miller and Kelley (2014, p. 99) state, "The number one way that readers find out about books they would like to read is through recommendations from other readers." Interacting with peers positively affects reading motivation, particularly as students enter adolescence (Nevo, Vaknin-Nusbaum, Brande, & Gambrell, 2020; Wigfield et al., 2016). Additionally, previous research demonstrates that books recommended by peers can serve as conduits to increase students' reading engagement and form communities where students discuss commonly read texts (Author; 2017; Brandt, Sharp, & Gardner, 2021; Hudson & Williams, 2015). Nystrand (2006) reviewed numerous studies focused on students engaging in book discussions; data strongly supported that those conversations enhanced reading comprehension. In another study, researchers compared participants' achievement on tests when they either could or could not discuss the text and examined qualitative data regarding students' responses (Fall, Webb, & Chudowsky, 2000). Interestingly, results revealed that just 10-minutes of discussion substantially impacted students' comprehension of the text. Qualitative data showed that students' understanding of facts and ability to provide descriptions of the text's contents increased after engaging in discussions with peers. In this section, we discuss strategies that provide students with opportunities to engage with their peers: Book Chain, Book Chime, Seesaw Book Recommendations, and Book of the Week.

Book Chain

This strategy could be implemented on the first day of school using a hook in the classroom ceiling and strips of paper that can be glued at the ends to form links (see Figure 6). Each time that students finish a book, they write the title and a short book recommendation on a paper strip, form a link, and add it to the growing "book chain." It can be motivating for students to see a physical representation of how many books their class has read, particularly at the end of the school year. One of the co-authors had a class celebration when the book chain reached the floor and found that students wanted to participate more when they saw their peers adding to the chain. After socially interacting and reading recommendations placed on the book chain, students learn about a wide array of books that they might find culturally relevant.

Book Chime

Encourage social interaction by placing a chime in an accessible space in the classroom. When a student finishes a book, he rings the chime, and the class cheers for his accomplishment (see Figure 7). The student then provides a brief book recommendation and shares how it related to his own life. If another student finds that the book is of interest or mirrors his culture as well, the book is passed along for him to read.

Seesaw Book Recommendations

When engaging students in social interactions, technology integration is a compelling option, especially when there are many students who want computer access. One online platform, Seesaw (https://web.seesaw.me/), is student led and free for classroom teachers to use. Teachers can create a class on the website and print barcodes that students scan for easy logins. Seesaw allows teachers to create assignments for students, including ongoing activities that can last all year, such as a book recommendation page. On this page, students create short videos

weere they share information about their books and discuss why they think others should read them. Teachers can also encourage students to mention text-to-self connections to note how the books were culturally relevant. After listening to their peers' book recommendations, students can post positive comments about the videos and read suggested books that resonated with them.

Book of the Week

Typically, teachers and media specialists decide what books are displayed on shelves, bookcases, and white board ledges. The "Book of the Week" strategy allows students to make the decision about what books are exhibited. On a rotating basis during Monday's morning meeting, a student shares a book that he wants displayed as the "Book of the Week." After sharing how the book related to his own life with the class, he places the book on a photo frame located on a shelf near the classroom library (see Figure 8). Students can then peruse the book throughout the week and decide if they find the book to be culturally relevant as well.

Conclusion

Research indicates that when students read culturally relevant texts and make connections between what they read and their own lives, they become more engaged (Ebe, 2010; Feger, 2006; May'ayn, 2010). While students' engagement increases reading volume and thus higher reading achievement (Allington, 2014), it is also important that students continue to read culturally relevant texts and become lifelong readers. In this article, we share strategies from our classroom experiences and expertise that provide students the opportunity to read culturally relevant texts. We categorize the strategies by two salient motivation factors, choice and social interaction. Students mentioned in this article were engaged in reading when participating in Flashlight Friday, Book Tasting, Digital Book Tasting, Floating While Reading, Book Chain, Book Chime, Seesaw Book Recommendations, and Book of the Week. Further, social

interactions particularly seemed to motivate students to want to read books that their peers recommended. As Brandt and colleagues (2021) note, extra money is not necessary in fostering students' reading motivation; the strategies that we present are both cost-effective and easy to implement.

