



VOL XII. NO. 4



Rutgers Center for Literacy Development

SPRING 2022 Newsletter

Letter from the Director

We were thrilled that the Center for Literacy Development could provide three live Presentations this academic year. We were fortunate to have Ernest Morell discussing Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction and Kelly Gallagher presenting his work dealing with student writing in December. In February, we enjoyed a lively presentation by Sarah Ahmed. She involved us interactively as she discussed promoting children's Identity. Kathy Ganske presented on the same day about Vocabulary development with excellent strategies for from K through 12. Finally, we got to hear Wiley Blevins engage the audience about phonics instruction and use of informational text. Presenting concurrently was Cris Tovani about engaging struggling readers. At the end of this newsletter are photos from each of the events.

We are planning next year and the speakers will be: Cornelius Minor, Doug Fisher, John Schumacher, Penny Kittle, and TBA. At the end of this newsletter you will find the titles and descriptions of the speaker's presentations.

At each of our events this year, I asked the audience to respond to different prompts. At one event, I asked for Words of Wisdom for teachers. Following are some of the responses:

- Be real and genuine with your students. Stacey Moore, grades 9-12, Neptune Public Schools

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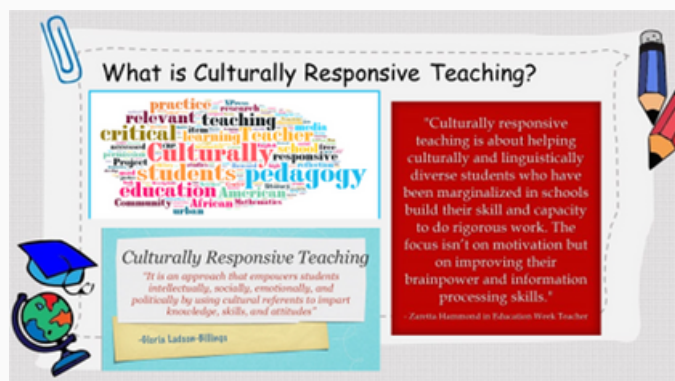
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Letter from the Editor (continued)

- Be flexible while teaching in your daily routine. Promote and encourage kindness and respect for others in your classroom. Enza Handras , 2nd grade teacher, Cliffside Park Schools
- Give your children choices, provide variety and be current. Florence Byrne, 6th grade, Union Beach Public Schools.
- When teaching, leave your baggage at home. Students have enough of their own issues and don't need to carry yours. Kim Kelly, Grades 9 to 12, Neptune Schools
- Positive reinforcement is important to motivate students. Brooke Casoni, 1st grade, Woodbridge Public Schools
- Welcome and support your students. Let them know you care and are happy they are in your class. Treat them well. Elizabeth Lucio, North Plainfield Public Schools
- Foster strong, meaningful relationships which will lead to strong meaningful teaching and learning. Amanda Panariello, 7th and 8th grade, Millstone Public Schools
- When the teacher shows enthusiasm for the content being taught the students will become enthusiastic and learn. Claire Varady, Supervisor, East Orange Charter School.
- Middle and high achievers are just as important and need strategic instruction as much as the children who are not at grade level. Emily Cimilluca, 1st grade, Woodbridge Public Schools.
- Create an environment for your students where they feel safe and free to express their thoughts and feelings. Kimberly Simuro, 6th grade, Hillside Public Schools



One of the articles in this newsletter, was written by Jennifer Liang a teacher in Scotch Plains, NJ and a student in Rutgers Master's program for the Reading Specialist/Supervisor program. Jennifer wrote about Culturally Responsive teaching. In a presentation to the class. She defined the term in this visual below. I thought these were Words of Wisdom for us to teach by.

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Rutgers Center for Literacy Development

2022-2023 Speaker Series



Oct. 20
Cornelius
Minor

We Got This: Teaching Reading and Writing with Equity, Access and Being who our Students Need us to Be



Dec. 8
Doug
Fisher

Reading Reimagined:
Weaving Word Recognition and Language Comprehension for Effective Literacy Instruction
(The Science of Reading)



Feb. 23
John
Schumacher

The Affective Side of Reading: Social and Emotional Literacy



Apr. 20
Penny
Kittle

The Writing Lessons I Learned from Hamilton:
Relevance, Engagement and Community



May 25
TBA

Registration Opens Soon!

