

HIGHLIGHTS

of the Minnesota Reading Association,
an International Literacy Association
affiliate

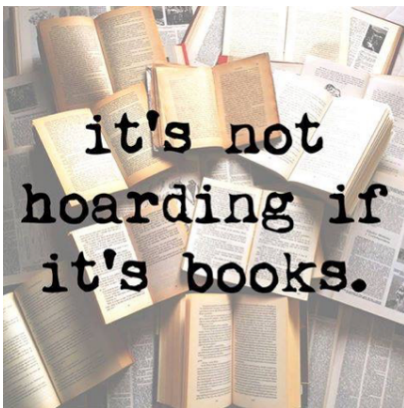
President's Message

Susan Paasch

There is just something about new books. Recently, I purchase several boxes of books for our Book Room. It caused great excitement for my teachers, students and myself. Even though, I had other things I should be doing, I spent time looking at each and every book! We don't have them cataloged yet, but I have had teachers and students browsing through the cart in my office.

Technology has become an important tool in our schools, but it doesn't and shouldn't take the place of books. The district where I work (Sauk Rapids-Rice Schools) is moving toward the implementation of one to one devices for all students. We understand the importance of leveling the playing field for all students and so devices are being provided for all. This year, all of the 5th grade students in my school got Ipads. It has been a great journey and we continue to learn every day.

As we moved in this direction, we made it very clear that the Ipad was one tool in each teacher and students' toolbox. Students have embraced this new learning tool and have taught us along the way. They are fearless when it comes to technology!



The use of Ipads has increased engagement and communication. I was at a conference with a teacher earlier this year and he logged onto his online account and was able to interact with his students and the substitute teacher back at school. Parents also have immediate access to their child's work and assignments through our online application.

As wonderful and engaging as technology is, it will never take the place of a brand new book, especially now when it's cold and snowy outside! Curl up with a good book.

Susan Paasch, MRA President

WINTER 2015

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**Thank you for being
an MRA member!**

MRA's Mission Statement and Goals

Minnesota Reading Association's mission is to actively promote lifelong literacy for all citizens. We encourage professional interaction among all organizations involved with literacy and provide resources for exemplary literacy practices and habits.

- Supporting, Recognizing, and Celebrating Literacy Efforts across the State of Minnesota
- Promoting Networking and Collaboration in the Area of Literacy
- Providing Resources and Opportunities for Professional Growth and Leadership Development

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR Kathryn Bannon

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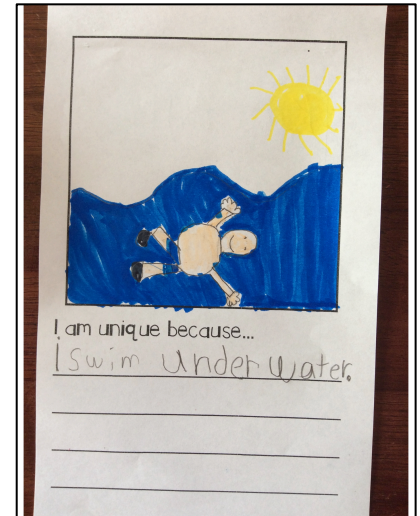
MNREADING.ORG

Reading Councils

Central Minnesota Reading Council

Celebrating Differences

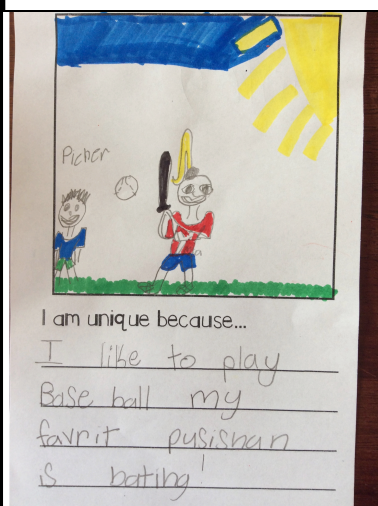
The beginning of the school year brings with it much excitement, anticipation, and what seems like a never ending to-do list. A book you must add to this list is *Odd Velvet* by Mary E. Whitcomb. This whimsical story centers around Velvet who is perceived by her classmates as “odd.” Of course, once the children get to know and understand her, the things that seemed so odd in the beginning are merely just a part of who she is. This book provides a wonderful starting point for discussions about uniqueness and celebrating differences. I talk with my class about how it’s important for us to honor and celebrate our differences. It’s what makes our class so special.



As a follow-up to our conversations, the kids showcase their uniqueness by completing a writing prompt and illustrating a picture to match. I put these up on my students’ lockers to showcase and celebrate their own individual uniqueness! My students love to check out their classmates’ pictures and read about what makes each of their peers unique. An unexpected positive from this activity was the number of connections my students were able to make with one another! They were also

genuinely curious to know more about each other, which lead to natural conversations that were initiated by the kids with one another.