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Figure 1

Figure 2

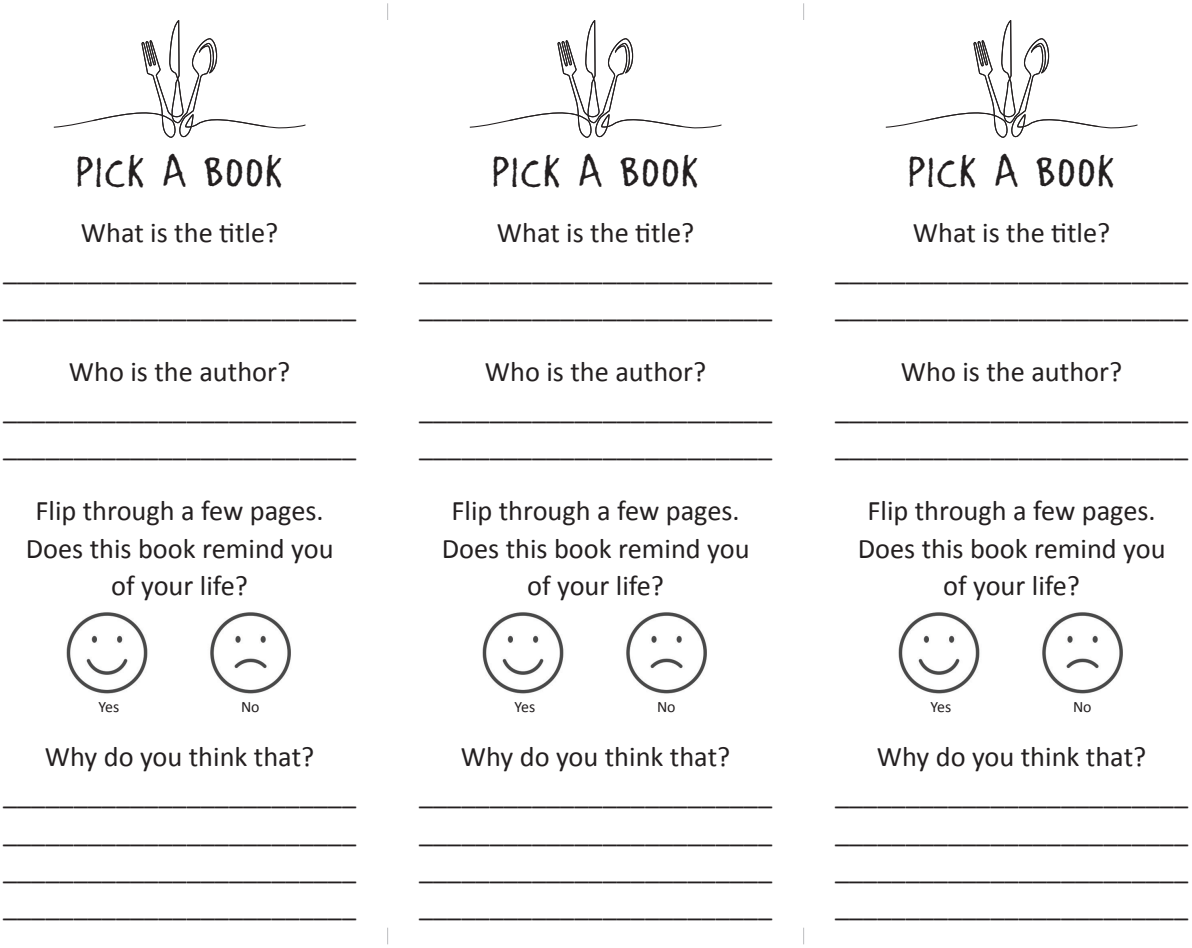

Figure 3

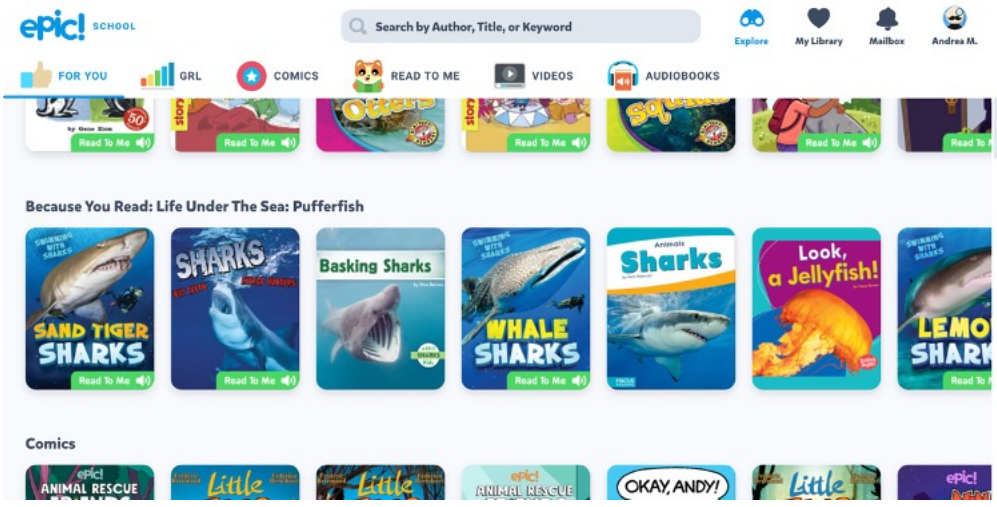

Figure 4

Figure 5


TONY DUNGY
You Can Do It!
TEACH US AMELIA BEDELIA
Fiction
Gg
Hh

Figure 6

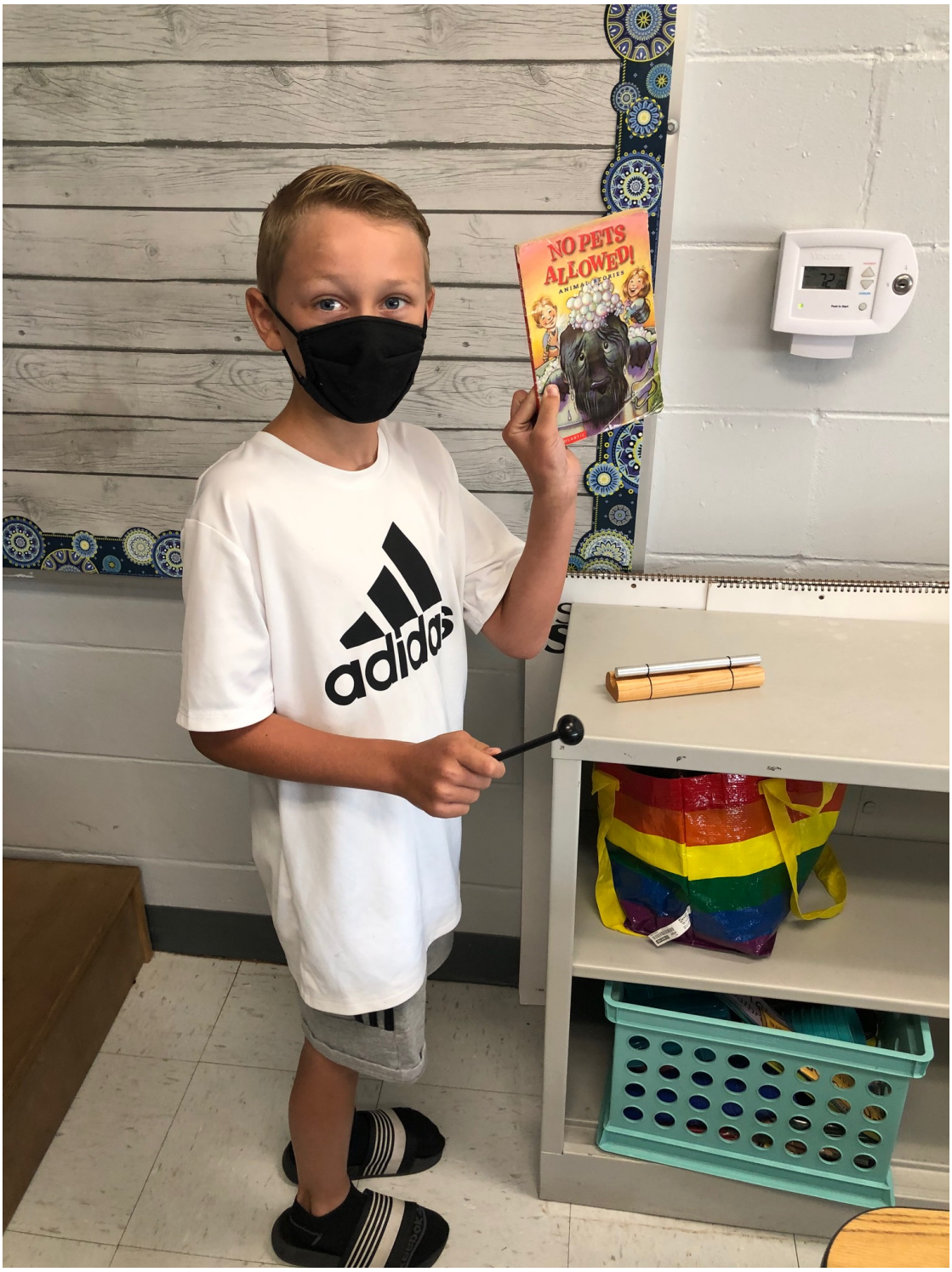

Figure 7

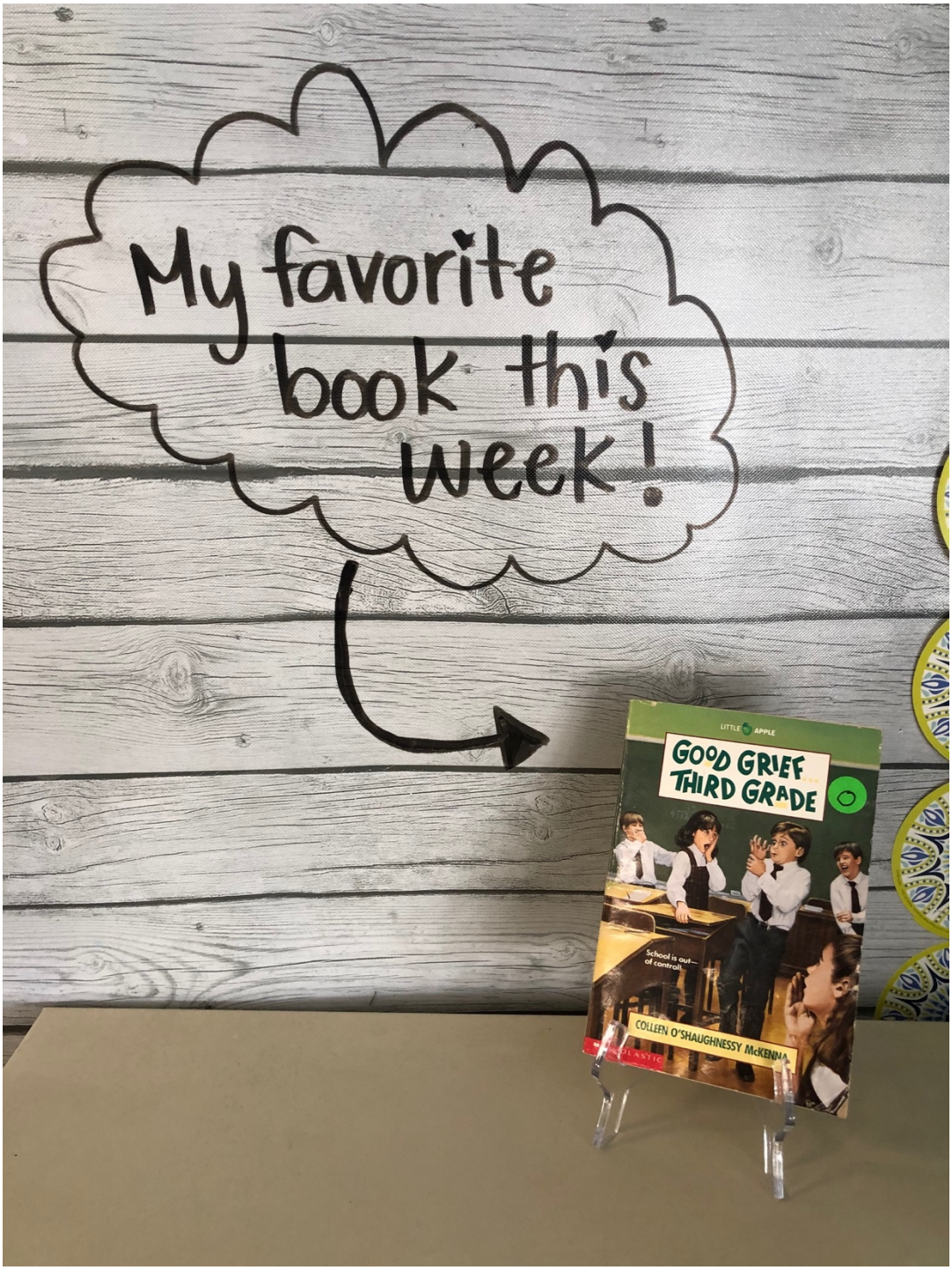
My favorite book this week!
LITTLE APPLE
GOOD GRIEF THIRD GRADE
School is out—of control!
COLLEEN O'SHAUGHNESSY McKENNA
SCHOLASTIC

Figure 8

Authors' Biography:

Lunetta M. Williams, a former elementary teacher, is currently a Professor at the University of North Florida. Her research focuses on minimizing the achievement gap among economically disadvantaged and economically advantaged children, motivating students to want to read, and using children's literature in the classroom. She teaches literacy methods courses to graduate and undergraduate students.

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Delaney Anderson is currently an elementary teacher with a passion for increasing students' engagement and their transition to becoming lifelong readers. She received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and followed it with a master's in Elementary Education with a Literacy Concentration, both at the University of North Florida.

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Sharon Bradley is currently a Title 1 elementary teacher that aspires to discover and design effective methodologies to boost reading motivation and academic achievement among today's urban youth. She graduated from the University of North Florida earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education. Soon after, she received a master's degree in Elementary Education with a Literacy Concentration at the same institution.

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Bullying In Children's Literature: Exploring Critical Issues To Enable Actions Through Teacher Read Alouds

Kathy Fox, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina

Abstract

This article describes a project I have refined over multiple years of teaching as well as working with preservice teachers in both children's literature and literacy courses. This project demonstrates how critical content can be explored through purposeful teacher read alouds, book groups and independent reading in upper elementary and middle grades. The relevancy of the article includes the definitions and descriptions of the strategies used by the classroom teacher.

Read alouds in elementary and middle grades classrooms take on special significance when the teacher goes beyond superficial issues within the text. Picture books and juvenile chapter books are often categorized by readability level rather than content. Children may decode the book and comprehend surface issues of the story to successfully answer grade level comprehension questions. A teacher's mediation, with slow and purposeful reading of a chapter book, shows upper elementary and middle grade readers that speed is not the goal. Rather, the rich vocabulary, the subtle use of images, symbols and metaphors, and the exploration of relationships lead to deeper understanding.

This article describes how a teacher can use a text set to explore the concept of bullying. The first book was read aloud to the class by the teacher. The second book was chosen by the as required independent reading outside of class, with teacher guidance and mediation as needed. Children chose the third book for independent reading and exploration from a teacher developed text set of children's literature (See Appendix A: Children's Text Set on Bullying). The text set included a range of reading levels, but each included a bullying situation in the story line. For the in-class reading the teacher used the Preview-Review method for vocabulary introduction at each read aloud. Guided questions for comprehension followed up the read aloud in a literature response journal. Independently students made text-to-text connection activities using graphic organizers for the three texts. Finally, students made presentations on their individual books from the text set

on bullying. The presentations culminated in the students signing the Anti-Bullying Pledge, role-playing peer mediation techniques and sharing books for further reading.

Perhaps the most important outcome of this three weeklong engagement was the development of an understanding that literature mimics life. By the careful choice of questions, the teacher encourage the children to use higher order thinking skills as they responded to the texts. Understanding that they each play a role in how children are treated in the classroom, cafeteria, playground, bus ride and communication outside of class is an important one. Children's literature can serve to not only explore children's bullying from an empathetic stance but also to apply the lessons presented in the book(s) to their own situations.

Research on Bullying

Bullying is broadly defined as aggressive behaviors that can be expressed physically, verbally and in writing, and can involve exclusion and other relational power struggles. Bullying differs from other conflicts in that it is most often repeated and involves others in the power dynamic (Espelage, Rao, & De La Rue, 2013; Espelage & Sweater, 2011; VanderBoos, 2007.) The significance of children and youth bullying has gained prominence in the last three decades perhaps due to the serious consequences and long-term effects of bullying. Olwens (1993) and Kumpulainen, Räsänen, & Puura (2001) found that for the bully, or perpetrator, the behavior often carried into adulthood resulting in violent behaviors, even homicide. Victims of bullying were more likely to have low attendance in schools, have low academic achievement—likely tied to attendance—and finally higher dropout rates. Violent behaviors and suicide were also effects of being bullied (Klomek, Sourander, Niemela, Kumpulainen, Piha, Tamminen, & Gould, 2009; Tanner, 2013).

Six consistent categories of participants in bullying scenarios: bully, victim, bully-victim (who both bully and are victims of bullies), bystander, defender, and the unaware, or those present but who do not notice were described in Salmivalli's work on bullying behaviors (Salmivalli, et.al, 1996; Salmivalli,2010.) In a nationally representative study of 3rd graders 30% of children were involved in bullying as either a victim, the perpetrator or a bully-victim (Maine Project Against Bullying, 2000.) More recent studies with different age groups showed similar results or higher, with 62% being bullied once or twice a year, and 35% reported seeing hate speech at their school related to race, gender, sexual orientation religion, and/or disability (National Center for Education Statistics , 2010). Recognizing that children and youth spend a great number of hours in class, on

the playground, in the cafeteria and on bus rides to and from school, it is reasonable that many of these behaviors are connected to school. Findings from the Maine Project Against Bullying (MPAB) showed that 71% of teachers ignored classroom bullying incidents (2000). Low teacher reporting, however, was found in multiple settings (Beaulieu, 2016). Studies reported teacher intervention as low as 10-18% in bullying situations (Compton-Lily, 2019.) Teacher inaction was acknowledged by children; black children in particular perceived the school climate as non-supportive when teachers were less engaged (Shirley & Cornell, 2011). In one study teachers responded more frequently to questions on cultural bullying than racial bullying (BonillaSilva, 2006; Ullicci & Battery, 2011). Teachers who described themselves as "color blind" often did not recognize bullying situations.

In order to confront both bullying behaviors within the school community teachers must be conscious of the effects and the subtle ways it becomes normalized. Being deliberate about the choices we make in the literature we present can provide opportunities to not only explore themes but to apply lessons learned.

Instructional Method

The teacher read the first of the three texts aloud to the class over a period of ten class periods. The chosen novel, *The Hundred Dresses* (Estes, 1947), focuses on a bullying situation that occurs on the walk to school, on the playground and in the classroom. As Salmivalli described all six identified bullying roles were present in the book— bully, victim, bully-victim (who both bully and are victims of bullies), bystander, defender, and the unaware, or those present but who do not notice (Salmivalli, et. Al, 1996; Salmivalli, 2010). During each reading, the instructor, reading part or all of the seven chapters aloud during a class period, employed two strategies for ensuring comprehension and a deeper look at the meaning of the text: Preview-Review vocabulary method (for more information see Appendix B: Useful Definitions and Appendix C: Resources) and Higher Order Thinking Skills (H.O.T.S.,) questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy (for more information see Appendix C: Resources). Both strategies were used prior to and explored after the reading. The vocabulary was chosen for its significance rather than its level of difficulty. In chapter 1, for example, the vocabulary words introduced prior to the reading were the "Gettysburg Address" and "incredulously." Chosen vocabulary terms had a significance, such as historical context, in the book that students, especially elementary age children, could have likely decoded but might not have been able to make the historical connection. The H.O.T.S. question was posed

prior to the reading: "Our H.O.T.S. question for today is, '*If you could go to where the story take place, would you go? Why or why not?*' As you listen to the reading pay attention to the setting so you can answer this question." After the reading the students were reminded of the H.O.T.S. question with the daily expectation that they would use their literature response journal for their individual response. Often, before the children began their writing, the teacher asked students to Think-Pair-Share their thoughts on the question. Other times the teacher encouraged the students to share with a thumbs up, thumbs down or "undecided" to show how they would answer the question, using the sentence stem "Yes, I would go to where the story takes place" Or "No, I would not go to where the story takes place." Afterwards students were given sufficient time to write and/or illustrate the response to the question in a teacher-made literature response journal. Finally, students shared with either a partner, in a "speed share" with two to three others as they moved around from peer to peer or shared from their seats with the class.

The Hundred Dresses, which has an independent readability score of 4.5, or mid-year 4th grade, is set in post-World War II New England. The book has the mature themes of ethnic and linguistic discrimination, immigration, social-economic class differences, and gender disparities. Although the book was published in 1947, the conflicts presented in the story remain relevant. The relationships between the three main characters—the bullied, the bystander and the victim--are relatable for current students. Importantly, the role of the teacher character shows the ignorer bullying role, showing subtle microaggressions beginning in the first chapter and throughout the book. The father character writes a letter to the teacher describing the bullying of his children and how they must move away to a place where their name and culture will be accepted. With the teacher's choice of guided questions, the adult characters' actions—or lack of—were made visible for the students as well. This opened the door to examining the significance of each character [person] in a bullying situation.