Registration cost for one Speaker Series event: \$175
Discounted registration cost for all 5 events: \$750



What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

by Jennifer Liang
3rd Grade Teacher, Scotch Plains, NJ



Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is an approach to teaching that draws on students' strengths. It connects students' cultural knowledge and prior experiences as a way to help them succeed in the classroom (Gay, 2000). However one of the biggest misconceptions about CRT is that it is all about bringing elements of students' racial backgrounds into a lesson. A common thought is that by bringing up famous Black and Latinx people, or talking about Ramadan, will magically motivate and engage students of color. While none of these practices are wrong, they do not touch the heart of what CRT aims to achieve. CRT is also about expanding students' intellectual capacity. It is not enough to simply allow students to share and talk about their family and home culture. It is about using those strengths and backgrounds to help them succeed.

Hammond (2015) explains in her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain*, that CRT is about tapping into the traditions that students' families and communities use to teach children and integrating them into the classroom. She discusses the way that some cultures are more collective and focus more on community and building positive relationships, while in the United States, the culture is more individualistic and emphasizes independence and self-reliance. Some collective cultures also focus more on oral tradition and share knowledge through storytelling. This way of teaching and learning is inherently communal. Written tradition does not involve as much interaction. Many oral cultures have written language for reading and writing, but many families and communities may still use oral traditions at home and within cultural communities. This reinforces the way the brain may prefer oral tradition as a way to process information. CRT may not always look "cultural" from an outside perspective because integrating the different strategies that promote community, social interaction, storytelling, and oral tradition are not just beneficial for diverse students, but for all students!

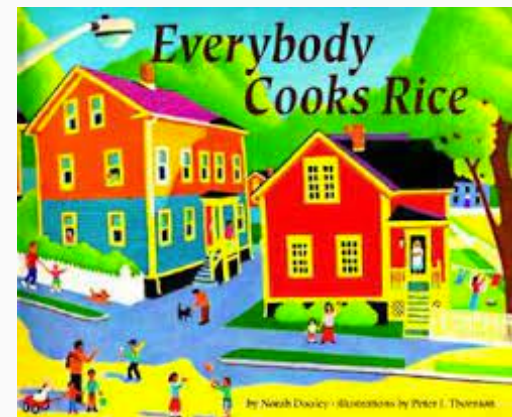
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What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

by Jennifer Liang

Here are some examples of ways that educators can incorporate CRT within the classroom through a whole class read-aloud or small group literature circle:

- Select a text that allows students to either learn about a culture that is different from their own, or one that reflects their own personal experiences. Some suggestions are listed below:
 - *We Are Family* by Patricia Hegarty - Tells the story of 8 different families and the way they are unique, yet share many similarities as well.
 - *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Norah Dooley - A child and her brother visit families around the neighborhood at dinner time and discover the many different ways that rice is prepared across cultures.
 - *Our Class is a Family* by Shannon Olsen - Children learn that their classroom is also their family - it is a place where they can learn, make mistakes, be themselves, and make lasting friendships.
- Allow students opportunities to share connections through activating background knowledge, personal experiences, or drawing upon real world issues.
- Give students opportunities to respond to a text through a variety of mediums, such as whole class conversations, asking questions, writing, art projects, etc.





Don't Forget: There is the Science and the Art in Teaching Reading

by Shannon D'Alessandro
Kindergarten Teacher, Woodbury, NJ



Reading is an important and necessary life skill. It is the key to learning and leading a successful life. As educators, we need to ensure that we are doing everything we can to help children learn to read. Moats (2020) states, about 20 percent of elementary school students nationwide have serious problems learning to read and at least another 20 percent are at risk for not meeting grade-level expectations. Those who struggle with reading will struggle throughout life—as possible school dropouts, being incarcerated, underemployed or unemployed and may experience chronic physical or emotional illness.

