

Dear Readers,

It is with pleasure and a little bit of sadness that I bring you our last issue of CRAJ under my stewardship as editor. Volume 3 No 1, as in the previous issues, offers timely articles from Connecticut's shining stars, often renowned locally and nationally, as well as articles from other celebrated bright lights in the field of literacy at the national level.

FEATURE ARTICLES

In Maureen Billings' *A Close Reading Journey with Dr. Nancy Boyles*, we are privy to an in-depth conversation with Connecticut's own Nancy Boyles. This interview sheds light on many of the questions we might ask, if we had the opportunity to spend a rainy afternoon conversing with this amazing teacher of teachers. In *Comprehension Instruction and the Common Core: Scaffolding Primary Readers to Complex Text* by Kathy Barclay and Laura Stewart the spotlight shifts slightly to focus on beginning readers and demonstrates a model for scaffolding complex text for them. Next, nationally known language arts consultant, Laura Robb underlines the significance of word knowledge in *Vocabulary Is Comprehension: Why Teachers Should Focus on Building Students' Word Knowledge*. Robb provides a structural framework for vocabulary lessons and outlines a research-based "Big Ten Approach" to building vocabulary. Finally, in *Fluency Matters* you will find a compelling argument as to why fluency should be a critical area of attention. This article was written with the Connecticut Reading Association Journal in mind by none other than Reading Hall of Famer, Timothy Rasinski, the most eminent scholar on fluency, along with his esteemed colleague, Chase Young.

DEPARTMENTS

In the **Children's and Young Adult Literature Department**, Section Editor Jane Gangi provides an article by Susan C. Griffith entitled, *Reality We Dream Together: The Jane Addams Children's Book Award*. This article provides information about the Susan B. Anthony Award and books that celebrate strong capable women. This is a wonderful resource for teachers who want to populate their classrooms and schools with books that represent a wide range of diverse perspectives.

J. Gregory McVerry, Section Editor of the **New Literacies Department**, presents a trio of topics in this issue. First, he shares his own cutting-edge work on teaching children to evaluate information on the constantly morphing web within socially curated environments. In *Hacking Your Sourcing Skills: Teaching Credibility with Mozilla's Webmaker Tools*, McVerry provides an intriguing and active way for students to heighten their ability to critically evaluate information on the Internet. Second, in *Digital Storytelling and Narrative Writing* by Julia Kara-Soteriou and Ashley Callan, the authors provide a description of an action research project that brings narrative writing to life via the affordances that technology provides. In particular, the authors emphasize the importance of writing for an authentic audience. The third in the trio is Martha M. Bless's provocative essay, *The Myth of the Digital Native*. Bless provides a compelling argument that serves to debunk some of the thinking surrounding the construct of the digital native.

Joanne Cunard, Section Editor of the **Teacher Research Department** brings us two examples of teacher research projects. She characterizes the studies presented as "... the work of two teacher researchers who use a dynamic constructivist model that places their students in direct management of with their own processes of learning while they function as facilitators." In Alison Perry's *Increasing the Literacy-Based Understanding of High-Achieving Elementary Students through Self-Guided Literature Circles*, Perry systematically collected data and documented this pilot study and shares what she learned about using a self-guided literature circle model with her selected population of students. Similarly, in *Classroom Blogging: A Recipe for Student Success Through Consistency*, Katherine Simpson chose to study blogs as a way to enhance out of school discussions and to involve parents in their children's schoolwork.

The **Review of Professional Literature** is a column that has rotated in every other issue. In this issue Section Editor, Jane Logie, with the help of Aggie Burns and Elisabeth Peterson, bring four reviews focusing on the latest work by Nancy Boyles, Laura Robb, Laurie Elish-Piper and Susan L'Allier, and the work of Camille Blachowicz and Peter Fisher.

CONGRATULATIONS FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

As I bring my editorship to a close, I want to say thank you to the two consecutive CRA Boards of Directors for launching and funding this endeavor. Many thanks to Adina Alexander for her work as graphic designer. Thank you to all of our editors who have done so much to bring enriching articles to our readership since we first began. In particular:

- Thank you Children's and Young Adult Literature Editor, Dr. Jane M. Gangi for providing our readers with resources with an eye towards exploring issues of diversity and social justice. Thanks too for all the exciting resources you provided on our Children's and Young Adult Literature website at <http://www.ctreading.org/journal/resources>.
- Thank you New Literacies Editor, Dr. J. Gregory McVerry for consistently providing cutting-edge articles on new literacies.
- Thank you Critical Literacies Editor, Dr. Cara Mulcahy for procuring articles that help us to question underlying assumptions about what we read.
- Thank you Teacher Research Editor, Dr. Joanne Cunard for giving voice to our teachers' important classroom questions about teaching and learning and for supporting their teacher research.
- Thank you Review of Professional Books Editor, Dr. Jane J. Logie for insightful reviews of the latest books of interest to our readership.
- Thank you Dr. Kenneth J. Weiss who has served as our Associate Editor and has engaged in a labor of love ensuring that references were cited properly in APA format. I assure you that although this is not an exciting task, it is a critical one in creating a polished issue. Even though Dr. Weiss retired and relocated outside of Connecticut, he gave his all to help to build a journal of which we can be proud.

Catherine Kurkjian, Ed.D
Editor, *Connecticut Reading Association Journal*



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Professional Highlights:

Past President of Connecticut Reading Association (2014)

Conference Chair for CRA Annual Conference (2013)

Editor of Bookbird: A Journal of International Literature (IBBY)(2009-2012)

Past President of New England Reading Association (NERA) 2009/2010

Conference Chair for the NERA Annual Conference (2008)

Editor of the New England Reading Association Journal (2001-2008)

Research Co-Chair for the Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR) (2004-2008)

Editor of Children's Book Department for The Reading Teacher (2003-2007), Journal of the International Reading Association.