A second novel selected by the teacher, *Wonder* (Palacio, 2012), was assigned for independent reading following the conclusion of the first text. Different from *The Hundred Dresses*, classmate, siblings, parents, teachers and administrators, actively confronted bullying and proactively encouraged fairness and appreciation of others. Students were responsible for reading the book either independently or in small book groups, depending on their choice and need for support. One class period was spent constructing a chart showing the actions that supported

Auggie's, the main character's, transition to public school. As in the model, they identified significant vocabulary and designed H.O.T.S. questions for each chapter.

Students chose a third book to further the exploration of bullying. The text set included books not typically identified as having lessons on bullying. Students were encouraged to identify how more subtle issues of social relationships contributed to feelings of isolation, hurt feelings and discrimination in the texts. As the third book was read after the first two assigned texts, the various bullying roles and actions became clearer to students.

When students submitted the final assignment, summarized as a Text-to-Text Connections Project, they included the third text of their own choice from the teacher made text set. They created a graphic organizer of their own design of the three texts. Finally, students submitted a written reflective section, called the Line of Learning, where they described their thoughts on the significance of the varied characters in the three texts.

The two books chosen by the instructor shared one characteristic…each story had a central character who was bullied by others. The ways in which the victim handled the bullying varied. Significantly, the ways in which actions were addressed by adults—both teachers and parents—in the books varied. Students' third book choice showed a heighted sense of sensitivity, advocacy and social justice in microaggression and bullying scenarios. These contrasts were made visible in the graphic organizers designed by the individual students.

Discussion

Literacy lessons for classroom practice included how to manage a chapter book read aloud over time and how to make text to text connections over concepts that included social and moral issues. Additionally the instructor, using the response journal, guided students with H.O.T.S. questions to explore the metaphors, historical contexts, vocabulary and life lessons from the texts, just as they would do with their future elementary and middle grade students.

In exploring the book, *The Hundred Dresses*, the character's desire to stand up to stop the bullying cycle was the desire, although no action took place, only regrets that "couldn't ever really make things right between them" (p.76). In *Wonder*, the hurt caused by subtle microaggresssions by bullies and bystanders was made clear through the voice of the victim, with Auggie's description of tears and pretending to be sick to avoid going to school (p. 113). The role of the teacher differed in the two books contributing to different outcomes for the victim. In *The Hundred Dresses* the teacher ignored the bullying taking place on the playground and on the walk to school.

On day one of the reading the instructor's H.O.T.S. questions facilitated a discussion on teacher microaggressions, pointing out how the teacher contributed to the behaviors with seating, neglecting absences, discounting bullying behaviors described by parent and seemingly being unaware of how the other children teased and isolated the child on the playground. Once prompted, the students agreed the teacher's passivity contradicted her tone when the parent later wrote that Wanda was bullied because of her name, her poverty and 'otherness'. In *Wonder*, read independently over the first 4 weeks of the semester, the classroom teacher and principal took on proactive roles…not only advocating for Auggie, but also teaching the class about moral actions, such as kindness, standing up for others and making good choices.

When students submitted the final assignment, summarized as a Text-to-Text Connections Project using a graphic organizer, they included a description of the third text of their own choice. The graphic organizers compared and contrasted the three texts. To prepare for this step, students participated in a class discussion comparing the two shared texts—*The Hundred Dresses* and *Wonder*. They then as a class constructed a 3-part Venn Diagram, leaving one circle open for their third text. One student copied the results onto a word document that was printed for each student. Students individually added their third text to the diagram. This was done in class, immediately following a review of the class constructed diagram from the previous lesson. Students were given time to work further on the graphic organizer as homework. A Line of Learning was included at the bottom of the sheet. For homework students continued to work on the graphic organizer and the two to three sentences reflecting on their findings from the three books. Finally, these individual papers were shared in class in a Think Pair Share activity, giving students the opportunity to talk more about their third text (for more information on this strategy see Appendix B: Useful Definitions). Papers were next displayed in the classroom and students did a Gallery Walk to read others' reflective statements in the Line of Learning (for more information on these strategies see Appendix B: Useful Definitions). Students reflected that the acts of reading and comparing the texts made clear the multiple roles in bullying. Students experienced what could only be called an 'aha!' moment when comparing roles in the two in-class books, such as that of the adults and of the bystanders in the two books. With the third book of their choice, the varied roles in bullying situations became more prominent in the discussion and were represented, even emphasized, in the final graphic organizers.

Students' reflective statements showed a strong commitment to raising consciousness of bullying actions in the classroom, cafeteria, playground, bus ride and home interactions, as in social media. For the final activity of the unit on bullying students worked in pairs to research anti-bullying websites and organizations. Several resources were reviewed first by the teacher and students chose two from the list to use in class. Using information from these sources, students made class posters and murals with slogans of respect and appreciation for others. Students researched joining the International Association of Antibullying. Still others encouraged classmates to sign the Anti-Bullying Pledge available at Teachingtolerance.org (See Appendix A: Resources, Teaching Tolerance Staff). All students expressed interest in reading books from the text set, including as book group members, during buddy reading and in-class quiet reading and at home.

Conclusion

This article explored ways to make bullying more visible by teachers' deliberate selection of texts, presentation and strategies. Students used texts to explore the effects of bullying, the multiple bullying roles and scenarios as described by Salmivalli (2010), and ultimately how to positively confront bullying situations (TeachingforTolerance.org). Through teacher text selection, the unit provided opportunities to explore critical issues, such as ethnic discrimination, institutionalized racism and oppression, and ways to increase perspectives in their classrooms. These text-to-text connections ultimately resulted in text-to-self and text-to-world connections, encouraging not only further reading but also action to fight bullying both at school and home.

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Appendix A: Teacher Chosen Text Set of Literature with Bullying Scenarios

Blubber	Judy Blume	Blubber is a good name for her, the note from Wendy says about Linda. Jill crumples it up and leaves it on the corner of her desk. She doesn't want to think about Linda or her dumb report on the whale just now. Jill wants to think about Halloween. But Robby grabs the note, and before Linda stops talking it has gone halfway around the room. That's where it all starts. There's something about Linda that makes a lot of kids in her fifth-grade class want to see how far they can go -- but nobody, least of all Jill, expects the fun to end where it does. Source
Stand Tall, Molly Melon	David Catrow & Linda Lovell	Molly Lou Melon is short and clumsy and has buckteeth and a voice that sounds like a bullfrog being squeezed by a boa constrictor. But armed with the encouraging words of her grandmother, Molly Lou confidently confronts the class bully at her new school. A not-to-be missed story for the less-than-perfect part of everyone! Source
The Name Jar	Yangsook Choi	The new kid in school needs a new name! Or does she? Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what about when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from. On the day of her name choosing, the name jar has mysteriously disappeared. Encouraged by her new friends, Unhei chooses her own Korean name and helps everyone pronounce it—Yoon-Hey. Source
The Hundred Dresses	Eleanor Estes	Wanda Petronski is bullied for her name, for her clothes and for the stories she tells her "friends." Winner of the Newbery Award in 1947, this book is told from a bystander's position who regrets the bullying but is intimidated to intervene.
Chrysanthemum	Kevin Henkes	She was a perfect baby, and she had a perfect name. Chrysanthemum. When she was old enough to appreciate it, Chrysanthemum loved her name. And then she started school. "I'm named after my grandmother," said Victoria. "You're named after a

		flower." Chrysanthemum wilted until the students were introduced to their music teacher, Mrs. Twinkle. Mrs. Delphinium Twinkle. Source
Fish in a Tree	Lynda Mullaly Hunt	Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the troublemaker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. Source
Purplelicious (2010)	Victoria and Elizabeth Kann	Everyone knows that Pinkalicious loves the color pink. But one day at school all the girls decide that pink stinks and black is in. When Pinkalicious does not agree with the crowd, they tease her. She develops a bad case of the blues and wonders if anyone out there shares her love for all things pink. Source
Have You Filled a Bucket Today?	Carol McCloud	Through simple prose and vivid illustrations, this heartwarming book encourages positive behavior as children see how rewarding it is to express daily kindness, appreciation, and love. Bucket filling and dipping are effective metaphors for understanding the effects of our actions and words on the well being of others and ourselves. Source
Wonder (2010)	R.J. Palacio	Auggie is home schooled and protected by family and close friends because of a congenital birth condition that resulted in facial deformity. Together with his parents' encouragement he begins school as a middle school student. Adult and peer roles in the bullying events that take place are explored.
Freak the Mighty	Rodman Philbrick	A brilliant, emotionally charged novel about two boys. The two pair up to create one formidable human force known as "Freak the Mighty". All his life Max had been called stupid. Dumb. Slow. He learned how to be alone. At least until Freak came along. Freak was weird, too. Together they were unstoppable as Freak the Mighty. Source
Thank You, Mr. Falker	Patricia Polacco	In this autobiographical story, Little Trisha, overjoyed at the thought of learning how to read struggles when she finds that all the letters and numbers get jumbled up. Her classmates make matters worse by calling her "dummy." Finally, in

		fifth grade, she is lucky enough to have a teacher who recognizes Trisha's incredible artistic ability, understands her problem, and takes the time to lead her to the magic of reading. Source
Stargirl	Jerry Spinelli	Leo Borlock follows the unspoken rule at Mica Area High School: don't stand out--under any circumstances! Stargirl arrives at Mica High and everything changes. The delicate scales of popularity suddenly shift, and Stargirl is shunned for everything that makes her different. Source
Smile	RainaTelgemier	Raina just wants to be a normal sixth grader. But one night after Girl Scouts she trips and falls, severely injuring her two front teeth, and what follows is a long and frustrating journey with on-again, off-again braces, surgery, embarrassing headgear, and even a retainer with fake teeth attached. And on top of all that, there's still more to deal with: a major earthquake, boy confusion, and friends who turn out to be not so friendly. This coming-of-age true story is sure to resonate with anyone who has ever been in middle school, and especially those who have ever had a bit of their own dental drama. Source
Each Kindness	Jacqueline Woodson	Chloe and her friends won't play with the new girl, Maya. Every time Maya tries to join Chloe and her friends, they reject her. Eventually Maya stops coming to school. When Chloe's teacher gives a lesson about how even small acts of kindness can change the world, Chloe is stung by the lost opportunity for friendship, and thinks about how much better it could have been if she'd shown a little kindness toward Maya. Source
The Other Side	Jacqueline Woodson	Clover's mom says it isn't safe to cross the fence that segregates their African-American side of town from the white side where Anna lives. But the two girls strike up a friendship, and get around the grown-ups' rules by sitting on top of the fence together. Source

Appendix B: Useful Definitions

Book Group: Student-led *book clubs* or groups, have the goal of allowing student choice and flexibility, encouraging student-led discussions; and robust conversation around ***books*** that lead to a deeper understanding of the text.

Gallery Walk: A strategy to encourage visual and verbal sharing of peer work. Students first walk around the classroom where their peers' work is displayed, either on individual desks, group tables or walls. Just as in a museum or gallery, there is a "look but don't touch" rule as well as encouraging silence as they walk. After time for doing a complete viewing, students walk around a second time, again not touching but able to comment and ask questions. This strategy both scaffolds learning as they view others' work as well as encouraging respect for different perspectives as they view.

Line of Learning: This reflective writing strategy encourages students to think about what they have learned in relation to what they previously thought. As the practice becomes more natural to them, students will be encouraged to use their metacognitive skills by using such terms as "This made me think about _____" or "Before I didn't know____, but since I read these book I think about____".

Preview Review Vocabulary Strategy: In preparation for the read aloud, the teacher scans the chapters to be read aloud to identify words that might slow down student comprehension of the text. This is best limited to no more than three to five words per chapter. Before adding a word to the list, ask how important the word is to the overall comprehension of the chapter and whether it will be difficult for the students to figure out the meaning of the word using context clues. Then, before reading the chapter, the teacher previews the new vocabulary words, pointing out where it will occur in the read aloud, and discussing their meanings and uses. After the reading, the

teacher reviews the selected vocabulary words for the section, giving students opportunities to use the words in the context of the story. This is a particularly good strategy for low language and English Language learners.

Text-to-Text Connections Project: Text-to-self connections relate ideas learned in a text with a student's own experiences or ideas. Text-to-text connections are recurring words, ideas or themes across books and other media. Text-to-self connections link ideas learned in a text with a student's own experiences. Text-to-world connections help students relate concepts in a text to other domains of knowledge.

Think Pair Share Strategy: Think-pair-share (TPS) is a collaborative learning strategy where students work together to solve a problem or answer a question. This strategy requires students to (1) think individually about a topic or answer to a question; (2) partner with another student to share ideas; and (3) share with the class what their partner said. Discussing with a partner maximizes participation, focuses attention on the question and forces both members to share. Importantly, when in a pair, listening skills and the use of 1st person ("I think….") is used. When sharing their partner's thoughts to the larger group, the student has the scaffold of the partner's language, which reinforces new vocabulary, and uses the 3rd person tense ("She said…"). This is a particularly good strategy for low language and English Language learners.