The National Reading Panel (2000) reported that in order to help resolve this issue, we need to teach these five important processes necessary to read well: Phonemic awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Fluency. Scholars have and are continually researching to find the best scientifically based strategies for teaching children how to read well. These skills and strategies must be intertwined to help make a person a skilled reader. Vocabulary knowledge, comprehension skills, and the ability to decode, should be woven together when teaching to produce a fluent reader. It is important that teachers implement and teach all of the skills continuously and vigorously.

We can think about reading as having both an art and science. The science of reading deals with the skills and strategies proven to enhance the ability to read. But there is also the art of teaching reading. When we think of the art, we must factor in a child's social, emotional and cultural experiences. We must recognize that each child learns differently and that all aspects of the child need to be taken into consideration. Children have different families, come from different cultures, with different ideas, and experiences. There is no such thing in reading as "one size fits all." It is vital that all of these components are considered when teaching a child in order to help create a strong, skilled reader.



Early Indicators of Dyslexia

By Arlene Comstock
Berkeley Township School District
2nd Grade Special Education Teacher



Dyslexia is a learning disability that is neurologic in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with lack of decoding skills resulting in poor comprehension. Dyslexia comprises about 80% of all learning disabilities. Early identification is important because the brain is more plastic in younger children and malleable for rerouting of neural circuits (Shaywitz 2020).

How do I know if my student, and/or child is dyslexic? School districts must screen students who have exhibited one or more indicators of dyslexia no later than completion of first semester of second grade. Of course earlier is better.

Some indicators of dyslexia from kindergarten to first grade: (Vellitino, Fletcher, Snowling, Scanlon, 2004)

- Identifying and discriminating letter sounds
- Inability to read one syllable words and discriminate sounds(b-aaa-t)
- Difficulty with pronouncing words when reading
- Reading errors with no connection to text or decoding (reading 'big' as 'goat')
- Reading problems in parents or siblings

Some indicator of dyslexia from second grade and higher:

Speaking

- Mispronunciation of long words (amulium instead of aluminum)
- Speech is not fluent (lots of ums)
- Confusion of words and sounds (saying tornado instead of volcano)
- Extended time to summon oral response
- Difficulty with rote memory

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Early Indicators of Dyslexia

By Arlene Comstock

Reading

- Reading is very slow
- Lacks strategies with new words
- Omits parts of words (conible instead of convertible)
- Very poor writing and spelling
- Laborious reading or lacking fluency
- Avoidance of reading

Educators need current and effective screening tools for detection at an early age. Child study team members, general education teachers, basic skills teachers, and reading specialists usually administer screening measures in a public school setting.

References

Shaywitz, S.E. (2020) Overcoming Dyslexia Second Edition, New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf

Vellutino FR, Fletcher JM, Snowling MJ, Scanlon DM. Specific reading disability (dyslexia): what have we learned in the past four decades? J Child Psychol Psychiatry. 2004 Jan;45(1):2-40. doi: 10.1046/j.0021-9630.2003.00305.x. PMID: 14959801.



The Power of Rereading Familiar Books

by Ali Steffner

Kindergarten Teacher, Warren, NJ



Italian journalist, short-story writer, and novelist, Italo Calvino, whose whimsical and imaginative fables made him one of the most important Italian fiction writers in the 20th century, knew the powerful impact of rereading.

"A classic is a book which with each rereading offers as much of a sense of discovery as the first reading." -Italo Calvino

Children enjoy reading books that are familiar to them. They give children a sense of achievement since they have already done the work of decoding and comprehending the text previously. Children also have the chance to think deeper about a text that is familiar to them. Students read familiar texts more fluently. Marie Clay, creator of Reading Recovery, stated, "Familiar reading builds volume of reading and provides extended opportunities for successful processing of information from the meaning, language, structure and print. Fluent reading, comprehension and speed would be good outcomes from these experiences" (Clay, 2016).