So as you get your bearings almost six weeks in, make some time to squeeze in this special book and open up the conversation of uniqueness and celebrating differences. I promise it will be time well spent!



Reading Councils Cont'd

Twin Cities Area Reading Council

Agency and Independence in Literacies

Jillian Maxe, EdD, TCARC President and Mary Green, MS, MA

The Twin Cities Area Reading Council (TCARC) Agency and Independence in Literacies' evening of learning was held at the Bloomington Public Schools Education Service Center on November 5, 2015, with national presenter Mary Green from the Lucy Calkin's Units of Study Team. Mary Green has worked as both a classroom teacher and a literacy specialist in a large urban district. She brings experience helping teachers and administrators create cultures of learning and norms of high expectations across schools to her role as a staff developer for the Reading and Writing Project with Lucy Calkins and colleagues from Teacher's College, Columbia University.



Presenter Mary Green from Teacher's College at recent TCARC event.

The TCARC November event highlighted the reading and writing connection of content area literacy. Ms. Green set the stage for the *Conditions for Learning* (Cambourne, 1995) and wove them into the writing instruction essentials. Participants experienced a workshop lesson that could be applied to their instruction the next day. The evening's presentation was a gradual release model displaying the integration of the reading and writing workshops based on the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP, 2014) work of Lucy Calkins and colleagues.

Ms. Green engaged participants in practices that are transferable to classroom settings. Examples include:

- Establishing rituals and routines for partnerships
- Speaking and listening norms
- Shared and interactive charting as a scaffold for taking notes and anchoring teaching
- A writing strategy for generating ideas

Mary Green connected the reading process to the writing process, stating that the Common Core Standards "place a tremendous emphasis on writing," with ten writing standards, along with two reading standards, numbers four and six. She specifically pointed out that standard six, craft and structure, requires us to read like writers, which further supports the significance of teaching writing as a subject. Mary also stated, "a strong writer is a strong reader," identifying that writers grow with instruction and the Workshop model is a predictable structure that provides opportunity for real writing. In the Workshop model, mini-lessons are held to 10-15 minutes, with plenty of independent work time for actual student writing. Table 1 displays the structure for the Writing Workshop.

Continued on page 4

Reading Councils Cont'd

Twin Cities Area Reading Council Continued

Continued from page 3

Table 1: Writing Workshop Structure

Mini-lesson

Gather as a class
Sit with writing partners
Teacher needs to model
One teaching point
(10-15 minutes)

Independent Writing Time

Students write independently
Teacher is buzzing around and conferring with students
Table conferences
Determining who needs a strategy group
Partner conferences
Mid-workshop teaching points
(40 minutes)

Teaching Share

Closure – highlight and do a little extra teaching
(5 minutes)

During the participant independent work time of the presentation, Mary Green modeled how writers generate ideas out of small moments, choose one small moment, and write the wide story. She emphasized that the goal of a teacher is to make sure that students are generating ideas rather than completing an assignment on writing about one person. She noted that writing is expressive and something we can see immediately. Mary ended the evening by sharing a video clip, *It's a Beautiful Day, and I Can't See It* (Purple Feather Online Content Specialists, 2015), to emphasize the difference words can make and the power of shifting words. She also shared the following beneficial links: Vimeo Teachers College reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) at <https://vimeo.com/tcrwp/albums>, and Chartchums blog at <https://chartchums.wordpress.com/>.



Teachers discussing how to incorporate Reader's and Writer's Workshop strategies into their own classrooms.

Overall, it was a wonderful evening of learning with rave reviews. If you are interested in further information, you may contact Mary Green at: Mary@unitsofstudyteam.com or Jill Maxe at: jill.maxe@spps.org.

References

- Cambourne, Brian (1995). "Toward An Educationally Relevant Theory Of Literacy Learning: Twenty Years of Inquiry". *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 49, No. 3.
- Purple Feather Online Content Specialists (2015). *It's a beautiful day and I can't see it*. www.purplefeather.co.uk. Retrieved December 18, 2015 from <http://keepmarketingfun.com/2013/08/05/the-power-of-words-its-a-beautiful-day-and-i-cant-see-it/>
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) (2014). Retrieved on December 18, 2015 from <http://readingandwritingproject.org/>

Reading Councils Cont'd

Minnesota Academy of Reading

Greetings from the Minnesota Academy of Reading!

Every other year, the Executive Board of the Minnesota Academy of Reading recognizes a leader in Minnesota reading research, advocacy, and service. At our annual MAR Policy Symposium on January 15, 2016, we will have the pleasure and honor of recognizing Rick Beach, Professor Emeritus of the University of Minnesota, and most recently, Past-President of the Literacy Research Association. I've included Rick's bio sketch here:

Richard Beach is Professor Emeritus of English Education at the University of Minnesota.