Appendix C: Resources

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Florida's B.E.S.T English Language Arts Standards and Transdisciplinary Literacy Learning at the Crossroads of Instruction

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Are you teaching for English Language Arts benchmarks or excellent student thinking? This question should cause teacher-colleagues and teacher leaders to reflect, investigate, and design professional learning opportunities and instruction to support the development of excellent student thinking across the English Language Arts (ELA). Responsive and contingent teaching demands reflection on professional learning and its impact on student outcomes. It requires educators to consider student learning as a response to further inform and improve their instruction. It is essential for teacher-colleagues and teacher leaders to be empowered to critically investigate professional learning opportunities as they take ownership and seek to improve instruction that aligns with Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) ELA Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2020). Designing professional learning opportunities interwoven with Florida's B.E.S.T ELA Standards requires systematic organization of content, processes, and products over time. Moreover, Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards as described by the Florida Department of Education "should not stand alone as a separate focus for instruction but should be combined purposefully." Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards emphasize the importance of building knowledge across varied domains and subjects which promotes transdisciplinary literacy learning and teaching.

Adapted from the UNESCO definition, literacy is the ability to characterize, confirm, comprehend, clarify, create, calculate, and convey information by whatever sources available for

individuals to thrive in a given society and culture. Building on this definition of literacy, transdisciplinary literacy moves beyond disciplinary literacy to inform learning and instruction that requires the integration of disciplines to create new knowledge addressing real-world issues. Acknowledging that proficient learners are transdisciplinary literate (Froelich & Puig, 2022; Manak & Puig, 2021), transdisciplinary literacy provides opportunities for knowledge to be constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed (Crouch & Cambourne, 2020). This fosters students' increasing levels of integration from disciplinary literacy to multidisciplinary literacy to interdisciplinary literacy and ultimately to transdisciplinary literacy (Vasques, 2015). It is the convergence of disciplinary literacy over time that enables learners to engage in divergent solution-seeking behaviors to solve real-world issues. Since we live in an inherently transdisciplinary environment, to best serve students we must teach students to read, think, and communicate in this transdisciplinary world. Intentionally engineering transdisciplinary literacy enterprises buttresses Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards to promote collaborative learning, critical reading of a wide-range of texts, and coherently communicating using knowledge of multiple disciplines. To intentionally and coherently integrate these literacy enterprises, the term *text* is defined as inclusive of a broad range of print and non-print texts, for example an utterance, an oral story, a conversation, a life experience, a thought, a gesture, a book, a movie, a dance, a poem, or a work of art (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Hartman, 1992; Manak, 2011; Short, 1992; Sipe, 2001).

Becoming Transdisciplinary Literate

Because becoming transdisciplinary literate is a uniquely personal and internalized journey, we use the preposition "for" when we are talking about teaching for transdisciplinary literacy. However, we can create conditions in our classroom for students to become

transdisciplinary literate by providing opportunities to look across disciplines and integrate their knowledge and experiences as they read the world and communicate.

Crouch and Cambourne's (2020) eight universal conditions "of" learning can be repurposed as conditions "for" transdisciplinary literacy learning. The eight conditions of learning are: immersion, demonstration, approximation, response, responsibility, engagement, employment, and expectation. They also serve as guideposts to inform learning and teaching at the crossroads of Florida's B.E.S.T ELA Standards and instruction. When transdisciplinary literacy learning is taking place, these eight conditions of learning synergistically and concurrently function together. In the next few paragraphs, we will discuss each condition individually with the understanding that at the classroom level they occur concurrently and build upon one another.

In considering immersion as a condition for learning, the task of the teacher is to create an age-appropriate, multisensory, information-intensive learning environment by providing online and off-line texts from diverse disciplines to benefit all learners. The condition of demonstration occurs when a learning task is modeled by a more knowledgeable other. Through multiple exposures to an activity, transdisciplinary learners acquire a sense of achievement, recognize the value, and understand the complexity of an activity. Providing a single disciplinary demonstration to transdisciplinary learners is insufficient; multiple demonstrations increase the likelihood that learning will take place in a transdisciplinary, multisensory learning environment (Crouch & Cambourne, 2020). As transdisciplinary learners internalize demonstrations, learning becomes a form of hypothesis testing where approximations are paramount in order to process information. When learners make approximations, they process transdisciplinary information as they predict and anticipate; a feed-forward mechanism. Generally, predicting is text-dependent

where anticipating relies on our personal funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992). Consequently, transdisciplinary learning environments should be designed for learners to feel free to approximate and to take risks.

Transdisciplinary literacy learning does not take place in isolation. In order for transdisciplinary meaning-making to occur, learning requires an ongoing response between the learner and the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). Providing a response is dependent on the learner's experiences and the experiences of the more knowledgeable other. A response is generally made intentionally and mindfully to a learner's approximations. Transdisciplinary responses at school usually focus on acknowledging, celebrating, or collaboratively seeking solutions based on a disciplinary demonstration provided by either students or teacher-colleagues. In other words, most transdisciplinary responses fall into three broad categories. They either focus on disciplinary knowledge or skill level, stretch the learner's transdisciplinary understanding, or guide the learner toward a specific resource. Learner/teacher responsiveness is critical for forward shifts in transdisciplinary learning.

The condition of responsibility in transdisciplinary learning highlights the importance of the learner being in the metaphorical driver's seat. The condition of responsibility in transdisciplinary learning manifests itself when learners are willing to make decisions about their learning and more knowledgeable others trust that learners will be involved in the demonstrations provided. Schools and classrooms that offer choice in an information-intensive learning environment are encouraging learners to take responsibility for their transdisciplinary learning and promoting self-efficacy (Bandura, 1998). It is a primary responsibility of a teacher to constantly be checking themselves so that transdisciplinary instructional decisions are generated by collaborative solution-seeking rather than silo-like, disciplinary, didactic decision-

making. Silo-like, disciplinary, didactic decision-making removes the element of responsibility from the learner and places it on the teacher or more knowledgeable others.

Crouch and Cambourne (2020), place the condition of engagement at the core of learning. It has been our experience that engagement in transdisciplinary learning occurs at the intersection of the Zones of Distal Development (Spear-Ellinwood, 2011), Zones of Mesial Development (Puig, 2019) and progresses within the learner's Zones of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) or instructional zones where transdisciplinary learners can take on and engage with a task with the support of a more knowledgeable other. The Zones of Distal Development are beyond the reach of what a transdisciplinary learner can do but fosters imagination, creativity, questions, and goal setting while the Zones of Mesial Development are what a transdisciplinary learner can do independently and supports the development of confidence, self-directing, self-monitoring, and self-regulating behaviors. The plural "zones" is used to imply that transdisciplinary learners have multiple zones of development across core disciplines. While referring to the Zones of Proximal Development, but applicable to the other zones, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) suggest that within each zone there are four overlapping levels taking transdisciplinary learners from collaborative disciplinary learning to transdisciplinary solution-seeking with complex sublevels existing within each.

As a scaffold for instruction according to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), the first level of engagement appears to exist at a collaborative level with interaction among learners and more knowledgeable others. At the second level of engagement, learners begin to consciously self-regulate while approaching automaticity. As the learner progresses through the levels of engagement that we have identified, the learning behavior becomes "fossilized" (Vygotsky, 1978) or automatic. The fourth level of engagement occurs when the learner understands what

they have learned and what they still do not know. The fourth level is where learning is recursive, and the learner returns to the first level with new learning occurring.

Although not new, the concept of employment or practice is another condition for transdisciplinary learning in our society and education. We have all grown up in school with employment or practice incorporated into nearly all aspects of our learning across the disciplines. Considering the concept of employment, we believe that effective transdisciplinary literacy instruction combines practice with social interaction in order for new learning to take place. New learning is a by-product of social interaction and personal reflection (Crouch & Cambourne, 2020). This concept is further validated by Vygotsky (1978) and Caine, Caine, McClintic, and Klimek (2005) when they claim that learning is amplified through socialization with others.

Expectations, both those of the transdisciplinary learner and teacher, have a powerful influence on learners' emotions, learning, and memory when processing information (Rushton, Eitelgeorge & Zickafoose, 2003). For genuine learning to take place, transdisciplinary learners must view themselves as capable learners. Through mindful and intentional assessments and evaluations, teacher-colleagues can develop a theory or rationale of transdisciplinary learners' strengths and needs. A teacher-colleague's use of language when communicating with transdisciplinary learners significantly influences the learners' sense of self and the learning experience.

By repurposing the conditions "of" learning to conditions "for" learning, you can then begin to curate a transdisciplinary learning environment interwoven with Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards. If our goal is to prepare for the development of excellent transdisciplinary student thinking, we need to: 1) intentionally immerse students in disciplinary content, 2) provide

comprehensible transdisciplinary demonstrations, 3) construct a failure-free learning environment that welcomes approximations, 4) provide timely and relevant responses to transdisciplinary student learning, 5) emphasize students' responsibility in their own transdisciplinary learning, 6) conscientiously create multisensory lessons that increase student engagement, 7) provide transdisciplinary opportunities for students to employ or practice disciplinary content learned, and 8) expect that transdisciplinary learning will take place. These conditions can form a solid foundation for creating a supportive transdisciplinary, multisensory learning environment. The conditions for learning are not to be developed into a checklist of classroom activities, but rather they are a "synergistic network" to frame our thinking when organizing a multisensory, transdisciplinary learning environment. We have provided a brief overview of Cambourne's conditions for learning as they apply to this work with students and teacher-colleagues. This information alone is insufficient for us to make truly informed decisions regarding transdisciplinary instruction. Grounded in assessment and professional learning opportunities, the likelihood of improving instruction lies at the crossroad of Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards and transdisciplinary literacy learning.

Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards and Implications for Professional Learning and Instruction

Implementing Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards have a variety of implications for designing professional learning experiences to improve transdisciplinary instruction. Research tells us that the teacher is the number one factor in student learning and achievement (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Wei, et al., 2009). As teachers employ Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards and plan for transdisciplinary literacy instruction, they create conditions for learning that are supportive of transforming student learning from surface-level into deeper learning that then

allows for the transfer of disciplinary knowledge across content areas. Similar to the revised Blooms's taxonomy (Anderson, et al., 2001) and Webb's Depth of Knowledge (Webb, 2007), teachers can guide excellent transdisciplinary student thinking by intentionally crafting lessons that allow the transfer of knowledge across disciplines. Using ethnographic methodologies and our own instructional histories, the following list is presented as universal design recommendations for teacher-colleagues and teacher leaders to take into consideration when implementing Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards with a goal of creating a transdisciplinary learning environment.

1. Understand students' strengths and needs based on formal and informal assessments.
2. Make tasks relevant and universally accessible for students at various developmental levels so both success and productive failure can be experienced.
3. Collaborate with students to set explicit goals that motivate by highlighting their strengths yet point them toward developmentally appropriate and reachable learning targets.
4. Provide extended time for reading a wide variety of authentic texts across disciplines and combine multiple knowledge sources to create new knowledge that serves as a springboard for further transdisciplinary investigations.
5. Promote an intensely collaborative environment grounded on the concept that knowledge is socially constructed through facilitating intentional student talk.
6. Develop facilitative skills that tap into learners' multisensory orientation by focusing on students' external (taste, smell, touch, sight, hearing) and internal (curiosity, imagination, metacognition, monitoring, timing) sensory mechanisms.

7. Nurture self-awareness of the role students play in the world they live in by modeling and guiding students to self-regulate and self-monitor.

As stated in Florida's B.E.S.T. EL Standards, literacy is not achievable merely through a skills-based approach to build life-long learners. Knowledge acquisition should be the primary purpose of any instructional approach kindergarten through twelfth grade. Knowledge acquisition includes not only content but processes that transdisciplinary learners employ. The systematic building of a wide range of knowledge across disciplines is a prerequisite to becoming transdisciplinary literate. An essential element for developing critical thinkers is to increase disciplinary knowledge by reading and communicating through a broad range of texts. When excellent student thinking is a core component of transdisciplinary literacy learning, how content is organized and presented to learners is the foundation of an effective curriculum. In this instance, an effective transdisciplinary curriculum encompasses professional learning experiences, assessments, instructional practices, and resources. Consequently, Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards are the foundation for a robust curriculum that accounts for transdisciplinary literacy learning. These standards foster a broad-spectrum view of literacy that promotes knowledge building across disciplines making the integration of disciplinary content and collaboration among teacher-colleagues a professional learning goal.