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The Power of Rereading Familiar Books

by Ali Steffner

Here are some ways to build rereading of familiar books into your classroom:

- Begin any reading lesson with rereading of a familiar text. This could be anywhere from 1-5 minutes. This creates a sense of achievement for students before presenting a new text.
- Provide multiple versions of books read in the classroom. Even when students are unable to read a text independently, they are able to use what they know and remember from a book to be able to enjoy the book on their own. This can be especially beneficial if the book has been used numerous times during instruction.
- Allow students time to read a familiar book to a classmate. This will build confidence and reinforce skills taught by the teacher because the student then becomes the teacher in sharing the book with a peer.

Capitalizing on opportunities to reread familiar texts with children can have a profound impact on their confidence and skill development. When implemented with purpose, rereading is a powerful instructional best practice.

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Clay, M. M. (2016). Literacy lessons designed for individuals. Mary Clay Literacy Trust.



The Importance of High Frequency Words

By Emily Cimmiluca
1st Grade Teacher, Woodbridge, NJ



What makes high frequency words important and why should you make time for them in your classroom? About 100-200 high frequency words account for “over 50% of the words in school text” (Johns & Wilke, 2018). High frequency words should not be confused with sight words. Sight words are based on content specific to the child, whereas high frequency words are words commonly seen throughout all texts and in the English language. In this article thus far, 38 high frequency words were used out of a total word count of 71, roughly 53% of the words. In work completed by Stahl et. al in Assessment for Reading Instruction (2020) found that, “109 of the most frequent English words make up 50% of all words found in reading material from grades 3-8”(Carroll, Davies, and Richman,1971).

When working with readers; struggling, average, and above average alike all should have a focus on the automaticity of identifying high frequency words. All readers greatly benefit from high frequency word instruction and this is seen in their reading through fluency and reading comprehension. This is done by removing the obstacle of pausing to decode multiple words in a text.

How can you bring high frequency word study into your classroom?

- Identify a list of target high frequency words for your students to master.
- Provide explicit instruction and allow students time to practice the words.
- Create a word wall for students to reference.
- Write high frequency words using different media; chalk, sand tray, dry-erase board, magnetic letters, etc.
- Go on a word hunt.
- Create games, allow students time to play.

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The Importance of High Frequency Words

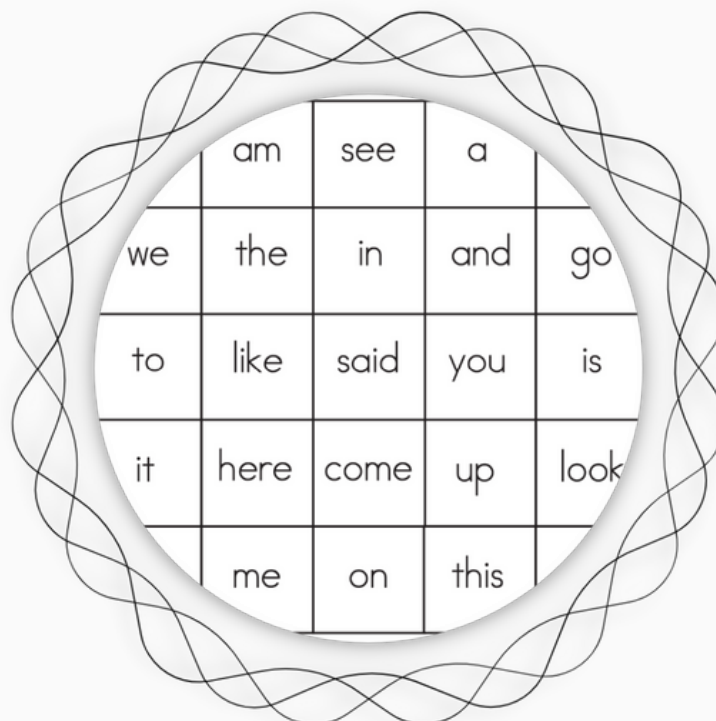
By Emily Cimmiluca

One of my favorite games to use in my classroom is High Frequency Word Candy Land. Using the same rules as the original game, players select face down cards to move spaces, but in High Frequency Word Candy Land these cards have the current high frequency words on them, students must say the word on the card before being able to move to that color space on the board. This is just one example of how to incorporate play into the mastery of high frequency words in the classroom.