He is author or co-author of 23 books, including *Understanding and Creating Digital Texts: An Activity-Based Approach* (<http://digitalwriting.pbworks.com>), *Using Apps for Learning Across the Curriculum: A Literacy-Based Framework and Guide* (<http://usingipads.pbworks.com>) *Teaching to Exceed the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards* (<http://englishccss.pbworks.com>); *Literacy Tools in the Classroom: Teaching Through Critical Inquiry, Grades 5-12* (<http://literacytooluses.pbworks.com>); and *Teaching Literature to Adolescents* (<http://teachingliterature.pbworks.com>). He was the organizing editor for the annual *Annotated Bibliography of Research for Research in the Teaching of English* from 2003 to 2013. He was a former President of the National Conference on Research in Language and former President of the Literacy Research Association. He received the 2009 Computers in Reading Research Award from The Technology in Literacy Education Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association.

It has been my pleasure to work with Rick over quite a few years, and we in Minnesota are indeed lucky to have access to his wisdom, knowledge, and advocacy for reading.

Yours in Reading,

Christopher 'CW' Johnson
President, Minnesota Academy of Reading

Reading Councils Cont'd

Southeast Area Reading Council

Learning with Legos!

By Jill Magnuson, Reading Interventionist at Dover-Eyota Elementary School; SERC

Read it, Write it, Build it is a grant that I wrote and received funding for through the Minnesota Reading Association. The main objective of Read it, Write it, Build it is to create a safe, welcoming environment that promotes reading and writing, as well as social skills, through the engagement of tools such as Legos, rock gardens, race cars, etc. By using these materials - Legos, Hot Wheels and related books and software - students work on sight words, fluency and comprehension individually, with partners and in small groups. Students are also engaged in writing activities that incorporate foundational writing skills and promote creative writing extension work.

I am still in the process of full implementation but so far the students love it! A favorite activity is searching out sight words in stories and then building the words with Legos. Kindergarteners enjoy making sight words and practicing letter identification and sounds. My 5th grade students enjoy practicing their spelling words with Legos as a change in routine. Parking lots with sight words in the parking spaces lend themselves to sight word games with Hot Wheels. Students also get practice with comprehension as they recreate scenes from the stories.

Learning with legos is a lot of fun!



You are cordially invited to the 2016

Celebrate Literacy Dessert Reception

Presented by the Minnesota Reading Association

*Please join us as we
recognize and celebrate the work of
Minnesota's finest literacy leaders.*

A Silent Auction and Dollar Book Sale will be a part of the evening:

Proceeds to benefit the Karen Lamb Johnson Scholarship Fund

Friday, March 7, 2014

6:30- 8:30 pm

Maple Grove Community Center

12951 Weaver Lake Road

Maple Grove, MN 55369

For more information, contact Katie Bannon

mrcelebrateliteracy@gmail.com

651-503-8502

The Minnesota Reading Association is sponsoring this event and it is being held free of charge; however, please RSVP by visiting www.mnreading.org in order to reserve space and refreshments for all attendees.

Book Reviews

Got a new book your kids are loving? Have you found a great new professional resource? E-mail Katie Bannon (kbannon10@gmail.com) with the title of the book/resource and a short blurb reviewing the book. We encourage kid review too!

6th Grade Readers Recommend These Books!

Faireground: Wish – *"This book is really good. It has great drawings and it tells you about a cool story"*

The Bully – *"I recommend this book cause it teaches students life lessons based upon what can actually happen in real life. It teaches you to stay and watch out for what you're doing, because it might lead you to trouble"*

Paper Towns – *"Paper Towns is an awesome book. It has a great message and concept. It's good because it's a mystery book with a twist! A girl gives a guy clues to find her somewhere."*

Smile – *"I liked it because I can relate to how they feel and it's a graphic novel."*

The Great Wall of Lucy Lu – *"I love this book because it teaches Chinese and it talks about a Chinese girl's life and that she hates her culture very much but then she starts to live it because of Yipo, her other sister from China."*

Scorpions – *"It was awesome!! The plot was well explained. The characters were well explained. To me, there was a lot of imagery."*

The Road to Paris – *"I recommend this book because it's about a girl named Paris and she's a foster kid to she has been moved a lot and she hated all of the families until she moves in with the Lincoln's. Then things change."*

Mercy – *"I think this book is a great book because it tells the story of a spirit who jumps body to body to help young women out of their problems."*

Impossible Knife of Memory – *"I thought the book was really good because it shows how people have addictions and how they fix their lives."*

Inside Out and Back Again – *"This book compares our life if you have emigrated to American and tells a good lesson."*