Summary

According to the Florida Department of Education, Florida's B.E.S.T ELA Standards are built on the concept that English Language Arts is the common denominator for all disciplines and should be combined intentionally to improve transdisciplinary learning and instruction. First, English Language Arts should be considered as a rich discipline integrated with content area

knowledge to ensure learners are able to solve real-world issues of our global society. Second, the clear, concise nature of the standards make them comprehensible to all stakeholders. Third, texts, broadly defined, should be authentic, age-appropriate, and relevant to foster transdisciplinary learners to become engaged, motivated, and literate citizens who collaboratively work across disciplines, cultures, and identities. Coherent transdisciplinary learning and instruction should be intentionally integrated and transformational. Consequently, transformational learning and instruction for all learners lies at the crossroads of Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards and transdisciplinary literacy learning.

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Powerful Use of Nonfiction Texts in Primary Grades

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Abstract:

In this paper, the authors share texts and classroom strategies for using children's literature as a tool to teach content and present learning opportunities in meaningful ways that can be tailored to meet the needs of diverse classrooms. Texts have been aligned with the National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands and we offer summaries and activities that compliment and extend the topic of the text. This piece could be useful for those teachers looking to refresh their classroom libraries and as supportive material to assist new teachers beginning their time in the classroom.

Best practices in elementary school teaching mandate teachers meet the needs of diverse students by creating engaging, challenging and hands-on learning experiences. It is essential students have opportunities to collect experiences and skills that will enable them to become productive members of society. In social studies, when students have opportunities to construct knowledge, to express themselves by explaining their ideas, and to study topics that have some significance beyond the classroom, they are more likely to care about learning which may lead to increased student achievement (King et al., 2009).

Children's literature has long been used in elementary reading class, but with the implementation of Common Core Standards, the alignment of literature and content areas, such as science and social studies has been on the rise. The standards require students to read stories and literature, as well as more complex texts, that provide facts and background knowledge in content areas and stipulate students use that information to think critically and problem solve scenarios posed by the teacher (Common Core, 2016). Furthermore, the Common Core English

Language Arts standards (ELA) advocate the use of informational text as a tool to promote rigorous integration of content with reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

Nonfiction texts can be broadly defined as texts that report and explain facts about the surrounding world (Duke & Kays, 1998) through different organizational patterns (Fisher & Frey, 2007). As this genre continues to evolve, there have been discussions over distinctions between texts, for example nonfiction and informational texts (see Williams, 2009). The terms used (e.g., "nonfiction," "information books," "informational texts," "creative nonfiction," "narrative nonfiction," and "expository text") add to the confusion of what nonfiction really is (Crisp, 2015). The National Council of Teachers of English's Orbis Pictus Award offers a concise definition for nonfiction: any title which has as its central purpose the sharing of information, including biography, but excluding textbooks, historical fiction, folklore, or poetry (http://www.ncte.org/awards/orbispictus).

CCSS has put nonfiction on equal ground with narrative/fiction literature, but this is not just a genre shift. The attention on informational texts is "so students build knowledge and are prepared to read and write as they engage in disciplinary study" (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015, p. 257). Using a variety of children's literature, including nonfiction texts, has the potential to help children develop important understandings of social studies content and gain enhanced perspectives of their worlds (Crawford & Roberts, 2016; Teale et al., 2007; Turner, 2018). The National Council for the Social Studies implores educators to provide a variety of materials and experiences that create learning experiences that cross subject matter boundaries (2009).

In a time when teaching socials studies as an independent subject varies between a tiny squeezed in mini-lesson to nonexistent, teachers are challenged to reinvent both pedagogical approaches and materials used in the classroom to teach. Bearing in mind the purpose of social

studies, according to the National Council for the Social Studies, is to give students opportunities to understand, participate in, and make informed decisions about their world which will help them become productive members of society as they learn about the past thorough the study of relationships between people, places and events (2016 a) teachers must intentionally and purposefully select and utilize texts and activities that enhance conceptual development.

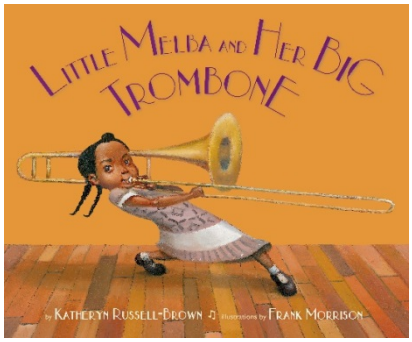
The books below can be tools to help teachers teach content and present learning opportunities in meaningful ways that can be tailored to meet the needs of diverse classrooms. Texts have been aligned with the National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands and we offer summaries and activities that compliment and extend the topic of the text.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Themes of Social Studies		
Theme	Title	Descriptor
1	Culture	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity
2	Time, Continuity, and Change	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.
3	People, Places, and Environments	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
4	Individual Development and Identity	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.
5	Individuals, Groups, and Institutions	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

6	Power, Authority, Governance	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
7	Production, Distribution, and Consumption	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
8	Science, Technology, and Society	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.
9	Global Connections	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.
10	Civic Ideals and Practices	Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

(National Council for the Social Studies, 2016 b)

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone



Russell-Brown, Katheryn. (2014). ***Little Melba and Her Big Trombone.*** Illus. Frank Morrison. New York, NY: Lee & Low. 40 pp. Gr K and up. Picture Book/Biography.

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands

- Time, Continuity, and Change (2)

- Individual Development and Identity (4)
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (5)

Summary

With vibrant illustrations and melodic text (plink, hummm, ping-pang), this text tells the story of Melba Liston who loved the sounds of music from as far back as she could remember. At age seven, Melba fell in love with the trombone in spite of her mother's uncertainty ("It's big and you're a little girl."). Melba worked hard growing up to nurture her talent and ignore the jealous taunts of her male bandmates. When she was seventeen, she joined a band led by trumpet player Gerald Wilson and toured the country with her mother's blessing. Readers will learn how she overcame obstacles of race and gender to become a famed trombone player and arranger, working with all the jazz greats of the twentieth century, including: Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, and Quincy Jones.

Teaching Suggestions

- Watch the documentary, "The Girls in the Band."(http://thegirlsintheband.com/) Compare the lives of the musicians with Melba Liston
- Create a bottle and pipe trombone for yourself: https://books.google.com/books?id=NndskU55890C&pg=PA62&lpg=PA62&dq=science+behind+trombone+playing&source=bl&ots=to80vDeM-q&sig=l59Rd9XpaXdYUJVK7YkEgw99w2I&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CFMQ6AEwB2oVChMIwp_pldWFxgIVTIYNCh2E9gCC#v=onepage&q=science%20behind%20trombone%20playing&f=false
- Discover facts about the Jim Crow laws: http://www.american-historama.org/1866-1881-reconstruction-era/jim-crow-laws.htm

Other Resources

Melba and Her 'Bones: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qwFmRzEbcM

All about Jazz: http://www.allaboutjazz.com/melba-liston-and-her-bones-melba-liston-fresh-sound-records-review-by-hrayr-attarian.php

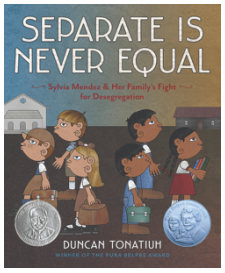
Chin-Lee, Cynthia. (2008). *Amelia to Zora: Twenty-six women who changed the world.* Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.

Copeland, Misty. (2014). *Firebird.* New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.

Nelson, Marilyn. (2009). *Sweethearts of rhythm*. New York, NY: Dial.

Powell, Patricia Hruby. (2014). *Josephine: The dazzling life of Josephine Baker.* San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation



Tonatiuh, Duncan. (2014). ***Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation.*** New York, NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers. 40 pp. Gr K-12. Picture Book/Biography.

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands

- Individual Development and Identity (4)
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (5)

Summary

Most of America is familiar with Brown v. Board of Education; however, the story about Sylvia Mendez and her family's struggle to desegregate the schools in California in 1947, seven years before *Brown v. Board*, is one that is rarely told. This book provides a glimpse into Sylvia's life as a Mexican American child who does not understand why she cannot attend the school in her new neighborhood. Sylvia and her brothers were forced to attend the "Mexican school" where the conditions did everything but support a positive learning environment. The school was dirty, the teachers expected the students to fail, and there was no playground for the children. Sylvia's parents refused to allow their children to be treated with such injustice, and they made it a mission to ensure that all children, regardless of their race or culture, were allowed equal rights to attend public school. Written in a way that makes it easy to understand the struggles of Sylvia and her family, this book does an excellent job of introducing readers to the Mendez's fight for equality.

Teaching Suggestions

- Read, *The Story of Ruby Bridges,* and compare and contrast the experiences of Sylvia and Ruby. Young students could draw images, whereas older students might create a presentation with Easel.ly or Prezi.
- Have students listen to Sylvia, in her own words, explain her experience and feelings during her family's fight for equality in California public schools. After listening to this interview, have students write how they would feel if they were in Sylvia's shoes. http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/05/16/312555636/before-brown-v-board-mendez-fought-californias-segregated-schools
- Introduce students to *Brown v. Board,* and have a Socratic Circle discussion about why the *Mendez v. Westminster* case did not receive the same recognition.

- Working with the art teacher in your school, have students recreate the image that stood out the most to them, while listening to the Sylvia Mendez story.

Other Resources

Coles, Robert. (2004). *The story of Ruby Bridges.* Illus. George Ford. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Levy, Debbie. (2013). *We shall overcome: The story of a song*. New York, NY: Jump at the Sun.

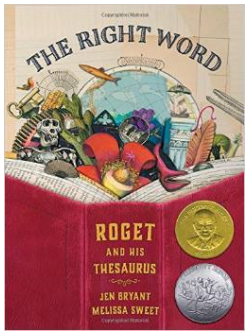
Herrera, Juan Felipe. (2014). *Portraits of Hispanic American heroes*. Illus. Raul Colon. New York, NY:

Dial Books for Young Readers.

Mora, Pat. (1997). *Tomas and the library lady*. Illus. Raul Colon. New York, NY: Dragonfly Books.

Ada, Alma Flor, & Campoy, Isabel. (2013). *Yes! We are Latinos.* Illus. David Dias. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.

The Right Word



Bryant, Jen. (2014). ***The Right Word***. Illus. Melissa Sweet. New York: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. 42 pages. Gr. 2 and up. Picture book/Biography.

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands

- Time, Continuity, and Change (2)
- People, Places, and Environments (3)
- Individual Development and Identity (4)

Summary

This beautifully-illustrated book celebrates the joy of learning and the power of words in a biography of Peter Mark Roget. The lyrical text (perfect for read alouds) tells the story of shy, young Roget who deals with his own tragedies (father's death) and adversities (moving often) but reading and creating his own books of lists. He organized his ideas and worked to find exactly the right word to express what he was thinking (because sometimes "fine" was not adequate). As his lists grew and he studied (medical school), Roget turned his book into one of the most important reference books of all time, *Thesaurus*. In addition to this fascinating story, readers will marvel at the detailed and intricate illustrations containing Roget's lists and sketches of popular scientific discoveries of the time.

Teaching Suggestions

- Review the List of Principal Events located at the end of the book; pick one of the world events (denoted by red font) to research and share with the class. Consider: why did the author include this event with the main events of Roget's life?
- Create a name poem using two synonyms and one antonym for each letter of your name
- Roget was friends with inventors and even constructed some inventions himself. What is something that you think should be invented to help out with your daily life? Draw or build a model of your invention

Other Resources

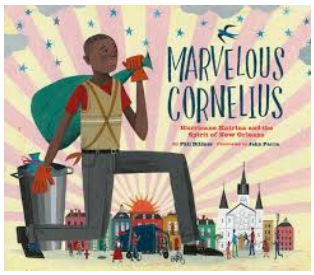
Hyperlinked thesaurus: http://www.roget.org/

Brown, Don. (2003). *Rare treasure: Mary Anning and her remarkable discoveries.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Ferris, Jeri Chase. (2012). *Noah Webster and his words.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

McGinty, Alice B. (2009). *Darwin.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Marvelous Cornelius: Hurricane Katrina and the Spirit of New Orleans



Bildner, Phil (2015). ***Marvelous Cornelius: Hurricane Katrina and the Spirit of New Orleans***. Illus. John Parra. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. 44 pp. Gr K and up. Picture Book/Biography**.**

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands

- Culture (1)
- People, Places, and Environments (3)
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (5)

Summary

Cornelius Washington was a sanitation worker in the city who, both pre and post Hurricane Katrina, inspired those he came across with his joyous spirit and dedication to his job. Using trash can lids as cymbals, Cornelius entertained those on his route. After the hurricane, Cornelius returned to a devastated city and resumed his work with his normal flair. His actions help inspire his community just as the story inspires others to be their best.

Teaching Suggestions

- Use Google Earth to locate New Orleans. Compare and contrast New Orleans geographic location to the location of your city.
- Tour a local recycling center or trash management facility.
- Compose a list explaining why trash collection is important.