References

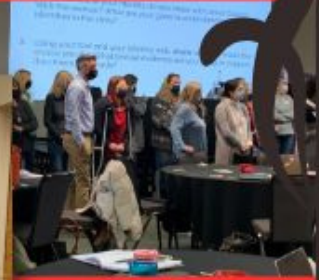
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Looking Back!

2021-2022 Speaker Series





Rutgers Center for Literacy Development



Coaching and Intervention Services



**Calling all teachers, principals, supervisors,
coaches, reading interventionists!**

After a year of COVID, academic disruption, and student loss, let us know if we could be of help with professional development, coaching, and evidenced based literacy strategies. Learn about our in-person and virtual PD to help create a successful school year!

Literacy Coaching for Educators in the following areas:

- Guided Reading groups
- Technology Techniques for Remote Learning
- Reading and Writing Workshop
- Use of Informational Text
- Assessment
- Project Based Learning
- Coaching in Social Justice and Equity
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Close Reading
- Differentiated Instruction
- Dyslexia
- Mentoring New Teachers
- Struggling Readings
- Parent Involvement Groups
- Evaluation and Organization of your Language Arts Program
- Programs Designed Individually for your School and Children

We also offer:

- Implementation of the Rutgers Reading Club : An Intervention for Struggling Readers
- Tutoring in reading and writing during and after school



Rutgers Center for Literacy Development

Rutgers Reading Club



An After School Literacy Intervention Program for Struggling Readers

This after school intervention program focuses on the child's needs. The teaching plan includes the integration of the language arts with developing: word work, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency and writing.

Motivation is a major goal in sessions. For example, the child can choose a book for the teacher to read to them that is too difficult for the child to read themselves. Literacy games are also played.

Each child is taught twice a week for 12 weeks for an hour by a teacher who is certified. Teachers work on building a relationship with the child.

For more information, email
Kelly.Clarida@gse.rutgers.edu

Rutgers Reading Club Cheer

Rutgers Reading! Rutgers Writing! Hoo-Rah! Hoo-Rah!
Rutgers Reading! Reaching Red Team! Writing Red Team! Rah! Rah!

Research Based Practices

- Motivating and engaging children
- Building self-esteem
- Time for socializing and snacks
- Building relationships between student and teacher
- Allows for choice and success
- Differentiating instruction
- Provides added time for literacy instruction in the school day
- Allowing for practice

Treatment Group

DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR
Sight Words	Sight Words	Sight Words	Running Record	Running Record	Running Record	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory
128	171	255	E	H	J	42/74	3/74	68/74

Control Group

DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR
Sight Words	Sight Words	Sight Words	Running Record	Running Record	Running Record	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory
134	144	170	E	E	F	42/74	44/74	50/74



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Rutgers University Graduate School of Education is accepting applications for our Reading Specialist programs that range between 30-33 credits. These programs help accepted students learn about evidenced based best practices, helping struggling readers and current issues in literacy development. The offered programs include:

NEW DOUBLE CERTIFICATION:

Ed.M. Program for Reading Specialist and NJ Supervisor's Certification

33 credits

Non-Degree Rutgers Certificate in Literacy Instruction

30 credits

Become a better teacher of reading and writing, become a basic skills teacher or an interventionist.

(4 courses)

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CENTER FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PARTNER: REACH OUT AND READ



The Center for Literacy Development partnered with the Reach Out and Read National Center, Eric B. Chandler Pediatric Health Center, helps put books into the hands of every child.



Reach Out and Read's Unique model:

- Reach Out and Read-trained doctors and nurses perform routine health checkups from infancy through five years not only with a stethoscope, but also with a children's book.
- The book is used as a clinical tool to encourage parents to read aloud, to give them a simple, practical way of spending time and engaging in conversation with their young children.
- The child is given a new book to take home and read with the family.



For more information about giving books, contact
Rutgers Center for Literacy Development
kelly.clarida@gse.rutgers.edu



THEIR SUCCESS STARTS WITH YOU

Your book donations at our events go to this clinic and have made family literacy possible for these children. The Center will collect new or gently-used books at each of our events.