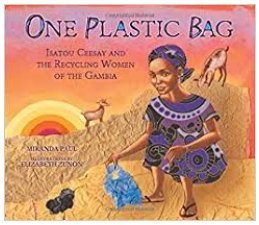
Other Resources

Ahmed, Roda. (2018). *Mae among the Stars.* New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Hood, Susan. (2018). *Shaking things up: 14 young women who changed the world*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Lewis, Suzanne. (2015). *A penguin named patience: A Hurricane Katrina rescue story*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press.

<u>One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia</u>



Paul, Miranda. (2015*).* ***One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia***. Illus. Elizabeth Zunon. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group. 32 pp. Gr K and up. Picture Book/Biography.

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands

- Culture (1)
- People, Places, and Environments (3)
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (5)
- Global Connections (9)

Summary

Stemming from an effort to unclog the streets of Gambia of debris, Isatou Ceesay started a movement to help women of the Gambia become more self-sufficient by reusing discarded plastic bags. The story inspires the reader to see a solution to a problem and work to make the possible solution a reality. Messages of perseverance are prevalent and serve as inspiration to the reader.

Teaching Suggestions

- Tour a recycling/waste management facility: http://www.swa.org/201/School-Education-Programs
- Watch a video of Isatou Ceesay and compare information between video and text: http://climateheroes.org/portfolio-item/isatou-ceesay-queen-plastic-recycling-gambia/
- Create a parent-assisted plastic reuse station to demonstrate how each person can reuse household items and act as responsible citizens:
- Reusable bags made from plastic bags: https://youtu.be/1zZw7yrI22M

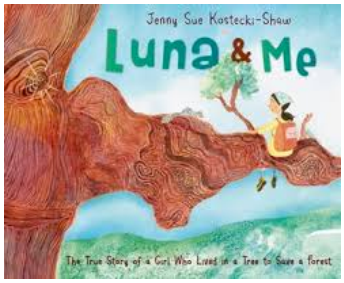
Other Resources

Thompson, Laurie Ann. (2015). *Emmanuel's dream: The true story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah*. New York, NY: Schwartz & Wade.

Kamkwamba, William. (2012).*The boy who harnessed the wind.* New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Drummond, Allan. (2015). *Energy Island: How one community harnessed the wind and changed their world.* New York, NY: Square Fish.

Luna & Me: The Story of Julia Butterfly Hill



Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue (2015). ***Luna & Me: The Story of Julia Butterfly Hill.*** New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co. 40 pp. Gr K and up. Picture Book/Biography.

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands

- Individual Development and Identity (4)
- Productions, Distribution, and Society (7)

- Civic Ideals and Practice (10)

Summary

Based on Julia Butterfly Hill's real experience with trying to save an ancient Redwood from being cut down, this text demonstrates the power of a single person to create change. With captivating illustrations, and using both first and third person narratives, the story of Julia Hill grabs the reader's attention. The captivating story grabs the reader's attention as Julia, who after discovering a blue X on a huge Redwood tree, took action. The action was not quick or easy, but had a big impact, for both the tree and the local community.

Teaching Suggestions

- View the sunrise using webcam from Sequoia National Park (https://www.nature.nps.gov/air/WebCams/parks/sekicam/sekicam.cfm), or explore Sequoia photos (https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/sequoiagroves.htm). Then write a story from the perspective of the Redwood. Topics to be explored can include: ecosystems, pollution, humans' impact on the environment, and the power of a singe person to make a change.
- Plant a tree in the schoolyard (Be sure it's native).
- Challenge students to reflect on their local community and discuss changes they have seen in local areas.

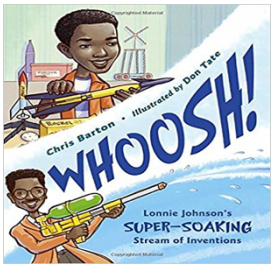
Other Resources

Hopkins, H. (2013). *The tree lady: The true story of how one tree-loving woman changed a city forever*. New York, NY: Beach Lane Books.

Lawlor, L. (2014). *Rachel Carson and her book that changed the world*. New York, NY: Holiday House.

Winter, J. (2011). *The watcher: Jane Goodall's life with the chimps*. New York, NY: Schwartz.

Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions



Barton, C. (2016). ***Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions.*** Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge. 32pp. Gr. K and up.Picture Book/Biography.

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands

- People, Places, and Environments (3)
- Individual Development and Identity (4)
- Science, Technology, and Society (8)

Summary

This text details the story of Lonnie Johnson, the inventor of the Super Soaker. Growing up with tenacity and a passion for problem solving became the cornerstone for Johnson's career as an engineer and his work with NASA. The story shares the multiple failures and the spirit of persistence required before he invented his most memorable idea- the Super Soaker.

Teaching Suggestions

- Create a classroom engineering challenge
    - http://tryengineering.org/
    - Online activities: http://tryengineering.org/play-games/solar-car-racing-game

- Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day
    - https://www.discovere.org/our-programs/girl-day

Other Resources

Beaty, A. (2013). *Rosie Revere, engineer*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams.

Spire, A. (2014). *The most magnificent thing*. Toronto: Kids Can Press.

Carick Hill, L. (2013). *When the beat was born: DJ Kool Herc and the creation of hip hop*. New York, NY: Roaring Brook Press.

Conclusion

As mentioned previously, teachers must intentionally and purposefully select and utilize texts and activities that enhance conceptual development. These texts, teaching suggestions, and other resources just may facilitate opportunities to construct knowledge, to have students express themselves by explaining their ideas, and to study topics that have some significance beyond the classroom.

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Data-Driven Decision-Making to Intensify Literacy Instruction and Intervention

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Abstract

Federal and state policy requires educators to differentiate instruction and intervention using data-driven decision-making (DDDM) aligned with increasingly rigorous state standards within a Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). To effectively engage in DDDM, educators must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to collect and analyze data to provide individualized, specially designed, and responsive instruction and intervention within a tiered framework. Additionally, educators need access to tools and resources from state and nationally vetted centers (e.g., PS/RtI, IRIS, NCII) to enhance their skillset for differentiation and DDDM, individualization, and intensification of literacy intervention.

In response to national trends and legislation such as the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA, 2015), the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) requires school districts to adopt policies and procedures that require educators to make data informed decisions that guide instruction and intervention for all learners within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. Policymakers have stressed the importance of data-driven decision-making (DDDM). Educators realize that DDDM is essential to instructional planning to address and enhance student outcomes. DDDM is a continuous use of assessment data to determine *when* and *how* to intensify instruction and intervention (Wilson, 2016).

The increased emphasis on DDDM has implications for all educators as it effectively requires educators develop and enhance their knowledge and skills to analyze, interpret, and

convert data into instruction (Datnow & Hubbard, 2016). As part of this process, educators need access to high-quality tools and resources to intensify instruction and intervention to meet the varied needs of diverse learners in literacy as they engage in DDDM.

Not only do educators need to gather a plethora of data from multiple sources, but they need to be able to engage in *data-chats* within their grade-level departments or professional learning communities. Although the process of data collection has become part of educational nomenclature and practice, questions remain regarding effective interpretation and use of data (Katz & Dack, 2014). Data *use*, not just *collection*, is at the nexus of classroom decision-making (Schlidkamp, 2019). This can be challenging as interpretation and use of data is complex and is influenced by teachers' knowledge of how to interpret and respond to data (Horn et al., 2015; Mandinach, 2012).

Improving Literacy Outcomes using DDDM within a Tiered Framework

Current data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2020) noted 65 percent of both fourth- and eighth-grade students performed below proficiency on grade level assessments in reading. These results indicate a significant number of students continue to struggle to meet reading standards. There is a tremendous need for early and immediate reading interventions specifically designed to meet the unique and individualized needs of students (Allington, 2013; McMaster, 2021). Due to the significance of literacy on student success, research has supported students receiving intervention at the first sign of difficulty (O'Connor et al., 2013).

However, current research indicates some educators feel unprepared to work with students who have diverse learning needs and many feel poorly prepared to provide literacy instruction and intervention for students who may be at risk (Powell et al., 2010; Varghese et al.,

2021). Given the influence an educator has on student outcomes, especially literacy development, it is important educators acquire knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective, targeted instruction and intervention.

Providing educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources within the DDDM framework could enhance instruction and intervention. Research indicates instruction and intervention for struggling readers should include the following: (a) targeted involvement of the teacher during design and delivery of instruction; (b) comprehensive and integrated approaches to literacy instruction as a cohesive whole; and (c) use of assessments to address and adjust instruction according to student needs (Fisher & Ivey, 2006). Additionally, Fien and colleagues (2015) stress the importance of DDDM for differentiation of instruction within a tiered framework of supports.

Responsive instruction through a DDDM approach is critical to improving literacy outcomes, especially when implemented in a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Federal legislation (e.g., ESSA) and state initiatives have reiterated the need to strengthen standards and rigor for *all* students, emphasized the use of research-based practices to support student learning, and promoted the use of DDDM. Previously established as a method for identification and eligibility within the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA; 2004), MTSS placed a focus on intensifying supports for struggling students before they experience failure. Wanzek and Vaughn (2009) asserted that MTSS should include several essential features:

> *"(1) the use of rigorous scientifically based research to facilitate decision making, (2) universal screening to identify students at risk for academic problems, (3) assessment and progress monitoring to ensure students learning is monitored and appropriate*

> *instruction is provided, and (4) the increasingly more intensive treatment of students through appropriate prevention and then intervention treatments"* (p. 151).

In Florida, MTSS is a three-tiered instruction, intervention, and problem-solving framework that begins with evidence-based instruction for all students (Braun et al., 2018). As educators collect data and adjust instruction, decisions are made about the need to intensify instruction either through frequency (additional sessions) or duration (increased time). Defining characteristics of MTSS include: (a) researched, evidence-based practices (EBPs) at all three tiers; (b) DDDM within the problem-solving process; and (c) individualized and targeted interventions (Barrio et al., 2015; Sisk, 2019). Throughout the MTSS process, educators use DDDM to identify students who are not responsive to instruction, determine specific instructional goals based upon the data, and provide individualized intervention (Hoover, 2019; Lane et al., 2019). Educators meet the needs of students using assessment tools sensitive to and directly linked to instruction, allowing them to make decisions about the environment, materials, and reinforcements to aide in skill acquisition (Daly et al., 2007).

MTSS is flexible and provides a system in which students receive instruction within a continuum of tiers as appropriate for their instructional needs. Within a tiered instructional framework, educators provide supports and interventions in literacy with increasing intensity (ESSA, 2015). MTSS provides an instructional framework within which educators engage in DDDM to rapidly respond to student needs (ESSA, 2015). Therefore, the MTSS framework promotes proactive, data-based instructional decisions to preempt, intercept, and intervene with students experiencing learning difficulties and also serves as the basis for determining a student's eligibility for special services in many states, including Florida (Slanda & Little, 2018).

Resources for Data Collection and Analysis

Although educators are skilled at the collection of classroom data through formal and informal assessment procedures, instructional decision-making requires "sensemaking" of the data (Mandinach, 2012) to determine necessary evidence-based instructional methods and resources. Further, not only do educators need to know how to interpret data, but also how to intensify instruction using various strategies that meet the unique learning needs of the student. DDDM is a cyclical process with educators engaged in continuous decision-making necessary to provide evidence-based instruction, evaluate the impact of the instruction through assessment, adjust instruction and intervention in response to student learning, and monitor continued progress. If the student is not responsive, the educator adjusts instruction. At the core of the cycle is student learning. Figure 1 illustrates this process (see below).

To assist with and guide DDDM, a taxonomy for the intensification of instruction and interventions (Fuchs et al., 2017) was developed. The taxonomy provides a system of considerations for instruction and intervention in terms of seven dimensions: strength, dosage, alignment, attention to transfer, comprehensiveness, support, and individualization. These dimensions can be considered by educators during the decision-making processes of instructional planning based upon assessment data. Additionally, the taxonomy is designed to identify interventions and make adjustments to improve student outcomes. Table 1 describes the dimensions and provides application details (see below).

Given the current role of educators as interventionists within the MTSS framework, additional knowledge and resources related to problem-solving, evidence-based instructional strategies, progress monitoring tools, and data analysis tools are needed to assist with DDDM across the tiers (Slanda & Little, 2020). To assist educators with DDDM, multiple state and

national vetted centers sites have been developed to provide multiple resources which are readily available for immediate use at no cost. These high-quality, fully accessible websites were created by experts and designed to transform research into resources for classroom use. Designed for and by educators, the sites include guidance on how to incorporate the resources within the classroom to make sense of data and translate data into action.

Table 2 provides information from three resources to assist educators with improving literacy outcomes by translating data into action across the tiers to address the diverse learning needs of students (see below).

PS/RtI

The Problem-Solving Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) project is a partnership between the FLDOE and the University of South Florida designed to inform and facilitate the implementation of MTSS. This open-access website (www.floridarti.usf.edu) offers easily accessible resources, learning modules, and publications across multiple topics in instruction and intervention including DDDM, academic and behavior support, building capacity, absenteeism, and MTSS. The PS/RtI project has aligned the B.E.S.T. Standards across all the MTSS tiers of instruction, provides data tools, and modules on the problem-solving process all aimed to build educator capacity.

IRIS Center

The *IRIS Center* at Vanderbilt University provides resources related to data-based decision-making, evidence-based instruction, and intervention practices to improve literacy outcomes. This open-access website (https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu) provides learning modules as well as multiple online resources and tools. IRIS resources include a wide variety of topics related to including learning strategies, EBPs, accommodations, early interventions,

literacy/reading, and universal design for learning (UDL). Additionally, IRIS provides opportunities for educators to earn badges through micro-credentials or earn Professional Development Certificates.

NCII

The National Center on Intensive Interventions (NCII) developed an open-access website (https://intensiveintervention.org) which provides resources for educators to enhance implementation of DDDM as an integral part of the MTSS framework. This site provides resources, tools, videos, virtual simulations, and practice-based opportunities to further enhance the educator's ability to engage in DDDM and data-based individualization.

Conclusion

Teachers and instructional coaches in literacy continue to strive to enhance their knowledge and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. The complexities of literacy instruction, assessment, and intervention to meet the needs of all students may require additional knowledge of and experiences with processes and resources designed to address diverse learning needs in literacy within a framework of continuous and responsive "sensemaking" during the data-driven decision-making (DDDM) processes. Enhanced literacy outcomes for students with diverse learning needs are actualized when educators are able to analyze, interpret, and convert data into action (Datnow & Hubbard, 2015; Wilson, 2016). DDDM further allows educators to intensify instruction and intervention across the tiers as guided by the taxonomy of intensification. The taxonomy provides considerations for educators when reviewing multiple sources of assessment data during team discussions and data chats. In addition, resources, tools, and protocols from state and national sites (e.g., PS/RtI, IRIS, NCII) provide teachers and instructional coaches with the knowledge and resources for data-driven

decision-making to meet the needs of each student within classrooms and schools. As each teacher and instructional coach continues to strive to meet the instructional needs of students in literacy within the inquiry-based, DDDM process, enhanced professional learning and use of resources provide important professional tools.

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Figure 1.

DDDM Cycle

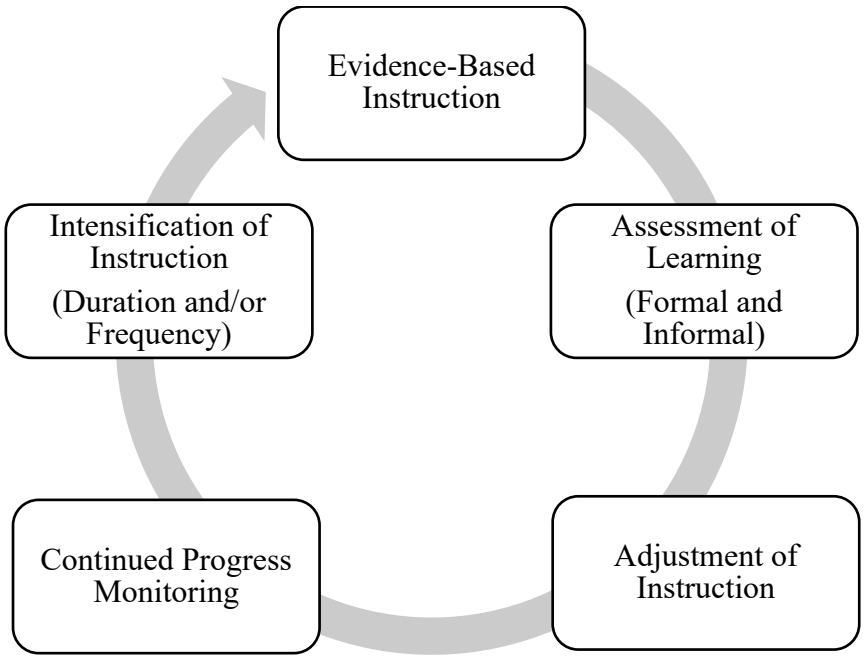

Table 1

Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity in Literacy

Dimension	**Description**	**Action**
Strength	Instruction and intervention are research-validated and have evidence of effectiveness	Select EBPs to address student need. EBPs are selected for their known outcome in improving student skillset in the targeted area
Dosage	Providing increased opportunities student has to respond and receive feedback	Increase Frequency (additional sessions) or Duration (additional time) in small groups or one-on-one
Alignment	Instruction/intervention matches need and incorporates grade-appropriate literacy standards	Aligned with the component of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) to be addressed
Attention to Transfer	Connections between the skills taught in classroom, home, etc.	Make clear connections across settings to assist the student to transfer skill
Comprehensiveness	Incorporates comprehensive pre-skills and principles to scaffold and support literacy development.	Teach pre-skills and scaffold/model the intervention to ensure it is implemented comprehensively
Support	Provides engagement, motivation, and student involvement to enhance ability to actively participate and learn	Provide student with multiple opportunities to actively participate in meaningful ways that are engaging
Individualization	Use of observations and other diagnostic data sources to intensify and individualize the intervention based on student need.	Monitor progress and adjust instruction/intervention to meet the specific needs of the student

Adapted from: Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., & Malone, A. S. (2017). *The Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity*. TEACHING Exceptional Children, 50(1), 35-43.

Table 2. *Resources for Educators to Engage in DDDM within a Tiered Framework*

	PS RtI	**IRIS Center**	**NCII**
Overview	Offers easily accessible professional learning modules, publications, presentation, and resources for DDDM, academic support, and MTSS	Shares products and services including self-guided modules, webinars, technical assistance, resources, roadmaps, toolkits	Provides tools and resources to support students with intensive needs including webinars, toolkits, tool charts, videos, sample lessons, sample strategies, infographics
Tier 1	Resources for determining instructional reading level, presentations and documents to assist with using assessment to inform instruction	Tools and practices for multiple levels of interventions MTSS and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction, fundamental skills sheets	Tool for data meetings, resources for finding EBP and programs for literacy and reading development across literacy components, sample lessons and activities
Tier 2	Small group planning worksheet, ongoing progress monitoring tools, resource for using student outcome data, presentations and documents to assist with using assessment to inform instruction	Multitude of resources for differentiation, cooperative learning and small group, early intervention, assessment, progress monitoring, learning strategies, literacy modules and using data to inform instruction	Progress monitoring tools, intensification tools, guide for intervention changes, tool for identifying intervention and assessment for literacy, sample interventions and activities
Tier 3	An RTI-based SLD identification toolkit	Intensive and individualized interventions, information briefs on individualization and DDDM, video vignettes, web resource directory	Intervention implementation measurement tool for daily/weekly use, individual intervention plan, data meeting tools

Authors' Biography:

Dr. Dena D. Slanda is a Research Associate in the College of Community Innovation and Education and serves as the Education Doctoral Program (Ed.D.) Advisor in Exceptional Student Education at the University of Central Florida. She received her undergraduate degree at George Mason University and both her Masters and Doctorate in Exceptional Student Education from UCF. She is currently a Co-Principal Investigator or Project Coordinator for federal grants in excess of $7.25 million for research and personnel/leadership development. Currently, she serves as the Co-Principal Investigator for Project SPEECH, a federally-funded research and development project through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education

Programs. The purpose of the project is to research, develop, and collaboratively prepare special educators and speech-language pathologists to implement intensive interventions to improve K-12 student learning and literacy outcomes. She is a published author and has conducted numerous presentations at international, national, regional, and state conferences focused on culturally proactive pedagogy and practices, equitable educational opportunities, inclusive practices, interdisciplinary collaboration, teacher and administrator preparation, intensive interventions, and multi-tier systems of support. Additionally, her research is focused on the intersection of race and disability with particular attention to disproportionality of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education. Her professional experiences in the K-12 schools include roles as a secondary teacher STEM and intensive reading teacher. She teaches courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels using synchronous and asynchronous platforms, in assessment, instruction, data-based decision making, and collaborative preparation.

Dr. Mary E. Little is a Professor and Program Coordinator in Exceptional Student Education at the University of Central Florida. She received her graduate and undergraduate degrees in Special Education and Curriculum and Instruction from the State University College at Buffalo and her doctorate in Special Education from the University of Kansas. Dr. Little has received in excess of $25 million in external funding for research and development from federal, state, and foundation funding agencies including the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). She teaches synchronous and asynchronous courses in multiple modes of instruction for the past fifteen years at the graduate and undergraduate levels specifically in mathematics, assessment, instruction, action research, and program evaluation. Dr. Little has attended multiple professional learning courses and workshops offered through the Course Development and Learning offices to enhance virtual instruction. Dr. Little was

instrumental in the development of one of UCF's initial fully online programs at the Graduate level in Exceptional Student Education. In addition, Dr. Little has provided professional development sessions both within UCF and nationally on the topics of synchronous and asynchronous instruction, universal design for learning in the virtual environment, and faculty support for virtual instruction.

Book Review:

Book 1:

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2021). *The Distance Learning Playbook, Grades K-12.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Publishers.

Reviewed by Dr. Lindsay Persohn, University of South Florida

Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and John Hattie combine their abundance of knowledge collectively around K-12 teaching and learning practices and dispositions to create a user-friendly workbook-style text for teaching online with intention and confidence. Citing teaching strategies and methods with high effect sizes while supporting those categorical ideas with personal accounts, the authors provide rich illustrative examples and encouragement around relying on the teaching we already know how to do, adapted for distance learning. The focus is not tech applications and tools but rather teaching practice. Throughout the book, QR (Quick Response) codes link to multiple video segments in each Module and provide nuanced explanations of the strategies described. The book's videos and reproducible resources are freely available on the Corwin Publisher's website (https://resources.corwin.com/distancelearningplaybook). Along with this research- and experience-based guidance, the authors provide space and prompts for readers to pause and work out their own strategies and methods tailored to their students' needs in online classrooms. Each Module clearly sets learning intentions at the start, contains "traffic light" evaluation scales related to the content of the Module, and concludes with success criteria. *The Distance Learning Playbook* also lists practices and habits teachers will want to avoid. Color images, callout boxes, helpful figures, and prompted thinking can assist new and experienced teachers in their quest to successfully deliver meaningful instruction to students in a digital environment.

Importantly, Module 1 is dedicated to teacher self-care, addressing the ongoing collective trauma we are experiencing related to the COVID-19 crisis as well as personal traumas that can adversely impact teachers. After leading readers through brainstorming about and setting intentions for healthful habits, The Distance Learning Playbook dives into the first days of school. Drawing on face-to-face classroom experience, Module 2 leads readers through developing a digital classroom management plan with norms, expectations, procedures, and routines. Module 3 provides guidance and encourages readers to think through building relationships with students in an online environment, with many bulleted lists, definitions, and questions to prompt thinking around these complex topics. Module 4 addresses teacher credibility in distance learning, communicating specific ways to develop big concepts like trust and competence in definitional and actionable terms. Module 5 provides information and ideas around teacher clarity in distance learning, beginning with the practices of clarity and then sharing action steps toward achieving clarity with a focus on creating intentional and cohesive learning opportunities for students. Module 6 outlines possibilities for engaging tasks in online teaching, highlighting how engagement functions, not just the tools available to increase engagement and the creation of an "At-Home Learning Menu" to promote engagement with learning tasks. Module 7 addresses planning instructional units in a distance learning environment, with a focus on demonstrating, collaborating, coaching and facilitating, and practicing. Module 8 brings forth practices for feedback, assessment, and grading in distance learning with practical and diverse solutions for connecting with students. Module 9 concludes the book with a focus on stability and optimism when teaching online, framing learning as opportunities for personal and academic growth, no matter the context. The conversational tone throughout and consistent opportunities to draw on prior teaching experience and make notes to

self, creates space in this workbook for teacher to see themselves in distance learning and determine how they will use what they already know about positive teaching and learning practices, enhance them with the opportunities digital contexts afford, and develop a plan for confident and predictive classrooms beyond the crisis learning situation so many teachers and students encountered at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Throughout the book, supporting all students, taking comfort in what we already know about good teaching, integrating innovative ideas for digital environments, and developing a positive online teaching practice take precedent. Fisher and Frey's characteristic helpful and well-informed writing combine with Hattie's well-known effect size studies of education research come together in a highly readable and decidedly useful approach to fostering productive and positive distance teaching and learning practices. Fisher, Frey, and Hattie (2021) remind us that distance learning is not an accelerator for learning but it also not inherently negative. The educational setting is not the deciding factor. "What we do matters, not the medium of doing it" (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2021, p. 5). These authors share a vision of technology as "the means and starting point, not the core, of teaching" (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2021, p. 6) and provide the tools for teachers to develop that stance in a personalized way. For any teacher looking to step up their game in online instruction, The Distance Learning Playbook is highly recommended as an accessible, practical resource for productive learning and planning in an online environment.

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Book 2:

McGregor. T. *Ink & Ideas: Sketchnotes for Engagement, Comprehension, and Thinking*. (2019). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Reviewed by Dr. Kaira Kelly-Howard, Union Park Middle School & Sherron Killingsworth Roberts University of Central Florida

Many scholars continue to seek a solution to the issue of students shunning the traditional lecture-notes-test instructional model. Although educators recognize the importance of taking notes as a self-created reference guide, this task, typically associated with a slideshow in the front of the room and the teacher lecturing, becomes mundane while students hurriedly copy information into notebooks. As a practicing middle school language arts teacher, I am constantly seeking strategies to increase engagement while helping students comprehend texts and clarify concepts. Tanny McGregor (2019) provides intermediate literacy teachers with an innovative way to promote engagement in the classroom through a new notetaking system, sketchnotes, in *Ink & Ideas: Sketchnotes for Engagement, Comprehension, and Thinking*.

McGregor answers many questions by beginning the book with her colorful FAQs. The questions are written from the perspective of a concerned educator, leery about implementing sketchnotes. McGregor reassures educators with advice for the smooth integration of sketchnotes. McGregor organizes the book into six chapters that discuss the benefits of sketchnotes, how to implement sketchnotes into direct instruction, and how to use sketchnotes for written communication within and outside of the classroom.

"More Than Just a Pretty Page" justifies utilizing sketchnotes by describing the strategy as "words and pictures together." McGregor quotes William Allard (n.d.): "Words and pictures can work together to communicate more powerfully than either alone." She describes how sketchnotes serve as visuals for students' thinking and understanding, which are both processes not easily seen. Also, the nature of sketchnotes allows students to determine if their notes will be linguistic, nonlinguistic, or a combination of both, which provides students with opportunities to choose how to demonstrate their understanding of text. McGregor also discusses the thinking processes that benefit from the use of sketchnotes, such as enhancing students' memory, evidenced in Mueller and Oppenheimer's (2016) research. In addition, McGregor cites research conducted by Kaimal, Ray, and Muniz (2016) who found that creating visual art reduced the stress hormone, cortisol, in 75% of their participants. McGregor implies that sketchnoting has the same effect on children. Finally, since children can create drawings and special fonts relevant to their notes, sketchnotes welcome students to display their learning in advantageous ways. In essence, Chapter One convinces readers of the educational benefits of sketchnotes, and ends with a section titled "Ink in Action" which relays a parent's animated, personal account about her son's love for sketchnoting vocabulary words. Each chapter also ends with a practice sheet for readers to give the strategy a go by cleverly sketchnoting that chapter's concepts.

One question in the FAQ section referred to the overwhelmed feeling teachers and students may have when presented with a blank sheet of paper to begin sketchnoting. Chapter Two, appropriately titled "One Blank Page = Unlimited Possibilities," provides a thorough explanation of how to combat those early feelings of nervousness. She goes on to suggest that teachers introduce sketchnotes by sharing the findings of research studies concerning memory and creating visual representations in student-friendly language and allowing students to

sketchnote something of their own choice. Teachers should also allow students to look at others' sketchnotes, so that they can notice patterns in how the sketchnotes are created, such as color schemes, linguistic and nonlinguistic representations, and elements of individuality. McGregor also shows the importance of helping students realize that perfection is not a pattern or required element of sketchnotes, since there is not a right or wrong way to sketchnote. Students simply have to determine how they can best make their thinking and understanding visual. The author suggests explicitly teaching students the visual elements and foundation of sketchnotes: lettering and fonts, connectors, frames and bullets, faces and figures, and words and pictures. Teachers can draw examples on their board, or display the examples presented in this book for students to see sample sketches they can create. Finally, McGregor suggests that teachers begin their first sketchnote experience in the classroom through a reading of a story or nonfiction text to practice sketchnoting.

"Becoming an Independent Inker" provides considerations for those who need to understand the smaller parts that make up the entire whole of the artistry behind sketchnoting. McGregor provides a vignette about her college friend, Karen, a very methodical thinker who appreciated the refinement of small details, while McGregor notes that she self-identifies as the complete opposite. McGregor states that this chapter is for those who can relate more to Karen. The author helps readers determine where to begin their sketchnoting on the blank sheet of paper. Then, she transitions into a discussion of color, with sample color wheels and potential color schemes alongside example sketchnotes for each color scheme described. The author also discusses how different colors can be used as the anchor, accessory, or accent color on the sketchnote. The chapter ends with the author providing suggestions to help educators determine what content should be displayed in their sketchnotes, which varies based on the task and

importance of information being shared. Although the author suggests that readers who, like her, prefer to jump in and pay attention to smaller details later, could skip this chapter. Teachers will appreciate her respect for differentiation. No doubt, McGregor offers useful information in this chapter for students who are struggling to get started on their sketchnotes.

"Sketchnote LIVE: Be in the Moment" is filled with pictures displaying the possibilities of sketchnotes for various activities in and outside of the classroom. The author demonstrates these strategies through sketchnoting, which further justified the usefulness of sketchnoting for more than students listening to a story or viewing a slideshow of unit content. In another section of the chapter, McGregor captures the aspect of sketchnotes that accounts for engagement and comprehension. The author provides strategies for taking sketchnotes "live" when interacting with read-alouds, music, audio content, excerpts from texts, direction instruction, marginal annotations, images and objects, and daily sketches. As a model for students, this chapter's sketchnotes will serve as useful references for classroom display. Furthermore, Chapter Four purports that sketchnoting works for cross-curricular learning, and even personal and non-academic purposes.

"Thinking Ahead & Thinking After" prompts the reader to use sketchnotes both to plan and to reflect. Revamping the traditional T-chart and K-W-L chart by integrating sketches into notes instead of writing bullet points of facts and other information, and utilizing a new strategy called "Idea Banks" to sketch pictures, thoughts, words, and questions about a topic, students learn by thinking ahead. Then, remodeling traditional reflection strategies continues with symbol sketches that allow today's students to demonstrate their understanding through visual representations of important symbols. Students can also synthesize their learning by creating sketches that capture the big ideas. Finally, instead of writing solely in a journal, students can

sketch their reflections in meaningful ways. Providing students with sketchnoting opportunities before and after new content can also allow teachers to gauge students' understanding through the students' use of sketchnoting.

"Sketchnote Tapas" offers a multiplicity of ways to use sketchnotes, such as creating visual representations for anchor charts, visual syntheses, and publishing formats for sharing sketchnoting. McGregor discusses these strategies and provides sample sketchnotes in well-place placed "Try This" boxes throughout this chapter to encourage readers in this new endeavor.

Once readers reach the final chapter, they will be filled with innovative and dynamic ideas for implementing sketchnotes into their instruction. Additionally, sketchnotes, used across multiple content areas, support students' metacognition, memory, focus, and creativity. Teachers are encouraged to use sketchnotes in their own professional development, in workshops, and conferences to improve their own practice. The best aspects of this exciting and accessible text are McGregor's insertions of salient research throughout to substantiate sketchnoting's claims of improved engagement, comprehension, and retention, as well as her enthusiastic invitations to get busy sketchnoting. By the end of this book, MacGregor's contagious confidence in this research-based, instructional strategy will ensure that teachers of all levels of experience will find many ways to implement this innovation with students across varying interests and abilities.

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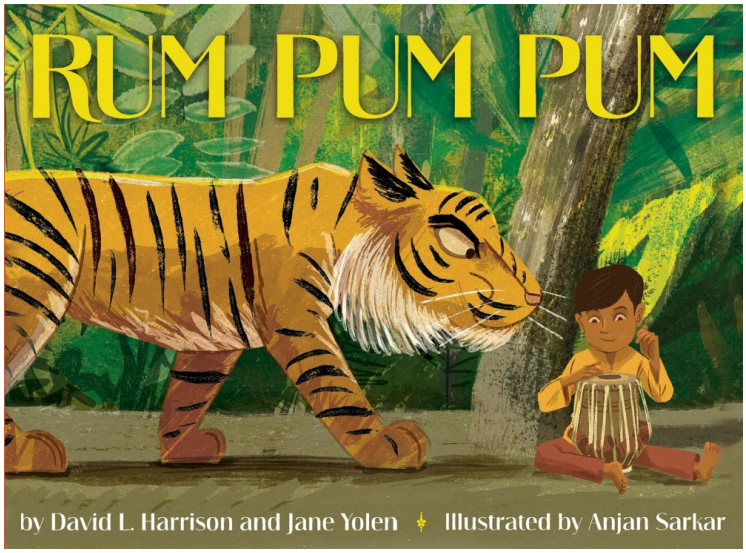
Book 3:

Harrison, D. L. & Yolen, J. *Rum Pum Pum*. Anjan Sarkar illus. (2020). NY: Holiday House.

Reviewed by Dr. Nile Stanley, University of North Florida



There once was a tiger,

a large, handsome tiger

with sharp claws,

big sharp teeth

and a long, sinuous tail.

But he had no friends.

Tiger wandered around the forest

saying “Rrrrrrrrrhhh,”

which in tiger talk means,

“Will you be my friend?”

But whether it was his growl

or his claws, or his big sharp teeth--

everyone he met

immediately ran away.

Upon hearing the lyrical lines of Rum, Pum Pum immediately, I wanted to be inside the book, get its flavor in my ears, like a talking drum, drain the sweetness of imagination from the beat of each word. Music, the great unifier, plays a large part in this folklore rendered as poetic prose. The book was masterfully crafted by the “old hands” (their words not mine!) of David Harrison and Jane Yolen (Maccarone, 2020), who between them have written some 500 books. This was a collaboration with “young” illustrator of 20 books Anjan Sarkar, who adds lush landscapes and eye-catching animal illustrations for a joyful, memorable story.

I have hosted both authors over the last twenty-five years to perform at the annual International Literacy Association (ILA) Poetry olio gatherings. Both David and Jane grace their audiences with magical, eloquent, uplifting poems, stories, and even occasional songs. Sharing their passion for the writer's craft always inspires.

This is a book that children will want to experience again and again. The book lends itself naturally to storytelling because the plot is engaging, simple, and fast-paced. The lonely, misunderstood tiger finds a drum. He strikes it with his tail, and it talks pleasingly "rum, pum, pum." Drum becomes his new friend, who he decides to carry down the road. A cumulative story unfolds as, one by one, other friends start to follow, each making a funny, unique sound. Monkey says "chee-chee-chee" which means "I will come too" in monkey talk. A rhino who says "ouggh," which means "I will come too" in rhino talk. A parrot that says "scree-awk," then a chameleon, and an elephant.

The made-up words are fun to play with, and the sounds reinforce phonemic awareness. Repetition is the magic story ingredient that makes the listeners appreciate the rhythm of the book and anticipate what is coming next. It encourages them to participate.

Elements of the story are noted, such as an Indian boy now reunited with the Tabla drum he lost. In the end, there is a conflict over who should carry the drum. The boy with the talking drum tells a story that is surprising, calming, and uniting. The backstory "saving the tiger" is a bonus. Children learn, "you don't know what you have till it's gone." Appreciating a species that is disappearing and beautiful land that is endangered is a call to action that readers will hopefully hear, embrace, and act.

I found the experiences of teaching the book to children equally satisfying through the techniques of visual storytelling, read aloud, and literary storytelling. I eagerly introduced the book to a large group of aged 3 to 5 preschoolers with a picture walk through the book. Getting anxious children in this time of COVID 19 to stop and look closely at illustrations and discuss what they see makes for a richer experience. Using visual thinking strategies (anonymous, 2020), I asked three questions of learners: What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find? Some of the children comprehended the sequence of events in the pictures and answered more complex questions. What is the story being told by the pictures? What do you think happened before this scene? What do you think happened next?
I found the read-aloud of this picture book a rich literary experience that blends art with a story. Pictures scaffolded the children's search for meaning by reminding them what happened in the story. In connecting pictures to words, I was reinforcing vocabulary knowledge by asking, Can you show me where the rhino is? What colors was the parrot? Can you draw your favorite animal in the story?

My favorite strategy, one we often neglect because of time, is literary storytelling. I used this strategy the following week. I committed to memory a visual portrait of the story, not a word for word recitation. With my drum in hand, without the children looking at the text, I performed

the story interactively using sound, movement, and expression. Storytelling was different than the read aloud and the children reaped added benefits young children retelling together a story to make it their own by roaring like a tiger and beating a drum was not only higher-level thinking, but I was sharing the joy of storytelling with the little people in my life. As Confucius wrote, "I hear, and I forget, I see, and I remember, and I do, and I understand.'

It has been said that every question and every answer is a story. Folktales unconsciously nudge us to universal truths. A talking drum expresses what we cannot always say. Making new friends can be awkward and scary. How do we communicate with people who may dress, speak, and act differently than us? Can we learn to communicate better and be friends? How do we cope with rejection? The answer lies in the stories we tell, which often have silver linings like *Rum Pum Pum.*

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